

For this assignment, you will follow the instructions for the “Analysis of Two Arguments Pro and Con on a Recent Controversial Issue” found on pages 353-357 of *Thinking for Yourself*. If your version of *Thinking for Yourself* does not have page numbers, then you will find the instructions in the first part of the Appendix at the end of the book under the section titled “First Option.” A student example of the assignment can be found on pages 361-367 under the title “Student Model Paper—Analysis of Two Arguments on the Question: Should there be Mandatory Labeling of Genetically Modified Foods?”

Hopefully, by now you should have found two arguments expressing different viewpoints about the topic you have chosen for your Extended Research Position Essay. Ideally, they should be short, no more than twelve paragraphs. Newspaper editorials, letters to the editor, blog posts, excerpts from a longer article (as long as the excerpt is itself a complete argument) are all fine choices. You’ll be asked in the assignment instructions to provide a “debate question.” This should be simply a matter of providing a question that both the arguments you’ve chosen (and by extension, you yourself) are trying to answer. For example, if you’re trying to argue your own position on racial injustice in our incarceration system, then you should find arguments that provide different takes on that topic, and your debate question might be something like, “Does racism play a role in the U.S.’s incarceration system?” Ideally, your two arguments should present different viewpoints, perhaps one would argue that our incarceration system is free of racism, and the other would argue that our incarceration system is riddled with racism. You might find an article from a former prisoner, or a warden, or an incarceration activist.

The assignment instructions in *Thinking for Yourself* provide all the directions you will need, including a rubric. I would like to make the following changes to the assignment including some suggestions for how to do a decent job on the assignment. According to the instructions on page 355, there should be four sections to the assignment, so I will make the following changes and suggestions to each of the sections:

Section 1: Title Page with Table of Contents—You don’t need to do a title page and a table of contents. Instead, on the first page of your assignment, use an MLA header in the upper-left corner of the first page, listing your name, College Writing II NZ, my name, and the date.

Section 2: The Argument—This section and Section 3 you will fill out for each of the two articles you will find.

1. The debate question: Here you’ll list the question you’re trying to answer in your own Extended Position Essay and that these two essays are exploring.
2. Title of Essay: What’s the title of the essay you’re currently analyzing?
3. Publication and Date: Where did you find the essay (i.e. what newspaper, magazine, website, etc.) and what is the publication date.
4. Form: You should probably put “Argument” here. This is to show that you confirm the essay you’ve chosen is an argument and not simply a report. (To better understand the difference, you can find a table explaining that difference on page 230 under the section

title “Is It an Argument or a Report?”

5. Viewpoint: Try to give a label (such as liberal/conservative/Democrat/Republican/Religious/Secular) to the author’s viewpoint. This section is also a good place to list the author’s qualifications and affiliations, so you might need to do some quick internet searches to find this information.

6. Conclusion: This section is asking you to summarize, using your own words or short quotations, the viewpoint/thesis statement of the author.

7. Reasons: Here, you’ll list all the reasons the author provides to support their conclusion. Again, you’ll summarize in your own words or provide short quotations.

Section 3: Critique Questions—Here you’ll review the argument according to the categories given in the textbook. This part will be the most analytical part of the assignment and will require the most thinking and writing. You’re not trying to necessarily find what’s wrong with the essay, although you might find plenty that’s wrong. You’re just trying to analyze. I won’t list all the steps here as they are already listed on page 355. However, in order to do well on this section, you might have to skim the appropriate sections of *Thinking for Yourself*, some of which we haven’t read yet. You will find sections of the book that discuss how to analyze an argument’s structure, its word choice, any fallacies, possible assumptions the author might be making, and how to evaluate an essay’s handling of information.

Section 4: Final Summary Comparing the Two Arguments—This should be a single page in which you discuss which of the two viewpoints you found to be the most persuasive and why did you find it to be the most persuasive. You do not have to defend your own viewpoint here. In fact, you might find that the most persuasive of the two arguments is the one you disagree with. Your assignment in this section is to recognize which of the two arguments is a better structured and supported argument.

The syllabus says this will be a three-to-five page assignment, but I now believe it will be a four-to-six page assignment. The assignment must be double-spaced, using a 12-point font (I recommend Times New Roman). Use one-inch margins, the MLA header including your name, the class, my name, and the date. Don’t forget to include your last name and page numbers in the top right-hand corner of each page. Make sure you pay excruciating attention to grammar, spelling, syntax, and mechanics. I strongly encourage you to visit the Writing Center. Read your paper out loud at least to yourself, and maybe to a friend. You want to demonstrate with this assignment that you are aware of different viewpoints surrounding your topic, thus making you better prepared to do well on the Extended Research Position Essay.

Scoring for this assignment can be found on page 357 of *Thinking for Yourself*.

Due date: **Friday March 26th**

This assignment is worth 10% of your final grade.