

Thesis Workshop

Comparative Analysis Essay

*This activity is populated in Google docs so that students can see each other's comments and revise thesis statements together.

1. In your groups, diagram the what, how, and why of the below thesis statements. Highlight in three different colors: a) which two authors/texts are discussed; b) what rhetorical devices are going to be analyzed, how the authors are accomplishing their purpose; and c) the “so what” claim, or why this argument matters. [A = What, B = How, C = Why]
2. Revise the thesis statements to be more argumentative, writing the new thesis below the old one. Remember that you should be able to argue the opposite of what a thesis statement is claiming.
3. Round robin: now review the next group's revisions—is the thesis arguable? What do you think is working well? What do you think they could still work on?

Example:

In both of these pieces, Anzaldua and Baldwin use a number of textual elements to convey their messages, that language is important to one's identity. They do this by incorporating personal stories about the necessity of their language to them, as well as utilizing their native tongue throughout their work. By doing this, the authors are establishing credibility and a sense of validation with their audience—making expressing their overall ideas easier, and more effective.

Revised:

In both of these pieces, Anzaldua and Baldwin incorporate personal stories about the necessity of their language to them, as well as utilize their native dialects, in order to convey the fight required to preserve language and also identity.

Group 1

Thesis:

In Ian Bogost's “Welcome to Dataland” and An Xiao Mina's “Hashtagging the Streets,” both authors reflect on events that they've experienced and write about how technology can lead to action. This means that events that occur in “real life” can inspire people to take action online or in the cyber world. While Bogost and Mina both write about how technology can lead to action and they are both writing for the same website, they use very different evidence.

Revised:

Group 2

Thesis:

People have always been stereotyped in society. Angeline F. Price argues that society demands that working class whites fall into one of two stereotypes: either “good country folk” or “white trash.” Deborah Tannen similarly examines stereotypes in “There Is No Unmarked Woman,” when she says that women are judged by their appearances. While both authors talk about stereotypes, Price suggests that working class whites are “dichotomized,” but Tannen argues that women are “marked.”

Revised:

Group 3

Thesis:

Genevieve Guenther and Jonathan Franzen are both American writers who are sympathetic with the cause of preventing global climate change. Examples of this support of the cause lie in the Guenther’s magazine article “Who Is the We in ‘We are Causing Climate Change?’” and Franzen’s newspaper article “What If We Stopped Pretending?”. Although both signal similar calls for reducing climate change, they present different and yet similar methods of inciting readers to join their cause. In their articles both Guenther and Franzen use copious amounts of evidence to defend their theses on combating climate change, however Franzen displays an active voice that produces an emotional connection with his audience, while Guenther presents an analytical and fact oriented argument. This emotional nature of Franzen’s argument offers greater appeal to the undecided American audience than an analytical argument as presented by Guenther.

Revised:

Group 4

Thesis:

In Genevieve Guenther's “Who Is the We in ‘We are Causing Climate Change?’” & Jonathan Franzen’s “What If We Stopped Pretending?”, both articles articulate their feelings towards the topic of climate change. Climate change has always been a controversial and broad term that possesses different perspectives and outlooks from individuals. Whether someone is a scientist or nonscientist, humans will express their opinions on climate change to vocalize their views, much like Guenther and Franzen employed in their essays. Although both authors encompass the topic of climate change, their strategies and devices utilized to construct their essays are different. While Guenther employs an abundance of rhetorical questions and a hopeful tone when arguing there is no guilty collective or “we” in causing climate change, Franzen applies a more forthright and pessimistic tone

and rarely uses rhetorical questions as he argues that individuals need to erase their false hope and accept that climate change is not preventable.

Revised:

Group 5

Thesis:

The current climate change crisis and its impending future damage is an issue that both Franzen and Guenther bring attention to in their essays. Guenther, a climate change activist and author of, “Who is the We in ‘We are causing climate change?’” structures her essay around real-life data to support her claims about the severity of the climate change crisis and the urgency for her readers to take action towards climate restoration. While Franzen, author of “What if we stopped pretending?” centers his essay around the claim that we, as a collective group of individuals, should drop the expectation that the crisis is going to be solved, accept the damage that we have created, and work towards preventing any further destruction. Through a close analysis of Guenther’s “Who is the We in ‘We are causing climate change?’” and Franzen’s “What if we stopped pretending?” insight into the current climate change crisis and its inevitable future consequences are exposed through Guenther’s informational and Franzen’s biased, yet evidence supported tones

Revised: