

ATS2946 Critical Thinking

Assessment Task 5 – Analysis and evaluation of an extended argument

- This exercise will be marked out of 25 and is worth **20%** of the final grade.
- **600 word limit** across the whole assignment. Yes, including your standard form! This is a word **limit**. You don't necessarily need to write 600 words to score full marks. If you can clearly say all you need to say in fewer words you will not lose marks for doing so. Being concise is something to strive for!
- Please submit your work on MOODLE.

Read the argument on the following page and do the following:

1. Represent the argument in **standard form**, including an **argument map diagram**.
 - When extracting the argument, bear in mind that not everything in the text is necessarily part of the argument. Background information, side comments, rhetoric and so on should not be included.
 - You might need to **paraphrase** the premises or the conclusion in order to represent the argument as clearly and fully as possible. Premises/conclusions should be fully self-contained and make sense by themselves.
 - Represent the argument as it is stated. Your standard form **should not include unstated assumption** that are required for the argument to be successful but not explicitly stated by the author. While you may need to discuss these in your evaluation, they should be left out of your standard form.
2. Write an **evaluation** of the whole argument. (Approximately 500 words).
 - Clearly state what the authors conclusion is and whether or not you think that the author's argument provides a good reason for accepting it.
 - If you think the argument provides a good reason for accepting the conclusion, identify (at least) 2 main issues that might be considered weaknesses in the argument. Explain why someone might take these weaknesses to undermine the argument and why you think they are mistaken.
 - If you think the argument does not provide a good reason for accepting the conclusion, identify (at least) 2 main issues with the argument. Explain why they undermine the argument as it is stated and whether or not additional support/information could save the argument.
 - Use the following template as a guide to structuring your response:

Paragraph 1:

First sentence: Say what the conclusion of the argument is and whether the argument provides a good reason for accepting it.

Second sentence: Say how many major problems/issues you're going to discuss.

Body Paragraph(s): [repeat for each issue you discuss]

First sentence: Say what the problem is.

Next sentence(s): Explain why it is a problem for the argument.

Final sentence(s): Say what would need to be established for the argument to be successful. / Explain how, with minor adjustments this problem can be overcome.

Below is the argument that you need to represent and evaluate for this Assessment Task.

The argument:

We can't reform the police to deal with police violence. So, we should abolish the police entirely. Firstly, many previous attempts to reform the police have failed. So why on earth would we think reforms would work now? Secondly, police officers don't do what most people think they do – i.e. primarily dealing with violent crime. This is clear from the statistics: police spend the vast majority of their time doing things like responding to noise complaints, and issuing parking and traffic citations. And we can't simply change their job descriptions to focus on the worst of the worst criminals.

Significantly adapted from a New York Times opinion article, 2020.

Marking Rubric

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| 1. Represent the main argument (10 marks) | | |
| Main conclusion clearly and accurately stated. | /3 | |
| Main premises clearly and accurately stated. | /3 | |
| Sub-arguments clearly identified. | /2 | |
| Argument map diagram provided showing type of support main premises give to the conclusion (linked or independent). | /2 | |
| 2. Evaluate the argument (15 marks) | | |
| Clear statement as to whether or not you think the argument provides a compelling reason to accept the conclusion. | /2 | |
| Identification of (at least 2) MAIN problems/weaknesses. | /5 | |
| Discussion of the identified problems/weaknesses | /5 | |
| Clarity of writing. | /3 | |
| Total | /25 | |