

Interacting with Texts

Essay Guidelines

This assignment requires you to respond to a single written text drawing on those methods (reflection, conversation, agree/disagree etc.) discussed in class. You will be writing for an academic audience—best imagined, perhaps, as your professors and other college-educated people—who have certain expectations about what makes a “reasonable” response to a written text.

You are expected to write a balanced essay which fairly represents and discusses the ideas put forward in the essay, while offering your own response to those ideas. Rather than a pure summary of the essay or a pure reaction based only on your opinions and experiences, you are aiming for more of a dialogue between you and the author.

That said, however, you will also need to choose a focus for your own response that may not (and probably should not) “cover” every point the author makes. Let your own interests, ideas, experiences, and reactions be the guides for what positions or ideas in the essay you choose to respond to.

Essay Length: 3 pages

You may respond to any one of the following texts:

Letter from Birmingham Jail, MLK

Ballot or Bullet, Malcolm X

Notes on Grief, Chimamanda Adichie

Walking While Black, Garnette Cadogan