COMM 171 Pre-Course Writing Sample

### **Assignment Context**

Before you write the assignment, let's think for a moment about why these tasks (summary, and response) are worthwhile. With them, you practice some key writing and communications skills. Here are the skills, and some of the ways they help you communicate in different contexts:

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| **Context** | |
| **Skill** | **Application** |
| Summarizing | * Understand material better * Explain/teach material to others * Incorporate evidence into a paper |
| Responding | * Build on others' ideas * Critically examine texts and ideas * Create and share your original ideas |

### Assignment Instructions

This assignment has two parts:

**Part A: Summarize the reading in 4-5 sentences. Make sure you remain neutral and not share your opinion on the topic. Stay true to the author's intended meaning.**

**PART B:**  Respond to the article by analyzing the effectiveness of the argument in 1-2 paragraphs.  **Do not write about your opinion on the topic;** rather, **critically evaluate** the information and sources that the author has used to validate their points of view. Did the author do a good job convincing the reader about the main point?

**Here some questions to think about while you write your response:**

1. Does the author sound trustworthy? Why? Or why not?

2. Is the author's argument effective/meaningful/convincing? Why? Or why not?

3. How did the author make their argument effective? Which strategies/techniques/styles/rhetorical appeals did they use to convince their readers? Are they valid and reliable?

4. Does the author sound biased? Why? Or why not?

**Don't think of food banks as a Band-Aid.**

*By Alex Boyd.ADAPTED FOR COMM 171 published for the CBC Opinion on January 15th 2023*

It's that time of year again. The Christmas carols are long finished, the malls and stores are quiet, and for the first time in weeks, your local food bank isn't everywhere you look.

After the hustle and bustle of the holidays, life is returning to normal. But throughout December, you couldn't turn sideways without hearing about turkey drives, or gifts for kids, or other food bank endeavours. And inevitably, this rise in publicity and recognition triggered a wave of comments, letters and thoughts. "Food banks are part of the problem," "food banks don't address the issue," and my personal favourite, "food banks are a Band-Aid." To an extent, I get it.

Being the executive director of Greener Village, the largest food bank in New Brunswick, has given me valuable insight into how food banks have evolved. I realize the beginnings — and how the need for food banks has only increased over the last 40 years. In fact, in 2022 food banks saw the highest level of need ever, with 23,000 visits in March in New Brunswick alone.

Some may say that this proves food banks are an inefficient model and should be scrapped since they don't help solve food insecurity. Those same opinions typically throw out several more concerns: "Food banks don't provide good food," we're told. Or that food banks cause shame, are judgmental or don't pay attention to the cultural needs of people.

I had the privilege of attending a conference about food systems several weeks ago. It was wonderful to hear about all the great initiatives throughout the Atlantic region to promote local food access, affordability and fairness.It was great to hear the presenters from academia, business, agriculture and food charities talk about the need for local food production, processing and procurement.

One of the opinions expressed at the conference framed food charity as a Band-Aid. It took the air out of the room for a minute for me, as I realized that there are many people (including people at a food systems conference) in our communities who don't have an accurate understanding of how organizations like Greener Village actually function.

We're not fixing small scrapes on a knee.

So let me be very clear. Food banks are*not* a Band-Aid. A Band-Aid is a little strip of plastic that you put on a small wound. It's something that can be used for minor cuts and maybe on the odd scrape. Food banks are not dealing with something so trivial. Food banks are dealing with a serious and systemic issue.So, the picture I'd like to put in your mind when you think about the rising prevalence of hunger in our communities is that of a person who just lost a limb.

Without immediate intervention, they are at risk of bleeding to death. We know that stemming the bleeding will not put this person back to perfect health, but the bleeding needs to stop if life is to be preserved.

Let me tell you about some of the feedback we receive from our clients. It often feels overwhelming to read a phrase like this: "the food bank saved our lives." My mind used to immediately discount that kind of thing. After all, we aren't firefighters, search and rescue, or health-care professionals. But the more feedback we receive, the more we hear that sentiment, over and over again. It's time that we as food bankers take our role seriously — and talk about it with our communities.

Here's what you need to know. Your local food bank is saving lives.

The challenges are systemic**.**But the work isn't completed. We know that hunger is rising and that there are systemic challenges from food supply, waste, cost, availability and perhaps most importantly adequate awareness and education. That's all before we even consider the challenge of income inequality, inflation and housing.

These most recent factors caused a 41 per cent increase in Greener Village client demand in 2022 alone.All of these things need to be addressed if we are truly going to eliminate food insecurity. It is going to take a robust group of leaders who can begin to tackle all these issues at a policy level.

We need long-term solutions that factor in growing demand, increase in population and climate change. Food banks play a critical role in filling the gaps. That's why places like Greener Village (and there are many) have "learning kitchens," which focus on food education.

It's why 60 per cent of what we spend on food goes to local and fresh food, and our hampers mirror this percentage in fresh and frozen food given to clients. Assumptions that food banks distribute unhealthy food are not true. It's why we create many different hampers for people with different dietary, health and cultural needs.

It's why we work to divert edible foods from landfills and to make sure that we can get them to the people who need them most. So while we wait for good, sustainable systemic solutions to the challenges of hunger and food insecurity, food banks will continue to be here — every month of the year. We will continue to sustain lives, fill gaps and innovate to address a growing problem. And, we will be here for those times when life throws you a curveball that you didn't expect.