

**Here are two sample reading responses  
to the *Groundhog Day* assignments. Each earned a score of “4.”**

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**Sample response 1**

██████████ [author’s name redacted]

Groundhog Day

528 words

The film *Groundhog Day* features Phil the weatherman reliving the same day repeatedly until he figures out how to live in the present moment rather than the future. The philosophy in the film is compared to Fredrick Nietzsche’s idea of how to live one’s life. Nietzsche proposed that the Christian view caused negative attitudes towards present circumstances because of the promise of an afterlife. In theory, this would place a greater value on the future rather than the present. Nietzsche emphasized a life geared towards the individual that may steer away from cultural norms, but ultimately led to happiness because the current life is the only one.

Plato’s *Republic*, Book II: The Ring of Gyges evaluated the importance of justice. In the book, Glaucon theorized that justice is only obtained by the force of law. In other words, if given the opportunity to live without consequences, then people would live unjustly. The example given is the shepherd who found a ring that gives him the power of invisibility. He then goes on to seduce the queen of his land and take over the kingdom. Therefore, Glaucon used this story as a confirmation that a just man is only just when it is enforced by a greater authority.

I agree with Nietzsche’s idea that the ideal way to live is as though there is no afterlife. If there is no afterlife, then each day will have greater value. It also emphasizes the present day rather than a deadline or the future. To live this way then allows an individual to grow freely and choose how to perfect themselves. Nietzsche’s theory pushes people to invent who they are in the time that they are given, rather than to fuss about what life will be like in five years. However, to get the most out of this type of life it will be important to live justly, or in a way that helps others. For example, an individual could volunteer or make an effort to benefit society in their own personal way. It would give each day a greater amount of purpose and would create a connection between that person and the people around them. Therefore, although there may be an afterlife, it is ideal to set the possibility aside to be present in the moment and to be able to invent the person an individual wants to be without the influence of others.

If an individual were able to be invisible like the in scenario with the shepherd, then it would be hard to live justly regardless if the individual is just or unjust. The ability to be invisible will take away the possibility of consequences, and therefore it would be tempting to break laws and norms. For example, an individual could commit theft and murder with no fear of the aftermath. This would create the mindset of superiority and would lead to future unjust acts regardless of the personality of the individual. Although this may be the truth of human nature, laws and norms keep justice as an important virtue. Thus, the fear of being unjust and the consequences of unjust actions would be enough to deter this behavior.

**Comment [j1]:** The assignment says to summarize each reading if there are multiple readings. In the first two paragraphs, this response briefly and accurately summarized each of the assigned readings.

**Comment [j2]:** The assignment says to critically reflect on at least one of the readings. This response reflects on both. Also, rather than just stating her opinion, the author *explains* her view and *gives reasons* for it. This is clearest in the last paragraph, where she argues that invisibility gives impunity, which gives one a feeling of superiority which makes it “hard to live justly.”

## Sample response 2

[author's name redacted]

“Groundhog Day”

538 words

“Groundhog Day” is a film about a weatherman named Phil who becomes cursed by being forced to live one of his least favorite days over and over again. Phil’s whole life revolves around planning for a better future, so only when he comes to love and accept his present life will he be released from the curse. This concept of living a single day on repeat coincides with Friedrich Nietzsche’s idea called eternal return. Eternal return is the idea that instead of going to heaven or hell after you die, you just keep living the same life over and over again. Nietzsche believed this idea greatly contrasted against Christianity, which was widely practiced among those who had tough lives since it brought hope for a perfect life after death. This is what Nietzsche did not agree with when it came to Christianity since he thought life was generally good and we should embrace the present, while Christianity encourages the idea of death as being an escape from the hardness of life. Another interesting thing about this film is that Phil is given the option to do whatever he wants since each new day begins just as the day before, meaning that there will be no real consequences to his actions.

This idea is also presented in Plato’s “*Republic*, Book II: The Ring of Gyges.” In this excerpt, Socrates and Glaucon discuss the idea of the just and the unjust. Glaucon begins telling the story of the ring of Gyges and the power it had to make anyone who wore it invisible. While wearing the ring, a person could do anything they wanted, and most of the time those actions were unjust. His argument was that no person would be able to resist temptations enough to remain just with that type of power. This is like the power Phil has been given since he is able to do whatever he wants one day without anyone remembering what he did the day after.

I disagree with Nietzsche’s claim that practicing Christianity “amounts to living in accordance with undemanding negative standards set by other people”. The lifestyle that Christians are called to live is extremely demanding. The whole idea behind it is to love God first, others second, and then yourself last. Being selfless is extremely difficult and full of demands that are hard to fulfill. The author of this chapter then goes on to discuss the idea of lent and how those who practice it “moan about the difficulty [they] have imposed upon [themselves, even though] there is no real sacrifice”, which I partly do agree with. Christianity itself is very demanding, but the people who practice it turn it into something that doesn’t require much effort because these people, like all people, are imperfect. The human nature can’t stand to fully take on something that is perfect like the selflessness of Christianity. However, I do agree with Nietzsche when he talks about how we should embrace the life we have been given. Life presents us with opportunities and challenges that help us grow, and even though life can be hard at times that does not mean that we should wait patiently for death to get us out of it.

**Comment [j3]:** This response also summarizes both readings. Because these summaries are a bit longer, they are more detailed.

**Comment [j4]:** The author critically reflected on one of the readings. The critical response is shorter than the summaries, but it is still substantial (over 200 words) and, more importantly, it gives a very clear set of reasons for why the author disagrees with Nietzsche in some ways, but not about everything.