Reaction or response papers are usually requested by teachers so that you'll consider carefully what you think or feel about something you've read. The following guidelines are intended to be used for reacting to a reading although they could easily be used for reactions to films too. Read whatever you've been asked to respond to, and while reading, think about the following questions.

How do you feel about what you are reading?

What do you agree or disagree with?

Can you identify with the situation?

What would be the best way to evaluate the story?

Keeping your responses to these questions in mind, follow the following prewriting steps.
Prewriting for Your Reaction Paper

The following statements could be used in a reaction/response paper. Complete as many statements as possible, from the list below, about what you just read.

My Reaction to What I Just Read Is That . . .

I think that

I see that

I feel that

It seems that

In my opinion,

Because

A good quote is

In addition,

For example,

Moreover,
However,

Consequently,

Finally,

In conclusion,

What you've done in completing these statements is written a very rough reaction/response paper. Now it needs to be organized. Move ahead to the next section.

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Organizing Your Reaction Paper

A reaction/response paper has an introduction, a body, and a conclusion.

The introduction should contain all the basic information in one or two paragraphs.

Sentence 1: This sentence should give the title, author, and publication you read.
Sentence 2, 3, and sometimes 4:

These sentences give a brief summary of what you read (nutshell)

Sentence 5: This sentence is your thesis statement. You agree, disagree, identify, or evaluate.

Your introduction should include a concise, one sentence, focused thesis. This is the focused statement of your reaction/response. More information on thesis statements is available.

The body should contain paragraphs that provide support for your thesis. Each paragraph should contain one idea. Topic sentences should support the thesis, and the final sentence of each paragraph should lead into the next paragraph.

Topic Sentence

detail -- example -- quotation -- detail -- example -- quotation -- detail -- example -- quotation -- detail -- example -- quotation

Summary Sentence
You can structure your paragraphs in two ways:

Author
You

OR

Author
in contrast to
You

The conclusion can be a restatement of what you said in your paper. It also be a comment which focuses your overall reaction. Finally, it can be a prediction of the effects of what you're reacting to. Note: your conclusion should include no new information.

More information on strategies for writing conclusions is available.
Summary

In summary, this handout has covered prewriting and organizing strategies for reaction/response papers.

Prewriting

Read the article and jot down ideas.

How do you feel about what was said?

Do you agree or disagree with the author?

Have you had any applicable experience?

Have you read or heard anything that applies to this what the writer said in the article or book?

Does the evidence in the article support the statements the writer made?

Organizing

Write the thesis statement first.

Decide on the key points that will focus your ideas. These will be your topic sentences.
Develop your ideas by adding examples, quotations, and details to your paragraphs.

Make sure the last sentence of each paragraph leads into the next paragraph.

Check your thesis and make sure the topic sentence of each paragraph supports it.

Return to the Write Place Catalogue

For questions and suggestions, please e-mail us at leolink@stcloudstate.edu.