



Non-Fiction

Critical Reading Responses

Each response should be **400 words**, typed, in MLA style.

While these responses are not essays, you should respond critically to the prompt in a few **developed, concise paragraphs**. Remember that paragraphs contain topic sentences, explanations of the topic, and examples to support explanations. Each response should contain at **least two examples** from the text that are **properly cited** in the text using **MLA form**.

1. **Context** / Due: _____

What is the context of the topic examined in your non-fiction book? Consider the cultural significance of topic and theorize what you think the author's impetus (incentive or motivation) for writing it may be. **Tips:** Look at the copyright date of the book. Think about what was happening in the culture at that time. Learn a little about the author's background.

2. **Author Background** / Due: _____

What can you discuss about the author that would help to understand the book? Consider the author's societal influences, upbringing, education, experiences, political leanings, etc. **Tips:** Once you learn about the author's background make assertions (claims) about how these influences appear in the writing of the book. Make connections between the author and what is written in terms of topic and author stance (viewpoint).

3. **Structure** / Due: _____

What is the particular structure of your text? What specifically makes it effective? **Tips:** For this prompt you are looking at why the book works in a particular form (e.g., memoir, manual, biography, essay). Examine the diction (word choice), chapters, or sections of the writing as well as the author's writing devices. Consider how reading a non-fiction text feels different from reading a fiction text.

4. **Thesis** / Due: _____

What is the thesis of the text? How would you describe the writer's purpose? **Tips:** Get some distance from the book and think about it as a whole. Start by forming a single sentence that states the main idea of the text. Next, figure out how the author wove this message, or built a case, throughout the book to achieve a grand (or controlling) thesis.