

WHAT IS A STUDENT OPINION PIECE (SOP)? 4th YEAR

Your goal in writing a SOP is to provide some form of critical analysis of the article/chapter/novel/etc. you have read. THE GOAL IS NOT TO WRITE A DIRECT SUMMARY OF THE PIECE. You may begin your SOP with a brief summary of the article's main point but that should be no longer than 1-2 sentences and should immediately be followed by a more specialized and focused sentence that directs the reader to what your SOP will be discussing.

Let's be clear, since the assignment is only 1 page long, you cannot make every single point you want to talk about. Instead, as you read the articles/chapters/ etc. - take notes! And after completing the reading select ONE TO TWO point(s) and speak directly to them.

As you write, be direct, be clear, and get to the point. What do you want to say? What did you find interesting, upsetting, thought provoking, or amusing from the reading? Say exactly what it is about the reading that engaged you and if you can, provide a direct reference by including a direct quote or an indirect quote and in-text citation.

Strong postings will be critical and analytical. Critical analysis is not about arguing that something is wrong or being critical in tone. Instead it is about practising critical thought by doing more than just answering "what" questions (such as what happened, what is the article about, what are its key points, etc.). Critical analysis seeks to answer "how" and "why" questions that explain the "what" of the article.

Your own opinion is welcome in this piece. You can write using the first person pronoun "I." Opinion is best used when accompanied by an example of a personal experience that demonstrates your point and when the tone is self-reflexive and not condescending or "preachy." Remember, you are drawing on your life experience here to enhance your argument or point- NOT- making a judgement call that supports your individual morals, ethics, or religious values.

Don't forget to make connections! Making connections between readings, life experiences, and main course themes is how you get the best grades!

Every writer must develop their own voice and therefore there is more than one way to write a SOP that is critical, analytical, and insightful. However, here is an example of a structure you may consider using to write a one page answer that would include all of the necessary components of a good SOP. For fourth year SOPs, what follows the first paragraph outlines in detail below should then be a paragraph that explicitly connects the reading and your 1st paragraph to CHILDREN, Children's Studies, and your experiences up until this point in the Children's Studies Program (this includes making connections to other texts you've read in the program to date).

EXAMPLE

TOPIC (1-2 sentences):

- This article is about...
- The author's main argument is...
- One thing I found very interesting about this article was...
- A quote from the article

OPINION (1-2 sentences):

- In my opinion...
- From my own experience...
- In my own life...

CONNECTION (1-2 sentences):

- This connects back to the course's main argument...
- We see these same ideas play out in the *who benefits* questions in the following ways...

Please note that these are just examples of sentence starters. Please use your own language to make similar points. Do not simply repeat these phrases.