

## Humanities 12 - Explaining a Concept

Your paper must fulfill the following requirements:

- Be 6-10 double-spaced pages
- follow the guidelines of one of the specific guidelines I've listed below
- Use at least three different pieces of evidence from readings, class activities, and films that we go over in class. Honors students must integrate their chosen film, *The Grand Inquisitor*, or *Angels in America* into their argument in some way. Refer to the List of Topics We've Studied posted on my DP under Student Resources to choose these three pieces of evidence
- Use proper MLA in-text citations and include a works-cited page. A handout explaining MLA citation is in your writing folder

### Explaining a Concept - Specific Guidelines

In this format, you will make something abstract understandable beyond the level of common knowledge. I will evaluate the following four features to arrive at a final grade.

- **A focused explanation** – A concept can be a value, a theory, an idea, a condition, or a specialized or technical term. Concepts that are broad require choosing a specific aspect of a concept that is of interest to you, such as the historical or cultural context of an idea. Narrow concepts gain importance by being connected to similar ideas from other cultures or times in history. Reference at least three topics that we've covered in our class thus far.
- **Appropriate explanatory strategies** - Explanatory strategies can include defining key terms, classifying and grouping together related material, comparing and contrasting, narrating explanatory stories or anecdotes, describing appropriate causes and effects. You can also illustrate with examples, statistics, or facts.
- **Readable plan** – You must have a clear thesis and forecasting statement in your introduction. Paragraphs should have topic sentences. The best papers will use repeated words or phrases to focus the reader and include strong transitional phrases to move the reader from one section of the essay to the next.

**Note that I do not assign point totals or percentages to these features above.** An essay that is extremely strong on one feature can make up for an area that requires more refinement. Match these requirements with the general essay standards posted on my DP to understand how I will evaluate your essay.

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Here is the checklist I will use to evaluate each feature

Feature	Comments
A Focused Explanation	For broad concepts, you've narrowed your focus to one aspect of the idea or subject matter For narrow concepts, you've added cultural and historical comparisons or contrasts
Appropriate explanatory strategies	Looking for some of these specific strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• defining key terms</li> <li>• classifying different categories</li> <li>• comparing &amp; contrasting</li> <li>• narrating anecdotes</li> <li>• narrating processes</li> <li>• reporting on cause and effect</li> <li>• providing examples</li> </ul>
A Readable Plan	Thesis and forecasting statement Topic sentences Labels positions consistently Repeats key words to identify agreement and disagreement Uses transitional words and phrases - "For example," "as well as," "Even though." The beginning pulls readers into the subject matter.
Mechanics	No comma splices or sentence fragments Correct use of punctuation Writes primarily in active voice, minimizing passive voice Errors do not significantly hinder comprehension

### A Note on Topics

Consider the following when choosing a concept to explain:

- Write about what you find original and exciting about your subject
- Think carefully about the particular message or impression you want readers to take away BEFORE you start writing your essay.
- Decide upon a tone for your essay that supports your perspective
- Include examples

Due: End of class on Monday, November 2nd