

formal paper i: summarizing and responding to an argument

In this first formal paper you will enter into a discussion with Robert Crease regarding his claim that there is beauty in experiments. You will frame your essay as a response to Crease's essays in *The Prism and the Pendulum*. Aim for a paper of 800–1000 words, double-spaced with a standard 12-point font. Set your margins at one inch all around. Include a title at the beginning of your paper and place the word count at the bottom of your paper. In Word you can find the word count using Tools: Word Count... from the menu bar.

The first part of your paper will summarize what Crease means when he describes an experiment as beautiful. You should identify and explain his criteria for beauty by drawing on his introductory essay (The Moment Of Transition.) and his concluding essay (Can Science Still Be Beautiful?), and use at least one, but preferably two or three of the ten experiments to illustrate your summary. If you wish, you can make use of the interludes that follow these experiments.

After you summarize Crease's argument, you must respond to it. You can do this in one of three ways: you can agree with him, you can disagree with him, or you can both agree and disagree with him.

- If you agree with Crease that an experiment can be beautiful, then you must both explain why **and** add something new to the conversation by offering and supporting at least one additional point that he did not make in his analysis (such as, for example, introducing a different way to see beauty in a scientific experiment).
- If you disagree with Crease and believe that an experiment cannot evince beauty as one of its attributes, then you must identify where you find fault with his argument and provide a suitable counter-argument to his analysis.
- If you both agree and disagree with Crease, then you must identify that part of his argument with which you agree and explain why, and then identify where you disagree with him and provide a suitable counter-argument to his analysis.

**Due Date.** The first draft of your paper is due by 4:00 pm on Friday, September 20<sup>th</sup>; this is a firm deadline. Please submit it by placing it in our shared folder using "yourlastname\_fpi\_draft" as the filename. We will review the draft of your paper at an individual conference beginning on Monday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>. The final draft of your paper is due by the end of the day on Sunday, September 29<sup>th</sup>. Please submit your final paper by placing it in our shared folder using "yourlastname\_fpi\_final" as the filename." Feel free to consultate with me regarding your paper at any time.

**Quoting and Citing the Text.** You will need to draw on Crease's essays both to summarize his claims and to respond to them. You may do so by summarizing a point that Crease makes using your own words, by including an in-line quote that uses a small portion of his text, or by block quoting a longer portion of his text and off-setting it from your text. In all three cases, you need to include an appropriate citation. There are many styles for citing the work of others, which vary from discipline-to-discipline. Here we will use the style adopted by Crease as shown by these examples from his second chapter, "The Legend of the Leaning Tower":

- page 35, top of page, citation number 13 is an example where Crease summarizes an idea presented by another author without using any direct quotes
- page 31, first full paragraph, citation number 9 is an example where Crease uses an in-line quote from another source

- page 30, top of page, citation number 8 is an example where Crease uses a lengthy quote from another source, which he sets off by itself

**Suggestions.** Here are some suggestions to keep in mind as you develop your ideas and begin writing your paper.

- Begin by making a list that summarizes what you see as Crease's definition of beauty and then identify some examples you can use to illustrate his definition.
- Decide on your position: Do you agree with Crease? Disagree? Both agree and disagree? If you do agree, how can you add something new to his position? If you disagree, what is the key issue(s) on which you disagree?
- Map out the general structure of your essay before you begin writing; summarize first and then respond.
- Be sure your essay has a clear transition between your summary of Crease's argument and your response to his argument.
- Pay attention to sentence structure, paragraph development, and word choice; good, clean writing is essential. Remember that you are writing for your reader, not for yourself. Revisit Clark's writing tools for guidance. Take note, in particular, of tool 22—climb up and down the ladder of abstraction—where Clark reminds us to identify big ideas in clear language (the top of ladder) and to illustrate them with compelling examples (the bottom of the ladder).