

Commentary

A common scenario: As a college student, you are given a reading assignment for a class. You go home, trudge through the reading, and close your book, thankful that assignment is finally done. When you get to class the next day, the professor asks you what you thought about the text, and you draw a blank. You didn't think about what you read, you just completed the reading assignment. The beauty of a commentary is that we are awarded this contemplation time and are able to give thoughtful responses, rather than simple gut reactions to what we have read.

A Commentary:	A commentary is not:
RESPONDS to an issue	NOT a spur of the moment REACTION
Offers your thoughts on a text	NOT a summary of a text
Is based on reason and intelligence	NOT a feeling-oriented: "I liked, or didn't like, it because..."
Finds faults with and/or praises a text and provides explanation	NOT simply agreeing or disagreeing with the text and leaving it at that
May contain personal knowledge	Can NOT contain personal experience

Writing Your Commentary

Do's	Don'ts
<p>Present your own ideas, in your own words.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Your commentary is exactly that... YOUR comments and thoughts. 	<p>DON'T dimply summarize the text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - That only tells what the author said, not what you think.
<p>Provide a context for your readers by giving a brief summary of the test/issue you are commenting on.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Include title, author, and main idea. - Give the author credit for her ideas using proper citation. - Summarize only those parts of the text you are commenting on. 	<p>DON'T assume that your reader knows the issue and the background information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide readers with enough information, or your commentary will not make sense to them.
<p>Make sure you understand the text/issue you are commenting on.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You cannot intelligently respond to a writer's ideas if you do not fully understand what they are. 	<p>DON'T just try to get the assignment done by "winging it".</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ask for help if you don't understand the author's message. Otherwise, you won't be able to comment on the author's content.
<p>Be thorough, yet selective.</p>	<p>DON'T be vague.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Provide full explanations that use appropriate supporting details.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Explore and explain all the angles of the issue you are commenting on.
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