## Reading Report Assignment

Reading college-level texts is difficult. Luckily, reading comprehension can improve with guided practice! The purpose of this assignment to help you improve your reading comprehension skills, identify the main ideas/issues in a text, and to verify you read the assigned text.

**Suggested Pre-Reading Strategies:**

I strongly encourage you to take 5-10 minutes to scan the whole text before you read it so that you go into the reading experience with a general sense of what the text is going to argue, who its audience is, and how it relates to your background knowledge. Pre-reading gives you a sense of where you’re going before you read the text, so you’ll be better able to understand the text and begin to respond critically to the conversation that it engages.

Once you complete the step above, you’re encouraged to engage in a conversation with the text as you read. This includes, but is not limited to: highlighting or noting important points and concepts in the margins, writing questions or comments in the margins, and underlining passages you feel are significant. Annotating a text often enhances comprehension because it provides students with a tool to visibly and permanently record, connect, and analyze key ideas in text. Please review the active reading guides in our course packet (starting on page 20) to further guide you.

**Reading Report Steps to Complete:**

Once you are done performing a close reading, please create a READING REPORT by writing the following information for each article:

1. **SUMMARY:** Write down a 1-2 paragraph summary of the article. Keep in mind that a summary should provide a condensed description of the article and be written in your own words. Research shows that you will understand a text better and gain better insight when you rephrase and summarize the text in your own words. This isn’t busy work—it will truly help you gain a better understanding of the author’s *meaning*. For more information on how to write a summary, see “How to Write a Summary” on page 195 in our course packet.
2. **TOP 3-5 CLAIMS/KEY POINTS:** Next, list (and briefly explain and/or delineate on) the top 3-5 claims or key points you believe the author is making in this article. In general, what are the top 3-5 claims or key point the author makes to prove, support, or explain his or her main argument? Make sure you list and explain each claim or key point in as much detail as necessary.
3. **YOUR THOUGHTS/ANALYSIS/RESPONSE:** React in your own words here. Is the author’s claims legitimate? Are there any discrepancies or untruths in the piece? Are there any parts of the article that are especially convincing, or that merit further discussion? Take time to write a paragraph or two analyzing the author’s claims. Write freely and openly in a casual style.

This is also where you respond to the author with your own ideas. When writing, you should consider yourself in conversation with the author. Through you can’t respond directly to him or her, you can respond on your own terms and on your own pace. How do you feel about his or her ideas? Do you agree or disagree? Why? Go into detail about how the article made you feel. Articulate any insights gained from the writing, or any particularly poignant spots. Again, write freely and openly in a casual style.

If we have read multiple articles on a topic, you may also consider reflecting on how this article supports, further complicates, and or/ challenges your understanding of the paper topic we will eventually write a paper on. Where are you seeing connections, agreements, disagreements, and/or alternate viewpoints between this article and others we read together as a class? This is your chance to demonstrate your level of engagement with the text and what you are learning about the paper topic.

After you have gotten your initial and rough ideas out onto paper, you can incorporate them into a formal reading report: simply clean everything up logically and grammatically and type it up. Label each section to help organize your thoughts better and make it easier for your reader to locate information as well.

Students often pull many ideas verbatim from these critiques to be used as development for their essays. If you take these critiques seriously, much of the information can be used as your personal insight and analysis, a valuable component in developing essays.

**\*SAMPLE READING REPORT\***

Jane Doe

Professor Lopez

English 102

Date

**Reading Report #1**

**TEXT ASSIGNED:** “Terminating the Postmodern: Masculinity and Pomophobia” by Thomas Byers.

**SUMMARY:** Byers argues that the human-based T-101 Terminator (Arnold Schwarzenegger) represents a production-based industrial society, like the America of old, while the T-1000 (Robert Patrick) liquid model represents the modern, or in this case post-modern, information-based consumption society of the U.S. today. He describes how the different mechanical aspects of the T-101 represent an industry based society. He also relates the liquidity and constant state of change of the T-1000 to the 1990’s financial environment in the United States.

**CLAIMS/KEY POINTS:**

* The author argues that Sarah is an inadequate mother. He states, rather convincingly, that Sarah Connors ―overtly masculine‖ portrayal serves as an attack on single moms, and working women. Byers compares the relationship of Sarah and the Terminator to that of a child who cannot quite walk in his father’s footsteps. This is highlighted by a recounting of Sarah’s voice over in the film (quoted in the article) stating that the Terminator himself was actually the perfect father for John; the perfect father that Sarah could never be nor find for John.
* The author also argues that Sarah is an inadequate fighter. Byers argues that Sarah is a maculinized figure who’s approach to saving the world in marginalized without the aid of the masculine prototype, the T-101. As stated above, Byers compares the relationship of Sarah and the Terminator to that of a child who cannot quite walk in his father’s footsteps. To highlight this fact, Byers lists several key scenes in which Sarah fails to equal the Terminator’s efficiency in protection and violence. Amongst things mentioned was Sarah being one round of ammunition short of finishing off the T-1000 only to have Arnold save the day with a bigger better gun.
* Finally, the author asks the questions: Is feminism in the future as dead? Byers argues that “the film lets us know that feminist rage has no positive part to play in the shaping of the future.” Byers breaks down the scene in which Sarah ultimately fails to kill Miles Dyson, the creator of the computer chip that caused the plot’s Armageddon. He describes how Sarah’s steely resolve at the beginning ends up in hysteric tears by the end of the scene. Her inefficiency/inadequacy is not only seen as weakness for her, but all feminists as well.

**MY THOUGHTS/ANALYSIS/REFLECTION:** I have had my fair share of experience when it comes to analyzing women in literature and in film. My first genuine experience of such critique came upon the literary works of Flaubert including, Madame Bovary, Nana, and Zola. In his works, the message was relatively the same: women are destined for lives of struggle, sadness, and weakness. Madame Bovary uniquely emphasizes such dreary outlooks upon women from her own interactions and dialogue unlike the other two novels, which implicate wealth as a key factor in such fate. Instead, Madame Bovary despises and detests women so much so that she faints upon learning that she has had a daughter, and not a son. It is her severe emotionality and dire state of cognitive thought process that ultimately brings her to suicide using arsenic. Not exactly the most romantic of sentiments for such a quintessential part of French culture, non?

Reading this article was interesting for me because, although the Sarah Connor character is not overtly feminine, many of the same questions that were raised about Flaubert’s works were raised in this film as well. Here too, Byers seems to argue that Sarah is destined to live a life of sorrow. Why is that? I was further fascinated by the fact that it would appear that her status as mother only compounded her sorrows. Here, Sarah’s status as mother and protector for her young son seems to serve as an albatross around her shoulder, denying her any chance at finding love, having a normal home life, or being able to simple pursue her dreams and goals (rather than her son’s). As a fan of *Terminator 2*, I always thought that Sarah Connor was a badass but this article made me look twice at the character and see that maybe the character wasn’t as positive or progressive as I initially thought. All in all, this article was insightful and made me rethink the way I used to view female heroines in action movies.

***\*\*See pages 26-27 in our course packet for an alternate reading report sample. Note that this example doesn’t include a “Key Points/Claims” section which is why I opted to post the sample above instead.\*\****