Pop Culture Paragraphs (PCP)

<u>What</u>

For days marked "PCP #" on the syllabus, write **<u>ONE</u>** well-developed paragraph that responds to the prompt proposed for the reading for that day. **Occasionally an Intro/Outline or assignment related to a paper will replace the typical PCP format. Instructions will be included in the specific PCP assignment.** There 11 PCPS; however, some assignments will follow the general PCP structure but there are also special assignments that aid you in developing larger papers for class. If the PCP assignment deviates from the typical format, it is noted in the assignment for that PCP. **Overall, you should NOT simply report on what you read or give your emotional response to the reading (like whether or not you liked the reading). Instead, make a substantive argument or comment about the assigned reading.** Think critically and analytically. Your overall PCP grade is worth 20% of your final grade.

<u>Why</u>

Paragraphs allow you to develop ideas for class discussion, to practice analyzing texts closely, and to develop coherent paragraph structure. I will provide feedback on paragraph structure and analysis that you can apply to your later papers.

<u>How</u>

To PASS the PCP, you MUST do all of the following items on the checklist below for each PCP:
☐ Attach the PCP Feedback Form to the front
☐ Your paragraph should be about **ONE PAGE** in length, double spaced.
☐ Font: 12 pt, Times New Roman
☐ Margins: 1" top, bottom, and sides
☐ If you run onto a second page, then **number and staple your pages**.
☐ Follow proper **paragraph structure** as outlined below.
☐ Use **parenthetical page citations** for all quotations or paraphrased information (see MLA in-text citations in *Easy Writer*).
☐ **Format** Movie, TV show, and book titles in italics and article titles in quotations.
☐ Include a Works Cited list at the end of the paragraph for any cited text (including the article, television show, movie, book, etc…).

<u>Paragraph Structure</u>
1. **Thesis** sentence or main idea of paragraph.
2. **Explanation** and elaboration of thesis idea/main point.
3. **Quotation/Example** from text (i.e. movie, TV show) that supports and illustrates main point.
4. **Interpretation** of quote or example, explanation of how it illustrates your point.
5. **Conclusion** of main idea, implications of your argument.

<u>Paragraph Principles</u>
- **Length**: Paragraphs should range from half a page to a page.
- **Thesis**: Begin with your analytical idea, not with plot summary or feelings.
- **Unity**: Make sure all ideas and sentences relate to the thesis topic.
- **Coherence**: Make sentences flow logically and smoothly into one another.
- **Quotation/Example**: Every paragraph must include a quotation or example from the text being analyzed.

<u>Assessment</u>

- **A**: This paragraph is well-developed, original, and succeeds in mastering the technical goals for the assignment.
- **B**: This paragraph has been written with considerable care and attention. It is developed and detailed. Aspects of the technical goals still need work and/or ideas need development.
- **C**: This paragraph is acceptable. The student needs to make more effort to master the technical goals and/or develop a thoughtful and focused analysis of the text.
- **D**: Student has made some effort to achieve the assignment goals, but basic fundamentals of writing and analysis need improvement.
- **F**: This paragraph does not achieve the assignment's technical goals and/or it does not present a focused or thoughtful analysis of the text. Or, it does not meet the minimum requirements of the assignment. It receives no credit.

Typical PCP Assignment Structure

For each PCP (unless otherwise noted), a reading is listed that can be accessed via either one of the databases on the library website or on E-campus. Your PCPs that respond to readings should NOT summarize the article or the main argument. First, you should read the article and make sure that you understand the overall argument of the piece. Once you understand the premise of the argument, apply that argument to a DIFFERENT pop culture item, issue, or text than the item discussed in the reading. You should **NOT** summarize the reading. Instead, you should use an idea from the reading in order to make an argument and analyze another pop culture item. For these readings, your paragraph format should look something like this:

- Topic Sentence/Thesis-One to two sentences that clearly articulates the point/argument you are making about the pop culture item of your choice.
- Explanation-A couple of sentences that articulates the main argument of the reading in your own words and defines the major idea/term from the reading that you will use to analyze a DIFFERENT pop culture text than the one discussed in the reading. Any specific ideas should be cited with MLA in-text citations.
- Quotation/Example-You should then present evidence from the pop culture item that you chose to analyze that connects to the main argument of the reading. You can also include a quotation from the reading that supports your point about the new text.
- Interpretation-This is where you clearly explain how the example/quotation connects to your main point of the paragraph that is articulated in the topic sentence/thesis statement of the PCP. This is the most important part of an analysis paragraph. Do not assume that your reader will draw the same conclusions about the pop culture item that you do. You must explain the connections you are making between the idea from the reading and your pop culture item/text.
- Conclusion-A sentence that brings everything together and concludes the paragraph. In a formal paper, this would be a transition sentence.

In addition, there is an example PCP in the Example Papers folder and the PCP folder on E-campus.