

**Television Analysis Paper (TAP)**  
**(English 102: Composition and Rhetoric)**

In class, we will discuss how best to examine an episode of a television show in order to create an argument paper that requires you to “read” the episode. For this paper, I ask you to choose one of the television episodes listed below and analyze the episode in terms of the theme listed. Here is a list of helpful hints to get this paper started:

1. Watch the episode for entertainment purposes.
2. Re-watch the episode with the given theme in mind. Take notes on dialogue and scenes that have to do with that theme. Make these notes as descriptive and specific as possible.
3. Begin working on your first paragraph. Your introduction should be a discussion of the television show you are writing about. Then, at the end of the first paragraph, you should do the following:
  - a. Create a thesis statement (“I argue that...”) that lists the show and episode title as well as articulates the argument you want to make about that theme.
  - b. Create a brief (no more than two sentences) methodology that briefly explains how the episode comments on the theme you are arguing about in your thesis statement. (This should come directly after your thesis statement in your paper.)
4. Create a partition paragraph (your second paragraph) that explains the episode’s theme and its relation to popular culture. This paragraph should explain the issue and what is at stake in representing this issue on a television show. You should find at least one scholarly source (a book or a journal article) on your theme in order to make your argument.
5. Each body paragraph should have a central focus that is articulated in the topic sentence. That focus should be supported with the dialogue/scenes that you found important while taking notes.
6. A conclusion that leads your reader in a new direction. It should not simply summarize your argument, but get your reader thinking about the larger implications of commenting on a cultural issue/theme through television/popular culture.
7. A Works Cited page in MLA format that lists your episode and any other secondary sources you used for this paper.

**Television Episodes**

Pick ONE of the following television show/episode pairing for your Television Analysis Paper. The focus of your paper will be on the theme listed with that television show/episode pairing. That theme will also be the subject of your secondary research for this paper. Listed with each episode is a note on whether or not the material might be offensive, so if you do not want to work with violent or sexually gratuitous material, avoid those noted shows/episodes. Also, in parenthesis at the end of each listing is where you can find or watch the episode.

**NOTE:** You may pick a single episode of a TV show of your choice, but you **must** first get approval from me. In order to get approval, you must **e-mail** me with a TV show, specific episode, and a potential argument about the episode.

*South Park*-“Dances with Smurfs” Season 13, Episode 13-Satirization of commentary “news” shows that appear on networks like FOX News and CNN. \*offensive content\* (Hulu.com)

*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*-“Bad Eggs” Season 2, Episode 12-Commentary on parenting through the use of a monster. (Hulu.com) **OR** “Go Fish” Season 2, Episode 20-Commentary on steroids and high school sports through the use of a monster. (Hulu.com)

*Sex and the City*-“The Baby Shower” Season 1, Episode 10; “A Woman’s Right to Shoes” Season 6, Episode 9-These two episodes deal with navigating the world of “normal” families and marriage from a single woman’s perspective. \*offensive content\* (Library-Media Services)

*Fringe*-“On Those We Left Behind” Season 4, Episode 6 (Hulu.com)-The impact of time, illness, and loss, especially for loved ones.

*House*-“Parents” Season 8, Episode 6- Commentary on the impact of parents on children and their development into adults. (Hulu.com)

*The Simpsons*-“The Book Job” Season 23, Episode 6-Commentary on the mass production of young adult books like Harry Potter OR “The Man in Blue Flannel Pants” Season 23, Episode 7-*Mad Men* spoof that comments on representations of 1950s corporate structure and masculinity. (Hulu.com)

*True Blood*- “Strange Love” Season 1, Episode 1-Uses the vampire as a figure to explore equal rights movements regarding race and sexuality. \*offensive content\* (Library-Media Services)

*Family Guy*-“Amish Guy” Season 10, Episode 7-Satirization of Amish representations. (Hulu.com)

### **Evaluation**

**You must meet ALL of the following minimum requirements to PASS the paper:**

- A clear argument, which is clearly stated through a thesis statement in the first paragraph.
- A researchable cultural issue that is presented through secondary research in a partition paragraph.
- Use of a television show/episode from those listed in the assignment.
- Each paragraph has a central point, which is supported by specific evidence from your episode.
- Each body paragraph follows the five part paragraph structure outlined in the PCP assignment sheet.
- Each body paragraph’s central point supports the thesis statement/overall argument of the paper.
- A strong opening that discusses your television show and its importance as cultural critique.
- A formal and objective/scholarly tone which avoids using “you”, “we”, and “I” (outside of introductory paragraph).
- A conclusion that leads your reader into thinking broadly about your topic and its importance rather than simply summarizing your entire argument.
- Research from ONE academic (journal article or scholarly books) sources in your partition paragraph.
- Analysis of your primary text(s) are integrated into your paper.
- MLA formatted in-text/parenthetical citations for ALL quoted AND paraphrased information from the TV episode and secondary source.
- Works Cited Page in MLA format.
- The paper is at least 4 FULL pages of text with an additional Works Cited page.
- The paper is formatted according to course requirements (see page 2 of syllabus).
- Clear syntax. Sentences are concise. Ideas are articulated as clear as possible.
- Proper grammar, punctuation, spelling, and organization conventions are observed.

**Length:** 4-5 pages, **excluding** Works Cited page, double spaced, 12 pt. Times New Roman, 1” margins

### **Timeline:**

**Tuesday, January 24, 2012:** PCP 3 Due, Paper Introduction & Outline Due

**Thursday, January 26, 2012:** Pages 1-3 of Paper Due

**Tuesday, January 31, 2012:** Class Cancelled for Conferences

**Thursday, February 2, 2012:** Post Draft on E-campus by 4pm

**Tuesday, February 7, 2012:** Class Cancelled for Online Peer Workshop; Respond to papers by end of class

**Thursday, February 9, 2012:** Final for Now Research Paper Due w/ALL Drafting

**Thursday, February 23, 2012:** Revision of Final Research Paper Due in Final Portfolio