

Information Sheet: Response Paper

Definition

A Response Paper is an annotated, contextualized concise summary of a scholarly article or book. It is not a mere summary of the text but rather a critical analysis of the material. This involves gathering and formulating arguments to either support or refute the original text. The Response Paper serves as a means to analytically structure your thoughts developed in response to reading a text, aiming to foster critical and purposeful reading.

Procedure

Timely preparation is an essential prerequisite for the successful creation of a Response Paper. You should allocate sufficient time, both for reading and for a structured engagement with the original text, and finally for the composition of your own argumentation and critical reflection. The following questions serve as guidance:

- What is the main theme, primary issue, or research question of the text?
- What central argument is emphasized by the author(s), from which theoretical perspective?
- How is the research question addressed, or what methodology is employed?
- What are the conclusions drawn from the text?
- Are key elements missing, or are there unclear or contradictory arguments? Can you come up with counterarguments or alternative viewpoints?
- Is the methodology appropriate and is the analysis correctly executed?
- In general, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the text?

You should consistently present objective and critical information while refraining from expressing personal impressions. In the event that you are analyzing multiple texts, you should establish connections and comparisons among them (e.g., "Do the authors concur on certain points? In what ways do the texts differ, etc.").

Structure

1. Introduction

Offers a concise overview of the topic covered in the original text.

2. Main Section

In this segment, you critically evaluate the text. Following a brief summary of the material, you substantiate your critical arguments in a scholarly manner. Organize your critique in a coherent fashion and bolster your points with examples whenever possible. Consequently, you provide a critical, yet respectful assessment of the original text, enabling the reader to form their own judgment. Central to this process is the clarity and logical consistency of your argumentation.

3. Conclusion

Serves as a summary of your critical examination of the topic.