

RESPONSE TO AN ARGUMENT

Read the essay twice.

Construct an interpretation of the essay. Do the SOAPS.

- Subject: What is the essay's topic?
- Occasion: What was the impetus for the writer's writing the essay at this time?
- Audience: To whom does the writer address his/her concerns?
- Purpose: Why did the writer write the essay? What does he/she want to convince readers of or persuade them to do?
- Speaker: Who is the writer? What are his/her credentials? Why should readers take seriously what he/she has to say?

Construct an argument about the argument, an essay on the essay.

In the first part, make sure you state clearly what the writer's point is and how he/she makes that point. In doing this, you are assuring your reader that you have read and understood the essay. Take time with the writer's ideas. Don't rush this paragraph.

Other points about the first paragraph:

- Make the writer the subject of your first sentence. Do not say "In Eric Hoffer's [name of essay], he argues that Say "In this essay, "[name of essay], " Eric Hoffer argues that" OR say "In [name of essay], Eric Hoffer argues that" > make subj. of sentence a proper noun
- Use quotations from the writer's text to help summarize his or her points. Use ellipsis marks if you want to leave out a part of a quotation, Use brackets to change a word or phrase that you have inserted into an otherwise word-for-word quotation.
- Always use quotation marks around a word or word taken from the text.
- When discussing the ideas of the writer, use words like *contends*, *argues*, or *states* rather than *thinks* or *feels*.
- After the first time you use the writer's first and name (if you choose to use the first name along with the last), refer to the writer by his/her last name only—no need for first names or titles.

In the second part, take a stand: agree, disagree, agree and disagree, disagree and agree.

Make clear to your reader exactly what position you are taking on the writer's argument.

- When discussing your ideas, use words like *contend* or *argue* rather than *think* or *feel*.
 - *I think that all students should be allowed to take four years of PE is not as strong as I maintain that all students should be allowed to take four years of PE. An even stronger way of saying it is All students should be allowed to take four years of PE.*
- What do you know from your experience and reading that supports your position? Establish your credibility here; cite data, knowledge gained in school and personal reading, personal experiences.

In the third part or conclusion, do not say "In conclusion. . . ." Try out the word "Clearly"—it works nicely as a way to begin a conclusion. The point of the conclusion is to bring both arguments (the writer's and yours) into focus and then make your reader see the SO WHAT of your argument. What do you want your reader to do with what you have written? What do you want to leave your reader with—a new idea, a proposal for action, an idea or practice to rethink and change?