

WRITERS' CENTRE



PPT First-Year Workshop:



Analysis & Evaluation

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Workshop Goals

- Increase your understanding of how to develop in a philosophy paper a closely-reasoned argument based on a text.
- Familiarize yourself with characteristics of writing a paper in the fields of philosophy and political thought.

Analysis & Evaluation

- Today's schedule:
 - 3.00-3.05 Introduction
 - 3.05-3.10 Reviewing a sample prompt
 - 3.10-3.20 Analyzing a sample text's argument
 - 3.20-3.35 Evaluating a sample text's argument
 - 3.35-3.40 Organization of a PPT paper
 - 3.40-3.45 Next steps & Exit tickets



PPT 1 Paper 2



Considering the Prompt

Activity 1 Review Sample Prompt

In his argument on moderation in funerals, Mozi describes what he sees as the destructive effects of lavish funerals and prolonged periods of mourning.

- Identify what Mozi's conclusion is, reconstructing the premises that allow him to arrive at this conclusion.
- Then, propose the best possible objection to Mozi's argument.
- Finally, suggest how Mozi might respond to your objection.

NOTE: Not all sections have the same prompt and your prompt may not include the objection-response part of this task.

Analyzing the prompt

What is the prompt asking you to do?

- What is the purpose of this assignment?
- Why is it set up the way it is?



Reviewing a Sample Text:



Analysis

Activity 2 Identifying premises of an argument

“If the world is poor, benevolent people do what they can to enrich it. If the people are few, benevolent people do what they can to increase their numbers. If the world is in chaos, benevolent people do what they can to make it well ordered”

“These are the three benefits that benevolent people plan for on behalf of the world.”

“If by following their words and implementing their plans concerning lavish funerals and prolonged mourning one really would enrich the poor, increase the population, bring stability to precarious situations and order to chaos, then these things clearly are benevolent and right and the proper task of filial children.”

Activity 2 Identifying the premises

In this excerpt, how do you distinguish between a premise and an argument or a conclusion?

- What is the conclusion or that which is to be proved?
- What are the premises of this argument?
- Are there steps left out that connect premises to conclusion?

Activity 2 Drawing a conclusion from premises

Premise 1:

- If lavish funerals and prolonged mourning are benevolent, they must enrich the state, increase the population, and bring order to chaos.

Premise 2:

- Lavish funerals and prolonged mourning do not enrich the state, increase the population, or bring order to chaos.

Conclusion:

- Lavish funerals and prolonged mourning are not benevolent.



Reviewing a Sample Text:



Evaluation

Activity 3 Identify objections to an argument

“If the world is poor, benevolent people do what they can to enrich it. If the people are few, benevolent people do what they can to increase their numbers. If the world is in chaos, benevolent people do what they can to make it well ordered”

“These are the three benefits that benevolent people plan for on behalf of the world.”

“If by following their words and implementing their plans concerning lavish funerals and prolonged mourning one really would enrich the poor, increase the population, bring stability to precarious situations and order to chaos, then these things clearly are benevolent and right and the proper task of filial children.”

Activity 3 Given these premises...

Premise 1:

- If lavish funerals and prolonged mourning are benevolent, they must enrich the state, increase the population, and bring order to chaos.

Premise 2:

- Lavish funerals and prolonged mourning do not enrich the state, increase the population, or bring order to chaos.

What objections could we raise?

Activity 3 A sample objection

Lavish funerals and prolonged mourning do bring order to chaos. Mourning periods and outward expressions of grief allow us to emotionally process the deaths of loved ones. Without this opportunity, people become sickly, sullen, and unable to work. Funerals and mourning provide a means of restoring order to the chaos left by a loved one's death.

What logic is at work in this objection?

Activity 3 How could Mozi respond?

One does not, however, need funerals that are lavish or periods that are prolonged to emotionally process the death of a loved one. The material circumstances of a funeral or the duration of time for which mourning is observed are not intrinsically tied to emotionally restorative responses to grief and loss. Furthermore, requirements for funerals and mourning could be so burdensome they undermine one's ability to process the death of a loved one.



Organization of PPT Paper 2

Essay Outline of the PPT Paper 2

Introduction

Body paragraph 1 (= Premise 1)

Body paragraph 2 (= Premise 2)

Body paragraph 3 (= Philosopher's conclusion)

Body paragraph 4 (= Objection)

Body paragraph 5 (= Response to objection)

Conclusion

Sample Body Paragraph 1 for our sample

In his discussion of whether or not lavish funerals and prolonged mourning are benevolent, Mozi first describes the qualities of benevolence in terms of the actions and motivations of benevolent people. This serves to establish a clear basis for making a judgment about lavish funerals. He notes that benevolent people attempt actions that have the following benefits: enriching people, increasing their numbers, and bringing order out of chaos (80). Thus, we can say that a customary practice is benevolent if it meets these conditions. If we are unsure about the relative benevolence of a practice, we are advised to consider whether or not it promotes these three benefits in the world (81). In short, if lavish funerals and prolonged mourning really are benevolent, then they must enrich the state, increase the population, and bring order to chaos.

Next Steps:

- **Intro:** Structure the introduction to your paper
 - Introduce text & context
 - What is claim made in text?
 - Possible objection?
 - State thesis
- **Analytical Section:**
 - Explain view or argument expressed in text
 - Define key terms
- ***Evaluative Section:***
 - *Identify objection, perhaps to premises, definitions, argument, or implications of text.*
 - *Respond to objection*
- **Conclusion**
 - Reprise argument, addressing any outstanding issue left.

Reminders

- Everything you write should clearly support or develop your **thesis**.
- Explain which **claims** act as **evidence** for other claims.
- If your instructor asks you to, identify **the kind of argument** used (reasoning with conditionals, by analogy, *modus tollens*, *modus ponens*, etc.)
- When identifying an **objection**, brainstorm a number of them and select what you believe to be the single best one.
- **Quote selectively**, rather than in a ‘patchwork’ style of many chunks strung together.



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Questions, answers, feedback

Exit Survey

- Please let us know if this was useful to you!

