

## In-Class Essay Checklist

1. Read & Reread, and Annotate the text as you go
2. Read the prompt question, and then come up with a provisional answer—this will become your thesis statement later on
3. Brainstorm some ideas and examples from the text that will help you support and explain your thesis idea
4. Outline those ideas and examples, so that you can put them in some kind of logical order before you begin writing your essay
5. Introduce & Summarize the article you are analyzing—Do this in your opening paragraph
6. Refer to the article you are analyzing often throughout your essay
7. Write a Thesis statement that clearly answers the question prompt—Make sure it introduces your specific topic and then states your clear position on that topic, or the point you wish to make about that topic
8. Make sure your introductory paragraph:
  - begins by saying something that’s interesting, that grabs our attention
  - briefly summarizes the article that you are analyzing
  - introduces us to your specific topic or focus
  - ends by clearly stating your thesis argument
9. Write each paragraph topic or controlling idea in the first sentence of each paragraph—Your body paragraphs should be clear, coherent and singular in purpose: each body paragraph should develop only one idea, and that one idea should clearly and directly support and relate to the thesis statement
10. Examples from the article should be, first, clearly introduced, then inserted, then completely explained, then, finally, linked back to the thesis argument and/or the paragraph topic
11. Don’t let your quotes do all the talking for you—Your paragraph discussion should be adequate and complete, and you must keep your discussion consistently focused on only your thesis argument and nothing else
12. Use Academic Language: 3<sup>rd</sup> person, present tense, no contractions or colloquial language
13. Write a Conclusion that restates your thesis argument in new language, and:
  - *does not* use any quotes from the text
  - *does not* offer us any moral lessons or overly general statements which are unconnected to the close textual analysis you’ve just completed
14. Proofread your essay—Make sure that:
  - every sentence is complete (has a subject and a verb and expresses a complete thought)
  - spelling is as correct as you can make it without a dictionary at hand
  - all verbs are written in the same (present) tense
  - informal and colloquial language is eliminated