

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

English 10

### Argumentative Essay Assignment: Evaluating Quality in Film \*

Throughout this unit we have discussed the complex nature of films, examining both their narrative elements and social/political implications. We also considered how a movie's text (e.g. images, dialogue, etc.) can influence audiences and their perceptions of themselves and others, and we decided as a class that some movies offered healthier or more positive messages for adolescents. As such, we developed a list of criteria that can help us to evaluate whether or not a movie is appropriate for an adolescent audience. However, it is highly possible for a film to meet some criteria and fail others, and so your assignment is to make a final judgment regarding the quality of a specific film and defend your reasoning.

**1) In what ways is the movie of your choice a positive and/or negative influence on adolescents (ages 12-17)? 2) What are quality aspects of the film? 3) What aspects may be misleading or harmful to adolescent audiences? 4) Overall, would you recommend this movie to an adolescent audience? Explain and defend your reasoning using the text.**

Your essay should:

- evaluate the quality of one (previously approved) movie
- provide a **thesis** in which you take a stance on the quality of the movie
- support this thesis with a set of **claims**—that is, the reasons that support your stance
- apply at least **4 criteria** to your film (At least 3 of these criteria must come from the class-produced list. You may add your own criteria as well.)
- back each claim with **evidence** from the movie; cite at least **6 specific events or quotes** from the film and provide a meaningful context for each example
- provide **warrants** that explain how the evidence supports the claim
- anticipate and explain a **counterargument**, which is a disagreement with your interpretation
- **rebut** the counterargument with additional reasons in support of your argument
- discuss **representation, stereotypes, and the status quo** in regard to your film choice
- follow rules of conventional Standard American English grammar, spelling, punctuation, and usage throughout your essay
- be 4-6 double-spaced pages, use 12-point Times New Roman font, and adhere to the MLA citation format

**Note:** You may argue that the movie illustrates both positive and negative characteristics according to the criteria, but you need to make a **final judgment** and explain whether or not you would recommend this movie to an adolescent audience.

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\* Assignment layout adapted from Smagorinsky.

### List of Possible Film Choices

You may choose to evaluate any movie of your choice, provided that it is rated G, PG, or PG-13 and approved by your parent or guardian. You should keep the class-produced criteria in mind as you consider your options.

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**The following are some possible film choices\* :**

- *How to Train Your Dragon* (2010): PG
- *Tangled* (2010): PG
- *Remember the Titans* (2000): PG
- *Dead Poets Society* (1989): PG
- *Twilight* (2008): PG-13
- *The Hunger Games* (2012): PG-13
- *Freedom Writers* (2007): PG-13
- *Scott Pilgrim vs. the World* (2010): PG-13
- *Mean Girls* (2004): PG-13
- *Friday Night Lights* (2004): PG-13
- *The Art of Getting By* (2011): PG-13
- *Vampire Academy* (2014): PG-13

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\* Even if you select one of these choices, you must have it approved by a parent or guardian.

### Argumentative Essay Rubric

Development of Argument (___/15pts)	15-14pts	13-12pts	11-10pts	9pts or fewer
<p>SWBAT construct the key elements of an argument of judgment.</p> <p>a) The argument must contain a concise thesis and a set of claims that supports this thesis.</p> <p>b) The argument must illustrate the application of at least 4 criteria.</p> <p>c) The argument must include relevant evidence as well as warrants that explain how the evidence supports the claim.</p> <p>d) The argument must explain and respond to a counterargument.</p> <p>e) The argument must state a final judgment, declaring whether or not this movie is appropriate or beneficial for an adolescent audience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Essay contains a rational, sustained evaluation of a single film.</li> <li>Essay includes all necessary components.</li> <li>Thesis is concise and deliberate. All claims are well-developed and support the thesis. Textual evidence and warrants are used to support all of the essay's claims. Essay adequately explains and addresses a counterargument.</li> <li>Essay states a rational final judgment of quality that is supported by the evaluation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Essay contains a sustained evaluation of a single film.</li> <li>Essay includes the majority of necessary components.</li> <li>Thesis is concise and deliberate. The majority of the claims are well-developed and support the thesis. Textual evidence and warrants are used to support most claims. Essay introduces a counterargument, but it lacks a rebuttal and/or requires further development.</li> <li>Essay states a rational final judgment of quality that is supported by the evaluation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Essay contains an evaluation of a single film, but it lacks focus and/or adequate direction in some parts.</li> <li>Essay includes the majority of necessary components.</li> <li>Thesis may be unclear or underdeveloped. Several claims lack sufficient detail and clarity. Textual evidence and warrants are used to support some claims. Essay does not adequately explain or address a counterargument.</li> <li>Essay may or may not state a final judgment of quality; this statement may require further detail and explanation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Essay contains an evaluation of a single film, but it is generally unfocused and inconsistent.</li> <li>Essay includes some of the necessary components.</li> <li>Thesis is unclear, off-topic, or absent. Claims are underdeveloped or absent in many cases. Textual evidence and warrants are used sparingly and may not support the essay's claims. Essay does not adequately explain or address a counterargument.</li> <li>The final judgment of quality is either absent or is largely unsubstantiated.</li> </ul>
Essay Flow & Organization (___/10pts)	10-9pts	8-7pts	6-5pts	4pts or fewer
<p>SWBAT create an organized essay structure that establishes clear relationships among the argumentative elements. SWBAT order interrelated ideas based on logic and a sense of essay flow.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organization of essay is clear and rationally structured, making it easy to navigate and follow.</li> <li>All sentences follow a logical, organized sequence.</li> <li>Paragraphs transition smoothly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organization of essay is generally clear, making it relatively easy to navigate and follow.</li> <li>The majority of sentences follow a logical, organized sequence.</li> <li>Paragraphs usually transition smoothly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organization of essay is somewhat confusing or difficult to follow.</li> <li>The majority of sentences follow a logical, organized sequence.</li> <li>The paragraphs sometimes transition smoothly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organization of essay is confusing or very difficult to follow.</li> <li>Sentences generally lack fluidity and clarity. Many sentences do not follow a logical, organized sequence.</li> <li>The paragraphs rarely transition smoothly.</li> </ul>
Use of Textual Evidence (___/10pts)	10-9pts	8-7pts	6-5pts	4pts or fewer
<p>SWBAT identify and apply textual evidence that is specific and relevant to their claims.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All examples of textual evidence are relevant and support the development of the argument.</li> <li>At least 6 specific events/quotes from the film are cited as textual evidence.</li> <li>The essay presents a concise and meaningful context for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All examples of textual evidence are relevant and support the development of the argument.</li> <li>4 or 5 specific events/quotes from the film are cited as textual evidence.</li> <li>The essay presents a concise and meaningful context for most pieces of evidence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most examples of textual evidence are relevant and support the development of the argument.</li> <li>2 or 3 specific events/quotes from the film are cited as textual evidence.</li> <li>The context for the pieces of textual evidence is sometimes vague, unclear, or even absent.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The textual evidence is generally irrelevant. Few or no examples support the development of the argument.</li> <li>1 or no specific events/quotes from the film are cited as textual evidence.</li> <li>A meaningful context is not</li> </ul>

	each piece of evidence; the examples make sense even if the reader has not watched the particular film.			provided for most pieces of textual evidence.
<b>Social Justice Issues</b> ( ___/10pts)	<b>10-9pts</b>	<b>8-7pts</b>	<b>6-5pts</b>	<b>4pts or fewer</b>
SWBAT examine the issues of representation, stereotypes, and the status quo and apply these concepts to their film within their argumentative essay.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The argument contains a focused and detailed discussion of all three social justice issues.</li> <li>The concepts are applied to the characters and evaluated within the context of the film.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The argument contains a brief discussion of all three social justice issues, but it lacks detail or description.</li> <li>The concepts are applied to the characters and evaluated within the context of the film.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The argument contains a brief discussion of all three social justice issues, but it lacks detail or description.</li> <li>The concepts are not applied to the characters or evaluated within the context of the film.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The argument does not mention one or more of the social justice issues. The discussion of these concepts may be vague or unclear.</li> <li>These concepts are not applied to the characters or evaluated within the context of the film.</li> </ul>
<b>SAE Conventions and Formatting</b> ( ___/5pts)	<b>5pts</b>	<b>4pts</b>	<b>3pts</b>	<b>2pts or fewer</b>
SWBAT construct their ideas according to Standard American English (SAE) conventions and mechanics. SWBAT craft a paper that follows the expected format and length. a) Essays should follow MLA standards and citation guidelines. b) Essays should be 4-6 pages double-spaced and in Times New Roman font (12pt).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Essay meets length and format requirements.</li> <li>In-text citations and Work Cited page are correctly formatted according to MLA standards.</li> <li>Punctuation, grammar, and spelling are mostly correct according to SAE conventions. There are no significant barriers to comprehension.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Essay meets length and format requirements.</li> <li>In-text citations and Work Cited page contain a couple of minor formatting errors.</li> <li>Punctuation, grammar, and spelling are mostly correct according to SAE conventions. There are no significant barriers to comprehension.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Essay meets length and format requirements.</li> <li>In-text citations and Work Cited page contain numerous minor formatting errors.</li> <li>Punctuation, grammar, and spelling are mostly correct according to SAE conventions. There are a couple of significant barriers to comprehension.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Essay does not meet length or format requirements.</li> <li>In-text citations and Work Cited page contain major formatting errors.</li> <li>Punctuation, grammar, and spelling are sometimes correct according to SAE conventions. There are multiple significant barriers to comprehension.</li> </ul>

**GRADE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**COMMENTS:**

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\* Citations are not "optional"; they are *required*. Failure to include in-text citations and a Work Cited page may result in a failing grade. If you have questions about citations, please see me for clarification.