**Houston Community College**

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**English 1302**

**Professor Hinchen-Bryan**

Essay #3: Visual Essay

The goal of this assignment is to construct a sequence of at least 15 images as a visual essay that visualizes a theme of your choice. This “essay” will use the images to discuss a claim or idea and then illustrate those claims or ideas through pictures. You will still have an introduction with a “thesis statement”, body “paragraphs” that help unfold your claims and a “conclusion” that brings your viewers to a greater understanding of what you (wrote, but in this case displayed).

**Why a Visual Essay?**

**More Interesting**

Sometimes this kind of essay is an assignment for a class, but it might also be an option your instructor gives you. If you have the choice, you might find making a visual presentation more interesting and more powerful than just writing a regular essay.

**Emotional Impact**

Why? By using music, video, quotes and powerful images, you can have a more powerful emotional effect on an audience than any written essay.

**Bigger Audience**

Better yet, these sorts of essays can be shared online to make your argument to a larger audience. For example, not too many people will read your essay on homelessness, but many people might want to see your essay on the lives of homeless people in your town and the people who help the homeless in a soup kitchen.

**A Picture Paints a Thousand Words**

This old saying is true. A great example is the "Texting and Driving" video. The audience will understand the author's strong stand against texting when they see this essay that includes pictures of the author's high school friends who died because someone was texting while driving.

**What to Include**

Like an argument paper, visual essays can use written words and quotes, but they also can include:

* Photos
* Professional video
* Personally filmed video
* Artwork
* Graphic Images
* Tables, charts and graphs
* Spoken words
* Music
* Sounds

**Steps to Follow**

**Step One:**You need to brainstorm, plan and research for your essay. Follow my steps below to plan your essay. I also give you links on where to find images to put in your essay and quotes to use.

**Step Two**: Gather your images and video. You can make your own videos and pictures, or use those available from the sites I give below.

**Step Three:**Put your essay together using flicker, Prezi, PowerPoint, photo peach, iMovie, Windows Movie Maker or other video software. You can include music, your own voice, captions, and quotes.

**Step Four:** Publish your essay by uploading it to YouTube or showing it to your classmates and instructor.

**How to Start**

Visual essays are a different format from a written essay, but they require many of the same processes to make. Just like in a written essay, you will need to decide what you want to explain or argue. Here is what you need to do in order to plan your essay.

1. **Choose a Topic.**
2. **Decide on your Claim Question:** After you have decided on your topic idea. You will need to choose a thesis or main idea that you want to prove. Even if you are doing a personal essay or talking about a piece of literature, you need to have the main point that you want to make.

Typically, argument essays make a claim which answers one of the following questions:

* **Fact**: Is it true or not? Does it really exist? Did it really happen? (example: Is climate change Real? Does domestic violence happen in my community?)
* **Definition:** How should we define it? What is it really? (example: What is love? or What was the great depression really like?)
* **Cause:** What is the cause? What are the effects? How are these related? (example: What causes homelessness? What are the effects of teens texting and driving?)
* **Value:** How important is this? How should we value it? (example: How important is Family for college students? or What is the value of a college education?)
* **Policy:** What should we do about it? How can we solve the problem? (example: How can we help friends with eating disorders? How can we solve the problem of child labor?)

**3. Decide on your claim answer.**You may need to do some research to find the answer. You can Google to find out some information on your topic, or look at YouTube videos. Once you find your claim answer, try to write it in a single sentence. That sentence is the thesis for your essay.

**Finding Images**

When you are looking for images on the Internet, you need to understand that there is a difference from just viewing those images and using them yourself. Luckily, there are many great sites with images which are offered free for anyone to use. Here are some of the best free use sites:

1. [**Wikimedia Commons**](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Topics)**:** All of the images on Wikimedia are available for free use and don't have copyright. Moreover, they have a lot of interesting historical images and famous pictures and art which can really make your visual essay unique. The link lands you on the "Topic" page, but you can also use the search engine to find photos.
2. [**Flickr:**](http://www.flickr.com/explore)includes many categories of photos, including "The Commons" which are photos uploaded from collections, as well as personal photos uploaded by people around the world.
3. [**Open Clip Art:**](http://openclipart.org/browse)a gallery of graphic clip art which is free to use. You can search for many objects here that can help you convey your story. Also includes humorous images and cartoons.
4. [**Pixabay**:](http://pixabay.com/en/editors_choice/) professional photography images which are often quite stunning. These free use images can be explored by topic, by the photographer, or by searching for a term. This site also includes clip art.
5. [**Slideshare**:](http://www.slideshare.net/?ss) contains many PowerPoint presentations on lots of different topics. You can get ideas for your own essay as well as look for graphics and quotes you could use. This site gets many uploads from companies, professors, and businesses, so it is a great resource for charts and graphs.

**Wordle Graphic Images**



Source

**Finding Quotes**

Need a great quote to make a point in your essay? Or maybe you remember a quote but don't know who said it. Use one of these sites to help you out:

* [**Brainy Quote**](http://www.brainyquote.com/)**:**Get quotes on many topics like love, friendship, wisdom, or quotes by author. A good quote can be an excellent way to end your essay.
* [**Good Reads Quotes**](http://www.goodreads.com/quotes): Another source for quotes from famous people. You type in the topic and many different quotes appear along with a picture of the person who said it.
* [**Wordle:**](http://www.wordle.net/)Create a beautiful design of words that are important for your topic. This can be a great graphic for an introduction or conclusion. All images you make are your own to use in any way you want.

Details:

**Visual component:**

At least 20 images, arranged in a sequence, with captions or comments. flicker, Prezi, PowerPoint, photo peach, iMovie, Windows Movie Maker arrange your images as a set called "visual essay."

**Written component:**

300-word project statement explaining your theme and conceptualization of your visual essay (include a works cited).

**Project Statement:**

The project statement provides an insight into your thought processes and decisions during the construction of your visual essay. In 300 words, address the following questions in a cohesive statement (i.e. do not answer each question individually):

* + What is your theme?
  + How do your images visualize your theme?
  + Why did you arrange these images in this particular sequence?
  + If you chose to add quotes to your images, why did you choose these particular quotes? If you cite from a text, please provide a bibliography with your statement.
  + What is your strongest image? Where in the sequence did you place it, and why?

**Visual Sequence:**

* + Remember that you are trying to “write” with these images—your visual essay should have a beginning, middle, and end. The first few images should set up your theme in the clearest way possible, the middle images provide details, and the final images offer a conclusion.
  + You may add up to 100 words of text per image. You can add the text as a description (comment underneath the image) or as a note on the image itself (to highlight a particular detail). The text can be written by you, or it can be a quote from readings we have done in class or from any other text. **Text and image must be in tension with one another. This means that the text cannot simply be a description of the image, or the image an illustration of the text. Rather, the interaction between image and text should encourage the viewer to think about how image and text relate to one another**.
  + You may edit your images with Photoshop/other image editing software or with picnik, flickr's built-in image editor (you can access it by clicking “edit photo” in the menu above each image). If you completely distort an image, you need to explain why you chose to do so in your project statement.
  + You may change the size of your images (in fact, you are encouraged to re-size them to less than 1000x1000 pixels). You can re-size your images or crop them to highlight details.

Grading Rubrics

**Overall Conceptualization (max. 50 points)**:

* Focuses on the relationship between theme and images. Is the theme well-defined? Do the images visualize it, rather than simply illustrating it?

**Project statement (max. 25 points)**:

* Focuses both on form (grammar, organization, style) and content (explanation of your theme).

**Visual sequence (max. 25 points)**:

* Are the images arranged in a cohesive way—is there a beginning, middle, and end? If applicable, do quotes or captions add another, thought-provoking dimension to the images?

**Title Slide Directions:**

**Title of Paper**

**Picture related to topic**

**Your name**

**Professor Hinchen-Bryan**

**HCC**

**English 1302**

**Date**

**Tips to keep in mind**

**Pre-Writing**

Before you gather images, video, music and other research for your essay, you will need to think about what you want to say and how you want to present it. Start by writing down your claim question and answer. Then answer the following to help you develop your ideas and think about what sort of materials you need to gather for your project.

1. What are the reasons for believing your claim?
2. What are some examples to back up those reasons?
3. What are the other views on this topic?
4. What objections would people have to your claim?
5. What are your most convincing arguments to refute those objections?
6. What images would you like to find to illustrate your claim?
7. What quotations or phrases could you use that would be memorable?
8. Are there any familiar sayings that you can reuse or repurpose to get your meaning across?
9. What music (if any) could help you convey your message?
10. Do you want to use long sequences of pictures with music, sounds or silence?
11. Do you want to write a script that you speak over the Visual images?
12. Will you include video? If so, will you take it yourself or use clips of other videos?

**Creating a Plan**

Looking at your answers to your pre-writing questions, you can start to plan how you will put together your piece. Just like a written essay, you will need and introduction, body and conclusion. You may want to think of this as a story with a beginning, middle and end. Before you start to gather images, you might want to make a rough outline of how you want your essay to come together.

**Title:**Often your claim question can be your title, or you may want a single word or short phrase title that tells your subject and use your question in the opening.

**Introduction:** How will you interest your viewer? Your first few images need to tell the viewer the subject and the question and grab their attention.

**Body:** How will you present your claim thesis? Will you tell it in a voice over? Write it on a picture or on a screen by itself? Would it be more effective to tell your main reasons first and then put your claim idea at the end in the conclusion?

What types of images could help you to prove your main reasons for your claim? Remember that it is usually important to order your ideas from least to most important, so put your best reasons last. You might want to make a list of the types of images you want. Be sure to indicate any images you already have.

**Conclusion**: What do you want your audience to think, do, or believe after they have watched your essay? How will you draw the audience with you to believe your claim at the end? Will you use a specific image? A repeated idea? A quote? A challenge? A question?

**Topics to Choose From**

With this visual essay, you can only choose a topic from the list below. You must submit your topic via google link: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfe1s7Ajutvbd8XW-X1u6AY6tp2i2eEbTo2vcH9iBu1ZKAGFg/viewform>

1. Paranormal technology is a good topic. There are numerous ways to get your topic a crossed to the reader. Human nature leads most people to wonder what really exists. Compare the tools used even ten years ago to today. It will be easy to get and keep the reader with the correct approach.
2. The process of the draft in professional sports. The talent, money and behind the scenes people who make it work.
3. The popularity of talent shows that include the entire nation. Using American Idol as an example. Give the numbers from the first year to today. The inter action between the public and show. Explain why it is so popular.
4. Phone technology the importance they play in the everyday world of the public. Describe the life before the phone to the top-of-the-line product today.
5. Lottery is there ever going to be a limit. The money won and how the winners handle the sudden success.
6. Exercising, the latest workouts and who uses them. Show the pros and cons.
7. What is the most ineffective campaign for a beauty product and why is it ineffective,
8. The American Dream. Describe what it is and how it has changed over the years.
9. Teens and Self-Image: Show how it can be a positive and a negative.
10. The Evolution of Discrimination in America, Show the story and evolution with either race, class or gender.

* **All visual essays must be emailed to** [myhccenglishprofessor@gmail.com](mailto:myhccenglishprofessor@gmail.com)  **in order to be credited and graded.**
* **Submit your essay by p.m. Sunday, April 11, 2021 by 11:59 p.m.**

Any questions please email me at [ronique.hinchen@hccs.edu](mailto:ronique.hinchen@hccs.edu)

