

Unit 1: Summary + Response Essay, due Wednesday, February 15

Skills: writing summaries that give your reader a clear picture of what you've read; expressing your personal response to a single text.

Percentage of Final Grade: 5%

Word Count: 500 words

Please note that word limits are binding: an essay that does not meet the minimum word count, or that exceeds the maximum word count by more than 100 words is going to be penalized.

Assignment Description

If “writing is telepathy,” as Stephen King puts it, then writing a summary is a special kind of telepathy: when we summarize, we **transmit a condensed version of a text to our readers**. And just like telepaths, we aim to make sure that our readers have a **clear** picture of what we've read **without actually seeing it themselves**.

For this assignment, write a **summary and response** to *either* Sherman Alexie's “Superman and Me” *or* Terry McMillan's “The Movie That Changed My Life.” Your essay will mainly be composed of 2 paragraphs.

1. In your **summary** paragraph, give the reader a clear picture of the essay you've chosen. Practice the summary skills we've discussed in class: keep the focus on the writer's words, not your reaction; include a concise statement of the writer's thesis; include basic facts about the writer that you might take for granted.
2. In your **response** paragraph, begin with a statement about **one aspect of the author's experience that you strongly identify with**. (Upbringing? Relationship to movies and/or writing? Encounters with racism?) Then, **expand** on this point with 1) a reference to a specific quote, and 2) a description of an episode or episodes from your life that strongly resonates with that quote. **The more specific you are, the higher quality your writing will be!**

Essays will be graded according to the rubric included in the Syllabus.

Dates

Due **Monday, February 6:** Blog post #1. Write a SuperShortSummary of **both** Alexie's and MacMillan's essays (3 sentences each). Although you shouldn't necessarily present the information in this order, the summary should include 1) basic biographical details, 2) a broad description of what happens in each essay, and 3) a description of each author's thesis. Then, in a separate paragraph, describe one important similarity and one important contrast between the two authors. **200-250 words.**

Due **Wednesday, February 8:** **5 sentence** summary paragraph of EITHER Alexie OR McMillan (bring to class)

Due **Wednesday, February 15: Final Draft of S + R essay.** Due at the beginning of class in physical form, as well as online under the appropriate submission dropbox.

Format Checklist

Before submitting online and/or physically, ask yourself these questions!

Does my essay...

- 1) appear in a Word .doc format (for electronic uploading to Blackboard)?
- 2) include a thoughtful, *italicized* title (NOT "Summary and Response Essay")?
- 3) have a header with my *surname* and *page number* on the top right corner of each page, if the essay is more than one page?
- 4) include my *name*, *assignment name* (i.e. Summary and Response Essay), *course and section number*, *instructor name*, and *due date* on the top left corner of the first page?
- 5) Have a staple that attaches multiple pages (if I have more than one page) for my physical copy?

Essays that fail to comply with these essential conventions of academic writing will be penalized.

The top of your essay should look like this:

Maximus Carter
Summary and Response Essay
English 1101, D342
Professor Lucas Kwong

February 15, 2017

Mindblowing Summary of "Superman and Me" (or whatever the title is)