

ARGUING ACROSS THE DISCIPLINES

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Chapter begins on next page >>

SAMPLE CHAPTER

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READING AND RESPONDING
TO ARGUMENTS

Whether our argument concerns public affairs or some other subject we must know some, if not all, of the facts about the subject on which we are to speak and argue. Otherwise, we can have no materials out of which to construct arguments.

—Aristotle, *Rhetoric*

OVERVIEW: This chapter will introduce you to the nature of argument, and the skills of critical reading, note taking, and summarizing, as well as present a sampling of arguments in the liberal arts, social sciences, and the sciences.

The Nature of Argument

Some of the most interesting and effective writing you will encounter takes the form of arguments that seek to persuade a specific audience of the validity of a proposition or claim through logical reasoning supported by facts, examples, data, or other kinds of evidence. Formal arguments differ from assertions based on likes and dislikes or personal opinion. Unlike questions of personal taste, arguments rest on evidence—whether in the form of facts, examples, the testimony of experts, or statistics—that can be brought forward to prove or disprove objectively the thesis in question.

Although the two are frequently confused, argumentation differs from persuasion. Argument is a form of discourse in which statements are offered in support of a claim or proposition. Argument is based on a rational appeal to the understanding and builds its case on a network of logical connections.

The term *argument* also refers to the practice of giving reasons to convince or persuade an audience to accept a claim or proposition. Argument is a form of advocacy and a process of reasoning designed to support a claim. Making an

assertion, offering a hypothesis, presenting a claim, and putting forth a moral objection are all ways of arguing. Thus, the process of argument is valuable because it provides an arena for testing the validity, truth, or probability of specific ideas, propositions, and claims.

Whereas argument presents reasons and evidence to gain an audience's intellectual agreement with the validity of a proposition, persuasion also includes appeals to the emotional needs and values of an audience to move them to approve an action or to take an action that the writer recommends. In argument, the audience's agreement with the truth of the claim has more to do with the soundness of the evidence than with the audience's response to the speaker's character and personality. Because of this, arguments are usually addressed to a general, unspecified audience, whereas persuasion is usually keyed to the beliefs, prejudices, interests, values, and needs of a specific audience. For example, political speeches employing persuasive appeals are usually keyed to the specific needs of an immediate audience. Persuasion is influenced by the audience's sense of the speaker's character, presence, and reputation. The difference between argument and persuasion can be clearly seen by comparing the following two short paragraphs.

Kirkpatrick Sale cites the results of various studies as evidence to support his claim that smaller communities are more neighborly and healthier places in which to live:

There is another way of coming at the question of the human limits of a community. Hans Blumenfeld, the urban planner, suggests starting with the idea of the size at which "every person knows every other person by face, by voice, and by name" and adds, "I would say that it begins to fade out in villages with much more than 500 or 600 population." Gordon Rattray Taylor, the British science writer, has estimated that there is a "natural social unit" for humans, defined by "the largest group in which every individual can form some personal estimate of the significance of a majority of the other individuals in the group, in relation to himself," and he holds that the maximum size of such a group, depending on geography and ease of contact, is about 1,200 people.

—*Kirkpatrick Sale, Human Scale*

Henry Fairlie, on the other hand, claims that life in a small community is subject to intrusion and loss of privacy and characterizes the typical village shop as follows:

But the village shop, as one knew it personally, and as one can read about it in fiction, was usually an unattractive place, and frequently a malignant one. The gossip which was exchanged was, as often as not, inaccurate and cruel. Although there were exceptions, one's main memory of the village shopkeeper, man and

wife, is of faces which were hard and sharp and mean, leaning forward to whisper in ears that were cocked and turned to hear all that they could of the misfortunes or the disgrace of a neighbour. Whisper! Whisper! Whisper! This has always been the chief commodity of the village shop. And not only whispers, because the village shopkeeper, informed or misinformed, could always apply sanctions against those to whom disgrace or misfortune was imputed.

—*Henry Fairlie*, *The Spoiled Child of the Western World*

Notice how Sale relies on evidence and the testimony of experts to support his claim that small communities promote peace, social harmony, trust, and well-being. The character of Sale as a person is less important than the facts he presents to support his thesis or claim.

By contrast, Fairlie’s description of the stifling character of small-town life is communicated by picturesque language that is designed to appeal to the imagination and arouse the emotions of his audience against this life. The audience’s sense of Fairlie as a person is important, since his own observations are presented as a source of evidence drawn from his past experiences. There is no objective evidence as such in this passage. Fairlie’s ability to appeal to the emotions of his audience through skillful use of provocative language is the only evidence he presents. Yet, it would be difficult to say which of these two passages is more persuasive. The point here is that the difference between argument and persuasion is one of degree. Arguments tend to emphasize appeals to logic, whereas persuasion tries to sway an audience through a calculated manipulation of the audience’s needs and values. Real-world arguments, however, should be a blend of the two.

Rhetoric and Persuasion

Rhetoric came into existence as a specific field of study in the early part of the fifth century BC in Sicily to enable ordinary citizens to make an effective case concerning why they should be entitled to recover property that had been seized by a dictatorial tyrant. The claimants had to present their case without supporting documentation and construct an argument solely on the basis of inference and probability. This emphasis on discovering, arranging, and presenting arguments to enhance the probability of a claim defines the distinctive nature of argumentative discourse from this beginning to the present day.

The term *rhetoric* has acquired negative connotations of language calculated to deceive; “mere rhetoric” is associated with stylistic flourishes devoid of content, or empty talk without action. It was not always thus. For Aristotle, rhetoric

meant discovering all the available means of persuasion in any given situation where the truth could not be known for certain (Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, Book I, Chapter 1, lines 26–27). Aristotle, of course, excluded coercive or violent means and concerned himself solely with systematic and skillful efforts that one person could use to get another to think in a certain way.

Rhetoric in its original context referred to the process of seeking out the best arguments, arranging them in the most effective way, and presenting them in the manner best calculated to win agreement from a particular audience.

Rhetoric is concerned with those questions in the realm of the contingent where the truth is not able to be known (Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, Book I, Chapter 2, line 15). It is up to arguers on all sides of the issues to find the most effective means for persuading audiences to believe or at least consider the probable truth of their claims.

Normally, the kinds of questions dealt with are those that are open to different interpretations; rhetoric, therefore, is concerned with the methods or strategies arguers may use in seeking acceptance of their position from an audience. Aristotle said there are three means by which people could persuade each other to adopt a certain point of view or approve a course of action. Broadly stated, these three elements—which are all present in some degree in every successful instance of persuasion—he identified as (1) the appeal to the audience’s reason (*logos*), (2) the appeal to the audience’s emotions (*pathos*), and (3) the degree of confidence that the speaker’s character or personality could inspire in the audience (*ethos*) (Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, Book I, Chapter 2, lines 1–4).

The most persuasive arguments appeal to the “whole person”—to the intellect, the conscience, and the emotions.

The goal of all three of these appeals is the same, although each takes a different approach to achieve the same end of persuading or increasing the credibility or probable truth of the claim. The appeal to the audience’s reason (*logos*) is often associated with formal logic and the citation of relevant facts and objective evidence (statistics, case histories, surveys, facts, examples, precedents). Well-constructed arguments that genuinely appeal to reason are indeed persuasive. And even though Aristotle made the point that appeals to an audience’s deepest desires, needs, and values need not be deceptive, arguers soon became aware that appeals to the emotions (*pathos*), such as fear, greed, love of comfort, or desire for status, could substitute for appeals to reason, especially in those cases where the persuader had little evidence or lacked the skill necessary to construct a logical argument. The third means Aristotle identified (*ethos*) depended on the degree to which the arguer could win the confidence of the audience. The credibility and persuasiveness of the arguer’s claims would be in direct proportion to the audience’s view of the speaker or writer as a person of good sense, good moral character, and good intentions (Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, Book I, Chapter 2, line 13).

It is in the context of these three methods that we will discuss arguments—what makes some persuasive, others ineffective, some legitimate, and others deceptive—and look at the separate elements that collectively constitute effective argumentation. Even though at points we may, for the sake of clarity, discuss elements of argumentation separately from elements of persuasion, the two are inextricably intertwined in any successful instance of persuasion.

The purpose, then, of argument is to persuade an audience to accept the validity or probability of an idea, proposition, or claim. Essentially, a claim is an assertion that would be met with skepticism if it were not supported with sound evidence and logical reasoning. Argument plays a key role for writers who use the forums provided by newspapers and popular magazines as well as the more specialized literary and scientific journals to persuade colleagues and the general public alike of the truth of their ideas, discoveries, viewpoints, and conclusions.

Critical Reading for Ideas and Organization

One of the most important skills to have in your repertoire is the ability to survey unfamiliar articles, essays, or excerpts and come away with an accurate understanding of what the author wanted to communicate and how the material is organized. On the first and in subsequent readings of any of the selections in this text, especially the longer ones, pay particular attention to the title, look for introductory and concluding paragraphs (with special emphasis on the author's statement or restatement of central ideas), identify the headings and subheadings (and determine the relationship between these and the title), and identify any unusual terms necessary to fully understand the author's concepts.

As you work your way through an essay, you might look for cues to enable you to recognize the main parts of the argument or help you perceive the overall organization of the article. Once you find the main thesis, underline it. Then work your way through fairly rapidly, identifying the main ideas and the sequence in which they are presented. As you identify an important idea, ask yourself how this idea relates to the thesis statement you underlined or to the idea expressed in the title.

Identifying a Thesis

Identifying a thesis involves discovering the idea that serves as the focus of the essay. The thesis is often stated in the form of a single sentence that asserts the author's response to an issue that others might respond to in different ways. For

example, the opening paragraphs of “The Case for Torture” present Michael Levin’s view that challenges conventional assumptions:

It is generally assumed that torture is impermissible, a throwback to a more brutal age. Enlightened societies reject it outright and regimes suspected of using it risk the wrath of the United States.

I believe this attitude is unwise. **There are situations in which torture is not merely permissible but morally mandatory.** Moreover, these situations are moving from the realm of the imagination to fact.

The thesis (in bold type) represents the writer’s view of a subject or topic from a certain perspective. Here, Levin states a view that will serve as a focus for his essay on the permissibility of torture.

As we can see, the thesis identifies the specific issue and presents the writer’s opinion on it. It also makes it easier for readers to follow the author’s reasoning offered to support it. An effective thesis suggests a clear direction for the argument. Thus, Levin is obliged to present examples that substantiate his claim (“there are situations in which torture is not merely permissible but morally mandatory”).

Writers often place the thesis in the first paragraph or group of paragraphs so that the readers will be able to perceive the relationship between supporting evidence and this main idea.

As you read, you might wish to underline the topic sentence or main idea of each paragraph or section (since key ideas are often developed over the course of several paragraphs). Jot it down in your own words in the margins, identify supporting statements and evidence (such as examples, statistics, and the testimony of authorities), and try to discover how the author organizes the material to support the development of important ideas. To identify supporting material, look for any ideas more specific than the main idea that is used to support it. Also look for instances where the author uses examples, descriptions, statistics, quotations from authorities, comparisons, or graphs to make the main idea clearer or prove it to be true.

Pay particular attention to important transitional words, phrases, or paragraphs to better see the relationships among major sections of the selection. Noticing how certain words or phrases act as transitions to link paragraphs or sections together will dramatically improve your reading comprehension. Also look for section summaries, where the author draws together several preceding ideas.

Writers use certain words to signal the starting point of an argument. If you detect any of the following terms, look for the main idea they introduce:

since, because, for, as, follows from, as shown by, inasmuch as, otherwise, as indicated by, the reason is that, for the reason that, may be inferred from, may be derived from, may be deduced from, in view of the fact that

An especially important category of words is that which includes signals that the author will be stating a conclusion. Words and phrases to look for are these:

therefore, hence, thus, so accordingly, in consequence, it follows that, we may infer, I conclude that, in conclusion, in summary, which shows that, which means that, and which entails, consequently, proves that, as a result, which implies that, which allows us to infer, points to the conclusion that

You may find it helpful to create a running dialogue with the author in the margins, posing and then trying to answer the basic questions *who, what, where, when, and why*, and to note observations on how the main idea of the article, essay, or book is related to the title. These notes can later be used to evaluate how effectively any specific section contributes to the overall line of thought.

Responding to What You Read

When reading an essay that seems to embody a certain value system, try to examine any assumptions or beliefs the writer expects the audience to share. How is this assumption related to the author's purpose? If you do not agree with these assumptions, has the writer provided sound reasons and evidence to persuade you to change your mind?

You might describe the author's tone or voice and try to assess how much it contributed to the essay. How effectively does the writer use authorities, statistics, or examples to support the claim? Does the author identify the assumptions or values on which his or her views are based? Are they ones with which you would agree or disagree? To what extent does the author use the emotional connotations of language to try to persuade his or her reader? Do you see anything unworkable or disadvantageous about the solutions offered as an answer to the problem the essay addresses? All these and many other ways of analyzing someone else's essay can be used to create your own. Here are some specific guidelines to help you.

When evaluating an essay, consider what the author's purpose is in writing it. Was it to inform, explain, solve a problem, make a recommendation, amuse, enlighten, or achieve some combination of these goals? How is the tone or voice the author projects toward the reader related to his or her purpose in writing the essay?

You may find it helpful to write short summaries after each major section to determine whether you understand what the writer is trying to communicate. These summaries can then serve as a basis for an analysis of how successfully the

author employs reasons, examples, statistics, and expert testimony to support and develop his or her main points.

For example, if the essay you are analyzing cites authorities to support a claim, assess whether the authorities bring the most timely opinions to bear on the subject, or display any obvious biases, and determine whether they are experts in that particular field. Watch for experts described as “often quoted” or “highly placed reliable sources” without accompanying names, credentials, or appropriate documentation. If the experts cited offer what purports to be a reliable interpretation of facts, consider whether the writer also quotes equally trustworthy experts who hold opposing views.

If statistics are cited to support a point, judge whether they derive from verifiable and trustworthy sources. Also, evaluate whether the author has interpreted them in ways that are beneficial to his or her case, whereas someone who held an opposing view could interpret them quite differently. If real-life examples are presented to support the author’s opinions, determine whether they are representative or whether they are too atypical to be used as evidence. If the author relies on hypothetical examples or analogies to dramatize ideas that otherwise would be hard to grasp, judge whether these examples are too far-fetched to back up the claims being made. If the essay depends on the stipulated definition of a term that might be defined in different ways, check whether the author provides clear reasons to indicate why one definition rather than another is preferable.

As you list observations about the various elements of the article you are analyzing, take a closer look at the underlying assumptions and see whether you can locate and distinguish between those assumptions that are explicitly stated and those that are implicit. Once the author’s assumptions are identified, you can compare them with your own beliefs about the subject, determine whether these assumptions are commonly held, and make a judgment as to their validity. Would you readily agree with these assumptions? If not, has the author provided sound reasons and supporting evidence to persuade you to change your mind?

MARKING AS YOU READ

The most effective way to think about what you read is to make notes as you read. Making notes as you read forces you to go slowly and think carefully about each sentence. This process is sometimes called annotating the text, and all you need is a pen or a pencil. There are as many styles of annotating as there are readers, and you will discover your own favorite technique once you have done it a few times. Some readers prefer to underline major points or statements and

jot down their reaction to it in the margin. Others prefer to summarize each paragraph or section to help them follow the author's line of thinking. Other readers circle key words or phrases necessary to understand the main ideas. Feel free to use your notes as a kind of conversation with the text. Ask questions. Express doubts. Mark unfamiliar words or phrases to look up later. If the paragraphs are not already numbered, you might wish to number them as you go to help you keep track of your responses. Try to distinguish the main ideas from supporting points and examples. Most important, go slowly and think about what you are reading. Try to discover whether the author makes a credible case for the conclusions he or she reaches. One last point: Take a close look at the idea expressed in the title before *and* after you read the essay to see how it relates to the main idea.

DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN FACT AND OPINION

As you read, distinguish between statements of fact and statements of opinion. Statements of fact relate information that is widely accepted and objectively verifiable. Facts are not open for debate. They can be easily verified through observation or because they are presented in trustworthy reference books such as dictionaries and encyclopedias. Facts are not usually disputed since they can be established empirically or by a consensus of experts. Facts are used as evidence to support the claim made by the thesis.

By contrast, an opinion is a personal interpretation of data or a belief or feeling that however strongly presented should not be mistaken by the reader for objective evidence. For example, consider the following claim by Edward T. Hall in "Hidden Culture":

Each culture and each country has its own language of space, which is just as unique as the spoken language, frequently more so. In England, for example, there are no offices for the members of Parliament. In the United States, our congressmen and senators proliferate their offices and their office buildings and simply would not tolerate a no-office situation.

The only statement that could be verified or refuted on the basis of objective data is "In England . . . there are no offices for the members of Parliament." All the other statements, *however persuasive they may seem*, are Hall's interpretations of a situation (multiple offices and office buildings for U.S. government officials) that might be interpreted quite differently by another observer. These statements should not be mistaken for statements of fact.

A reader who could not distinguish between facts and interpretations would be at a severe disadvantage in understanding Hall's essay. Part of the difficulty

in separating fact from opinion stems from the difficulty of remaining objective about statements that match our own personal beliefs.

Take a few minutes to read and annotate the following essay. Feel free to “talk back” to the author. You can underline or circle key passages or key terms. You can make observations, raise questions, and express your reactions to what you read.

A Sample Essay for Student Annotation

Edward T. Hall

Hidden Culture

Edward T. Hall (b. 1914) anthropologist and author of The Silent Language (1959), The Hidden Dimension (1966), and Understanding Cultural Differences (1990), has taught at Northwestern University, the University of Denver, Bennington College, the Washington School of Psychiatry, the Harvard Business School, and the Illinois Institute of Technology. Best known for his work in intercultural communication, Hall has been a consultant to business and to government agencies. The following selection is drawn from Beyond Culture (1981).

Thinking Critically

As you read Hall’s piece, observe how he takes an anthropological, or comparative cultural, approach to his own experiences to understand the hidden logic that governs behavior in Japan.

A few years ago, I became involved in a sequence of events in Japan that completely mystified me, and only later did I learn how an overt act seen from the vantage point of one’s own culture can have an entirely different meaning when looked at in the context of the foreign culture. I had been staying at a hotel in downtown Tokyo that had European as well as Japanese-type rooms. The clientele included a few Europeans but was predominantly Japanese. I had been a guest for about ten days and was returning to my room in the middle of an afternoon. Asking for my key at the desk, I took the elevator to my floor. Entering the room, I immediately sensed that something was wrong. Out of place. Different. I was in the wrong room! Someone else’s things were distributed around the head of the bed and the table. Somebody else’s toilet articles (those of a Japanese male) were in the bathroom. My first thoughts were, “What if I am discovered here? How do I explain my presence to a Japanese who may not even speak English?”

I was close to panic as I realized how incredibly territorial we in the West are. I checked my key again. Yes, it really was mine. Clearly they had moved somebody else into my room. But where was my room now? And where were my belongings? Baffled and mystified, I took the elevator to the lobby. Why hadn't they told me at the desk, instead of letting me risk embarrassment and loss of face by being caught in somebody else's room? Why had they moved me in the first place? It was a nice room and, being sensitive to spaces and how they work, I was loath to give it up. After all, I had told them I would be in the hotel for almost a month. Why this business of moving me around like someone who has been squeezed in without a reservation? Nothing made sense.

At the desk I was told by the clerk, as he sucked in his breath in deference (and embarrassment?) that indeed they had moved me. My particular room had been reserved in advance by somebody else. I was given the key to my new room and discovered that all my personal effects were distributed around the new room almost as though I had done it myself. This produced a fleeting and strange feeling that maybe I wasn't myself. How could somebody else do all those hundred and one little things just the way I did?

Three days later, I was moved again, but this time I was prepared. There was no shock, just the simple realization that I had been moved and that it would now be doubly difficult for friends who had my old room number to reach me. *Tant pis*, I was in Japan. One thing did puzzle me. Earlier, when I had stayed at Frank Lloyd Wright's Imperial Hotel for several weeks, nothing like this had ever happened. What was different? What had changed? Eventually I got used to being moved and would even ask on my return each day whether I was still in the same room.

5 Later, at Hakone, a seaside resort where I was visiting with friends, the first thing that happened was that we were asked to disrobe. We were given *okatas*, and our clothes were taken from us by the maid. (For those who have not visited Japan, the *okata* is a cotton print kimono.) We later learned, when we ventured out in the streets, that it was possible to recognize other guests from our hotel because we had all been equipped with identical *okatas*. (Each hotel had its own characteristic, clearly recognizable pattern.) Also, I noted that it was polite to wave or nod to these strangers from the same hotel.

Following Hakone, we visited Kyoto, site of many famous temples and palaces, and the ancient capital of Japan.

There we were fortunate enough to stay in a wonderful little country inn on the side of a hill overlooking the town. Kyoto is much more traditional and less industrialized than Tokyo. After we had been there about a week and had thoroughly settled into our new Japanese surroundings, we returned one night to be met at the door by an apologetic manager who was stammering

something. I knew immediately that we had been moved, so I said, “You had to move us. Please don’t let this bother you, because we understand. Just show us to our new rooms and it will be all right.” Our interpreter explained as we started to go through the door that we weren’t in that hotel any longer but had been moved to *another* hotel. What a blow! Again, without warning. We wondered what the new hotel would be like, and with our descent into the town our hearts sank further. Finally, when we could descend no more, the taxi took off into a part of the city we hadn’t seen before. No Europeans here! The streets got narrower and narrower until we turned into a side street that could barely accommodate the tiny Japanese taxi into which we were squeezed. Clearly this was a hotel of another class. I found that, by then, I was getting a little paranoid, which is easy enough to do in a foreign land, and said to myself, “They must think we are very low-status people indeed to treat us this way.”

As it turned out, the neighborhood, in fact the whole district, showed us an entirely different side of life from what we had seen before, much more interesting and authentic. True, we did have some communication problems, because no one was used to dealing with foreigners, but few of them were serious.

Yet, the whole matter of being moved like a piece of derelict luggage puzzled me. In the United States, the person who gets moved is often the lowest-ranking individual. This principle applies to all organizations, including the Army. Whether you can be moved or not is a function of your status, your performance, and your value to the organization. To move someone without telling him is almost worse than an insult, because it means he is below the point at which feelings matter. In these circumstances, moves can be unsettling and damaging to the ego. In addition, moves themselves are often accompanied by great anxiety, whether an entire organization or a small part of an organization moves. What makes people anxious is that the move usually presages organizational changes that have been coordinated with the move. Naturally, everyone wants to see how he comes out vis-à-vis everyone else. I have seen important men refuse to move into an office that was six inches smaller than someone else’s of the same rank. While I have heard some American executives say they wouldn’t employ such a person, the fact is that in actual practice, unless there is some compensating feature, the significance of space as a communication is so powerful that no employee in his right mind would allow his boss to give him a spatial demotion—unless of course he had already reached his crest and was on the way down.

10 These spatial messages are not simply conventions in the United States—unless you consider the size of your salary check a mere convention, or where your name appears on the masthead of a journal. Ranking is seldom a matter that people take lightly, particularly in a highly mobile society like that in the

United States. Each culture and each country has its own language of space, which is just as unique as the spoken language, frequently more so. In England, for example, there are no offices for the members of Parliament. In the United States, our congressmen and senators proliferate their offices and their office buildings and simply would not tolerate a no-office situation. Constituents, associates, colleagues, and lobbyists would not respond properly. In England, status is internalized; it has its manifestations and markers—the upper-class received English accent, for example. We in the United States, a relatively new country, externalize status. The American in England has some trouble placing people in the social system, while the English can place each other quite accurately by reading ranking cues, but in general tend to look down on the importance that Americans attach to space. It is very easy and very natural to look at things from one's own point of view and to read an event as though it were the same all over the world.

I knew that my emotions on being moved out of my room in Tokyo were of the gut type and quite strong. There was nothing intellectual about my initial response. Although I am a professional observer of cultural patterns, I had no notion of the meaning attached to being moved from hotel to hotel in Kyoto. I was well aware of the strong significance of moving in my own culture, going back to the time when the new baby displaces older children, right up to the world of business, where a complex dance is performed every time the organization moves to new quarters.

What was happening to me in Japan as I rode up and down elevators with various keys gripped in my hand was that I was reacting with the cultural part of my brain—the old, mammalian brain. Although my new brain, my symbolic brain—the neocortex—was saying something else, my mammalian brain kept repeating, “You are being treated shabbily.” My neocortex was trying to fathom what was happening. Needless to say, neither part of the brain had been programmed to provide me with the answer in Japanese culture. I did have to put up a strong fight with myself to keep from interpreting what was going on as though the Japanese were the same as I. This is the conventional and most common response and one that is often found even among anthropologists. Any time you hear someone say, “Why *they* are no different than the folks back home—they are just like I am,” even though you may understand the reasons behind these remarks you also know that the speaker is living in a single-context world (his own) and is incapable of describing either his world or the foreign one.

The “they are just like the folks back home” syndrome is one of the most persistent and widely held misconceptions of the Western world, if not the whole world. There is very little any outsider can do about this, because it

expresses views that are very close to the core of the personality. Simply talking about “cultural differences” and how we must respect them is a hollow cliché. And in fact, intellectualizing isn’t much more helpful either, at least at first. The logic of the man who won’t move into an office that is six inches smaller than his rival’s is *cultural* logic; it works at a lower, more basic level in the brain, a part of the brain that synthesizes but does not verbalize. The response is a total response that is difficult to explain to someone who doesn’t already understand, because it is so dependent on context for correct interpretation. To do so, one must explain the entire system; otherwise, the man’s behavior makes little sense. He may even appear to be acting childishly—which he most definitely is not.

It was my preoccupation with my own cultural mold that explained why I was puzzled for years about the significance of being moved around in Japanese hotels. The answer finally came after further experiences in Japan and many discussions with Japanese friends. In Japan, one has to “belong” or he has no identity. When a man joins a company, he does just that—joins himself to the corporate body—and there is even a ceremony marking the occasion. Normally, he is hired for life, and the company plays a much more paternalistic role than in the United States. There are company songs, and the whole company meets frequently (usually at least once a week) for purposes of maintaining corporate identity and morale.

15 As a tourist (either European or Japanese) when you go on a tour, you *join* that tour and follow your guide everywhere as a group. She leads you with a little flag that she holds up for all to see. Such behavior strikes Americans as sheeplike; not so the Japanese. The reader may say that this pattern holds in Europe, because there people join Cook’s tours and the American Express tours, which is true. Yet there is a big difference. I remember a very attractive young American woman who was traveling with the same group I was with in Japan. At first she was charmed and captivated, until she had spent several days visiting shrines and monuments. At this point, she observed that she could not take the regimentation of Japanese life. Clearly, she was picking up clues, such as the fact that our Japanese group, when it moved, marched in a phalanx rather than moving as a motley mob with stragglers. There was much more discipline in these sightseeing groups than the average Westerner is either used to or willing to accept.

It was my lack of understanding of the full impact of what it means to belong to a high-context culture that caused me to misread hotel behavior at Hakone. I should have known that I was in the grip of a pattern difference and that the significance of all guests being garbed in the same *okata* meant more than that an opportunistic management used the guests to advertise the hotel. The answer to my puzzle was revealed when a Japanese friend explained what it means to be a guest in a hotel. As soon as you register at the desk, you are no longer an

outsider; instead, for the duration of your stay you are a member of a large, mobile family. *You belong.* The fact that I was moved was tangible evidence that I was being treated as a family member—a relationship in which one can afford to be “relaxed and informal and not stand on ceremony.” This is a very highly prized state in Japan, which offsets the official properness that is so common in public. Instead of putting me down, they were treating me as a member of the family. Needless to say, the large, luxury hotels that cater to Americans, like Wright’s Imperial Hotel, have discovered that Americans do tenaciously stand on ceremony and want to be treated as they are at home in the States. Americans don’t like to be moved around; it makes them anxious. Therefore, the Japanese in these establishments have learned not to treat them as family members.

Keeping a Reading Journal

The most effective way to keep track of your thoughts and impressions and to review what you have learned is to start a reading journal. The comments you record in your journal may express your reflections, observations, questions, and reactions to the essays you read. Normally, your journal would not contain lecture notes from class. A reading journal will allow you to keep a record of your progress during the term and can also reflect insights you gain during class discussions, and questions you may want to ask, as well as unfamiliar words you intend to look up. Keeping a reading journal becomes a necessity if your composition course will require you to write a research paper that will be due at the end of the semester. Keep in mind that your journal is not something that will be corrected or graded, although some instructors may wish you to share your entries with the class.

TURNING ANNOTATIONS INTO JOURNAL ENTRIES

Although there is no set form for what a journal should look like, reading journals are most useful for converting your brief annotations into more complete entries that explore in-depth your reactions to what you have read. Interestingly, the process of turning your annotations into journal entries will often produce surprising insights that will give you a new perspective. For example, a student who annotated Edward T. Hall’s “Hidden Cultures” converted them into the following journal entries:

- Hall’s personal experiences in Japan made him realize that interpreting an action depends on what culture you’re from.

- Hall assumes hotels should treat long-term guests with more respect than overnight guests. “Like someone who had been squeezed in without a reservation” shows Hall’s feelings.
- What does having your clothes replaced with an *okata*—cotton robe—have to do with being moved from room to room in a hotel?
- The hotel in Hakone encourages guests—all wearing the same robes—to greet each other outside the hotel in a friendly, not formal, manner.
- Hall says that in America, size of office = personal value and salary. Hall compared how space works in the U.S. in order to understand Japanese attitudes towards space.
- Thesis—“culturally defined attitudes toward space are different for each culture.” Proves this by showing how unimportant space is to members of Parliament in England when compared with the great importance office size is to U.S. congresspersons and senators.
- Hall is an anthropologist. He realizes his reactions are instinctual. Hall wants to refute the idea that people are the same all over the world. Says what culture you are from determines your attitudes and behavior.
- He learns from Japanese friends that workers are hired for life and view their companies as family. Would this be for me? In Japan, group identity is all-important.
- Hall describes two tour groups, one Japanese and one American, as an example of Japanese acceptance of regimentation, whereas Americans go off on their own.
- The answer to the mystery of why he was being moved: moving him meant he was accepted as a member of the hotel family. They were treating him informally, as if he were Japanese: a compliment not an insult. Informality is highly valued because the entire culture is based on the opposite—regimentation and conformity.

SUMMARIZING

Reading journals may also be used to record summaries of the essays you read. The value of summarizing is that it requires you to pay close attention to the reading in order to distinguish the main points from the supporting details.

Summarizing tests your understanding of the material by requiring you to restate, concisely, the author's main ideas in your own words. First, create a list composed of sentences that express in your own words the essential idea of each paragraph, or each group of related paragraphs. Your previous underlining of topic sentences, main ideas, and key terms (as part of the process of critical reading) will help you follow the author's line of thought. Next, whittle down this list still further by eliminating repetitive ideas. Then formulate a thesis statement that expresses the main idea behind the article. Start your summary with this thesis statement and combine your notes so that the summary flows together and reads easily.

Remember that summaries should be much shorter than the original text (whether the original is 1 page or 20 pages long) and should accurately reflect the central ideas of the article in as few words as possible. Try not to intrude your own opinions or critical evaluations into the summary. Besides requiring you to read the original piece more closely, summaries are necessary first steps in developing papers that synthesize materials from different sources. The test for a good summary, of course, is whether a person reading it without having read the original article would get an accurate, balanced, and complete account of the original material.

Writing an effective summary is easier if you first compose a rough summary, using no more than two complete sentences to summarize each of the paragraphs or group of paragraphs in the original article. A student's rough summary of Hall's essay might appear as follows. Numbers show which paragraphs are summarized from the article.

1–4 Hall describes how an event that occurred while he was staying in a Tokyo hotel (the management moved his belongings to another room) aroused his curiosity. When this happens again Hall begins to wonder why this did not occur during his stay at Frank Lloyd Wright's Imperial Hotel in Tokyo.

5 At another hotel in Hakone, Hall is given an *okata*, a kind of cotton robe, to wear instead of his clothes and is encouraged to greet other guests wearing the same *okata* when he sees them outside the hotel.

6–8 At a third hotel, a country inn near Kyoto, Hall is moved again, this time to a different hotel in what he perceives to be a less-desirable location. Hall is angry that the Japanese see him as someone who can be moved around without his permission. The hotel turns out to be much more authentic than tourist hotels.

9 Hall thinks he is being treated shabbily because in the United States, one's status is linked with control over personal space.

10–11 Hall realizes that he has been applying an American cultural perspective to these actions. He remembers that in England, members of Parliament have no formal offices, while congressmen and senators equate office size with power.

12–15 Hall concludes each culture is based on a “hidden” logic that applies only to that culture. He learns that in Japan self-esteem does not depend on control over personal space, but on being part of a group. For example, Japanese tourists move as a group and closely follow their guide, while American tourists refuse to accept such discipline.

16 Hall realizes that being moved to different rooms and hotels and being given an *okata* means that he has been accepted and his informal treatment is an honor not an insult.

Based on this list, a student’s formulation of a thesis statement expressing the essential idea of Hall’s essay appears this way:

Every society has a hidden culture that governs behavior that might seem inexplicable to an outsider.

The final summary should contain both this thesis and your restatement of the author’s main ideas without adding any comments that express personal feelings or responses to the ideas presented. Keep in mind that the purpose of a summary or concise restatement of the author’s ideas in your own words is to test your understanding of the material. The summary would normally be introduced by mentioning the author as well as the title of the article:

Edward T. Hall, writing in “Hidden Culture,” believes every society has a hidden culture that governs behavior that might seem inexplicable to an outsider. In Japan, Hall’s initial reactions of anger to being moved to another room in a hotel in Tokyo, having his clothes replaced by a cotton kimono or *okata* in Hakone, and being relocated to a different hotel in Kyoto led him to search for the reasons behind such seemingly bizarre events. Although control over space in America is related to status, Hall realizes that in other cultures, like England, where members of Parliament have no offices, this is not the case. Hall discovers that rather than being an insult, being treated informally meant he was considered to be a member of the hotel “family.”

Although some features of the original essay might have been mentioned, such as the significance of office size in corporations in the United States, the student’s summary of Hall’s essay is still an effective one. The summary accurately and fairly expresses the main ideas in the original.

CHECKLIST FOR SUMMARIZING

- Read the selection or passage, identifying key ideas and supporting evidence.
- Do a quick reread of the material to discover the sections of the argument and to identify the governing ideas and important terms.
- Draft a rough summary by writing one or two sentences for each stage of thought.
- Write a thesis sentence that concisely encapsulates the main point.
- Write a first draft by combining this thesis sentence with the most important ideas in your rough summary and significant details from the selection.
- Revise your summary by comparing it with the original material to see if you covered all the important points.
- Check your style to make sure your summary follows a logical sequence and fairly represents the original passage.

Using Your Reading Journal to Generate Ideas for Writing

You can use all the material in your reading journal (annotations converted to journal entries, reflections, observations, questions, rough and final summaries) to relate your own ideas to the ideas of the person who wrote the essay you are reading. Here are several different kinds of strategies you can use as you analyze an essay in order to generate material for your own:

1. What is missing in the essay? Information that is not mentioned is often just as significant as information the writer chose to include. First, you must have already summarized the main points in the article. Then, make up another list of points that are not discussed, that is, missing information that you would have expected an article of this kind to have covered or touched on. Write down the possible reasons why this missing material has been omitted, censored, or downplayed. What possible purpose could the author have had? Look for vested interests or biases that could explain why information of a certain kind is missing.

2. You might analyze an essay in terms of what you already know and what you didn't know about the issue. To do this, simply make a list of what concepts were already familiar to you and a second list of information or concepts that were new to you. Then write down three to five questions you would like answered about this new information and make a list of possible sources you might consult.

3. You might consider whether the author presents a solution to a problem. List the short-term and long-term effects or consequences of the action the writer recommends. You might wish to evaluate the solution to see whether positive short-term benefits are offset by possible negative long-term consequences not mentioned by the author. This might provide you with a starting point for your own essay.

4. After clearly stating what the author’s position on an issue is, try to imagine other people who would view the same issue from a different perspective. How would the concerns of these people be different from those of the writer? Try to think of as many different people, representing as many different perspectives, as you can. Now, try to think of a solution that would satisfy both the author and at least one other person who holds a different viewpoint. Try to imagine you are an arbitrator negotiating an agreement. How would your recommendation require both parties to compromise and reach an agreement?

A writer presenting an argument must keep an open mind, consider points of view other than his or her own, define or stipulate the meaning of key terms in the argument, and present a clear statement of the thesis. The writer must present the argument in logical order; cite the best and most relevant evidence, statistics, examples, and testimony available; state assumptions when necessary; draw conclusions that seem plausible and are consistent with the known facts; and effectively use rhetorical strategies to adapt the argument for a given audience.

Three Short Arguments for Critical Reading

Examine the following three arguments and notice how Roger Ebert (“Great Movies”) focuses on questions of artistic interpretation, Eric Schlosser (“Kid Kustomers”) addresses a social phenomenon, and Loren Eiseley (“How Flowers Changed the World”) proposes a scientific theory. All three authors, although in very different fields, propose answers or solutions that have arisen from their inquiries. The conclusions they reached almost certainly were not their first ideas. They followed a trial-and-error process of defining the problem more clearly and matching various explanations to available evidence.

Roger Ebert

Great Movies

Roger Ebert (b. 1942) is widely known for his television program Ebert and Roeper and for his columns on film for the Chicago-Sun Times, where he has been on the staff since 1967. He won a Pulitzer Prize in 1975 for film criticism and has written, among other books, A Kiss Is Still a

Kiss (1985), Behind the Phantom's Mask (1993), and The Great Movies (2002), from which the following selection is reprinted.

Thinking Critically

As you read, try to identify the artistic criteria that underlie the eclectic list of films Ebert mentions in his essay.

Every other week I visit a film classic from the past and write about it. My “Great Movies” series began in the autumn of 1996 and now reaches a landmark of 100 titles with today’s review of Federico Fellini’s “8 1/2,” which is, appropriately, a film about a film director. I love my job, and this is the part I love the most.

We have completed the first century of film. Too many moviegoers are stuck in the present and recent past. When people tell me that “Ferris Bueller’s Day Off” or “Total Recall” are their favorite films, I wonder: Have they tasted the joys of Welles, Bunuel, Ford, Murnau, Keaton, Hitchcock, Wilder or Kurosawa? If they like Ferris Bueller, what would they think of Jacques Tati’s “Mr. Hulot’s Holiday,” also about a strange day of misadventures? If they like “Total Recall,” have they seen Fritz Lang’s “Metropolis,” also about an artificial city ruled by fear?

I ask not because I am a film snob. I like to sit in the dark and enjoy movies. I think of old films as a resource of treasures. Movies have been made for 100 years, in color and black and white, in sound and silence, in wide-screen and the classic frame, in English and every other language. To limit yourself to popular hits and recent years is like being Ferris Bueller but staying home all day.

I believe we are born with our minds open to wonderful experiences, and only slowly learn to limit ourselves to narrow tastes. We are taught to lose our curiosity by the bludgeon-blows of mass marketing, which brainwash us to see “hits,” and discourage exploration.

I know that many people dislike subtitled films, and that few people reading this article will have ever seen a film from Iran, for example. And yet a few weeks ago at my Overlooked Film Festival at the University of Illinois, the free kiddie matinee was “Children of Heaven,” from Iran. It was a story about a boy who loses his sister’s sneakers through no fault of his own, and is afraid to tell his parents. So he and his sister secretly share the same pair of shoes. Then he learns of a footrace where third prize is . . . a pair of sneakers.

“Anyone who can read at the third-grade level can read these subtitles,” I told the audience of 1,000 kids and some parents. “If you can’t, it’s OK for your parents or older kids to read them aloud—just not too loudly.”

The lights went down and the movie began. I expected a lot of reading aloud. There was none. Not all of the kids were old enough to read, but apparently they were picking up the story just by watching and using their intelligence. The audience was spellbound. No noise, restlessness, punching, kicking, running down the aisles. Just eyes lifted up to a fascinating story. Afterward, we asked kids up on the stage to ask questions or talk about the film. What they said indicated how involved they had become.

Kids. And yet most adults will not go to a movie from Iran, Japan, France or Brazil. They will, however, go to any movie that has been plugged with a \$30 million ad campaign and sanctified as a “box-office winner.” Yes, some of these big hits are good, and a few of them are great. But what happens between the time we are 8 and the time we are 20 that robs us of our curiosity? What turns movie lovers into consumers? What does it say about you if you only want to see what everybody else is seeing?

I don’t know. What I do know is that if you love horror movies, your life as a filmgoer is not complete until you see “Nosferatu.” I know that once you see Orson Welles appear in the doorway in “The Third Man,” you will never forget his curious little smile. And that the life and death of the old man in “Ikiru” will be an inspiration every time you remember it.

10 I have not written any of the 100 Great Movies reviews from memory. Every film has been seen fresh, right before writing. When I’m at home, I often watch them on Sunday mornings. It’s a form of prayer: The greatest films are meditations on why we are here. When I’m on the road, there’s no telling where I’ll see them. I saw “Written on the Wind” on a cold January night at the Everyman Cinema in Hampstead, north of London. I saw “Last Year at Marienbad” on a DVD on my PowerBook while at the Cannes Film Festival. I saw “2001: A Space Odyssey” in 70mm at Cyberfest, the celebration of HAL 9000’s birthday, at the University of Illinois. I saw “Battleship Potemkin” projected on a sheet on the outside wall of the Vickers Theater in Three Oaks, Mich., while three young musicians played the score they had written for it. And Ozu’s “Floating Weeds” at the Hawaii Film Festival, as part of a shot-by-shot seminar that took four days.

When people asked me where they should begin in looking at classic films, I never knew what to say. Now I can say, “Plunge into these Great Movies, and go where they lead you.”

There’s a next step. If you’re really serious about the movies, get together with two or three friends who care as much as you do. Watch the film all the way through on video. Then start again at the top. Whenever anyone sees anything they want to comment on, freeze the frame. Talk about what you’re looking at.

The story, the performances, the sets, the locations. The camera movement, the lighting, the composition, the special effects. The color, the shadows, the sound, the music. The themes, the tone, the mood, the style.

There are no right answers. The questions are the point. They make you an active movie watcher, not a passive one. You should not be a witness at a movie, but a collaborator. Directors cannot make the film without you. Together, you can accomplish amazing things. The more you learn, the quicker you'll know when the director is not doing his share of the job. That's the whole key to being a great moviegoer. There's nothing else to it.

ENGAGING the Text

1. How has Ebert's lifelong obsession with movies taught him to value out of the way foreign films and underappreciated classics?
2. What factors have made audiences into consumers rather than film lovers?

EVALUATING the Argument

1. How does Ebert's example about free kiddie matinee films illustrate his thesis that great movies stand on their own and audiences do not need to limit themselves to preapproved "hits"?
2. What means does Ebert use to offset potential criticism that he is an elitist "film snob"?

EXPLORING the Issue

1. Do you agree with Ebert's contention that mass marketing brainwashes us and causes us to lose our natural curiosity?
2. Have you ever sought out an unfamiliar foreign film or classic film instead of the "hyped" hit of the moment? What is your favorite film and why do you like it?

CONNECTING Different Perspectives

1. Would John M. Darley and Bibb Latané's hypothesis ("Why People Don't Help in a Crisis") explain why moviegoers accept the consensus of the crowd and don't think independently as Ebert recommends?

Eric Schlosser

Kid Kustomers

Eric Schlosser is a contributing editor of The Atlantic. His articles on marijuana and the law (August and September 1994) won a National Magazine Award for reporting. He has appeared on 60 Minutes. In “Kid Kustomers” from Fast Food Nation: the Dark Side of the All-American Meal (2001), Schlosser reveals how advertisers are becoming more savvy in marketing their products toward children. His latest book is Reefer Madness: Sex, Drugs, and Cheap Labor in the American Black Market (2003).

Thinking Critically

Notice the range of evidence that Schlosser uses to substantiate his analysis of how children have become the pawns of companies who use them to pester their parents into buying certain products.

Twenty-five years ago, only a handful of American companies directed their marketing at children—Disney, McDonald’s, candy makers, toy makers, manufacturers of breakfast cereal. Today children are being targeted by phone companies, oil companies, and automobile companies as well as clothing stores and restaurant chains. The explosion in children’s advertising occurred during the 1980s. Many working parents, feeling guilty about spending less time with their kids, started spending more money on them. One marketing expert has called the 1980s “the decade of the child consumer.” After largely ignoring children for years, Madison Avenue began to scrutinize and pursue them. Major ad agencies now have children’s divisions, and a variety of marketing firms focus solely on kids. These groups tend to have sweet-sounding names: Small Talk, Kid Connection, Kid2Kid, the Gepetto Group, Just Kids, Inc. At least three industry publications—*Youth Market Alert*, *Selling to Kids*, and *Marketing to Kids Report*—cover the latest ad campaigns and market research. The growth in children’s advertising has been driven by efforts to increase not just current, but also future, consumption. Hoping that nostalgic childhood memories of a brand will lead to a lifetime of purchases, companies now plan “cradle-to-grave” advertising strategies. They have come to believe what Ray Kroc and Walt Disney realized long ago—a person’s “brand loyalty” may begin as early as the age of two. Indeed, market research has found that children often recognize a brand logo before they can recognize their own name.

The discontinued Joe Camel ad campaign, which used a hip cartoon character to sell cigarettes, showed how easily children can be influenced by the

right corporate mascot. A 1991 study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* found that nearly all of America's six-year-olds could identify Joe Camel, who was just as familiar to them as Mickey Mouse. Another study found that one-third of the cigarettes illegally sold to minors were Camels. More recently, a marketing firm conducted a survey in shopping malls across the country, asking children to describe their favorite TV ads. According to the CME KidCom Ad Traction Study II, released at the 1999 Kids' Marketing Conference in San Antonio, Texas, the Taco Bell commercials featuring a talking chihuahua were the most popular fast food ads. The kids in the survey also like Pepsi and Nike commercials, but their favorite television ad was for Budweiser.

The bulk of the advertising directed at children today has an immediate goal. "It's not just getting kids to whine," one marketer explained in *Selling to Kids*, "it's giving them a specific reason to ask for the product." Years ago sociologist Vance Packard described children as "surrogate salesmen" who had to persuade other people, usually their parents, to buy what they wanted. Marketers now use different terms to explain the intended response to their ads—such as "leverage," "the nudge factor," "pester power." The aim of most children's advertising is straightforward: Get kids to nag their parents and nag them well.

James U. McNeal, a professor of marketing at Texas A&M University, is considered America's leading authority on marketing to children. In his book *Kids As Customers* (1992), McNeal provides marketers with a thorough analysis of "children's requesting styles and appeals." He classifies juvenile nagging tactics into seven major categories. A *pleading* nag is one accompanied by repetitions of words like "please" or "mom, mom, mom." A *persistent* nag involves constant requests for the coveted product and may include the phrase "I'm gonna ask just one more time." *Forceful* nags are extremely pushy and may include subtle threats, like "Well, then, I'll go and ask Dad." *Demonstrative* nags are the most high-risk, often characterized by full-blown tantrums in public places, breath-holding, tears, a refusal to leave the store. *Sugar-coated* nags promise affection in return for a purchase and may rely on seemingly heartfelt declarations like "You're the best dad in the world." *Threatening* nags are youthful forms of blackmail, vows of eternal hatred and of running away if something isn't bought. *Pity* nags claim the child will be heartbroken, teased, or socially stunted if the parent refuses to buy a certain item. "All of these appeals and styles may be used in combination," McNeal's research has discovered, "but kids tend to stick to one or two of each that proved most effective . . . for their own parents."

- 5 McNeal never advocates turning children into screaming, breath-holding monsters. He has been studying "Kid Kustomers" for more than thirty years and believes in a more traditional marketing approach. "The key is getting

children to see a firm . . . in much the same way as [they see] mom or dad, grandma or grandpa,” McNeal argues. “Likewise, if a company can ally itself with universal values such as patriotism, national defense, and good health, it is likely to nurture belief in it among children.”

Before trying to affect children’s behavior, advertisers have to learn about their tastes. Today’s market researchers not only conduct surveys of children in shopping malls, they also organize focus groups for kids as young as two or three. They analyze children’s artwork, hire children to run focus groups, stage slumber parties and then question children into the night. They send cultural anthropologists into homes, stores, fast food restaurants, and other places where kids like to gather, quietly and surreptitiously observing the behavior of prospective customers. They study the academic literature on child development, seeking insights from the work of theorists such as Erik Erikson and Jean Piaget. They study the fantasy lives of young children, they apply the findings in advertisements and product designs.

Dan S. Acuff—the president of Youth Market System Consulting and the author of *What Kids Buy and Why* (1997)—stresses the importance of dream research. Studies suggest that until the age of six, roughly 80 percent of children’s dreams are about animals. Rounded, soft creatures like Barney, Disney’s animated characters, and the Teletubbies therefore have an obvious appeal to young children. The Character Lab, a division of Youth Market System Consulting, uses a proprietary technique called Character Appeal Quadrant analysis to help companies develop new mascots. The technique purports to create imaginary characters who perfectly fit the targeted age group’s level of cognitive and neurological development.

Children’s clubs have for years been considered an effective means of targeting ads and collecting demographic information; the clubs appeal to a child’s fundamental need for status and belonging. Disney’s Mickey Mouse Club, formed in 1930, was one of the trailblazers. During the 1980s and 1990s, children’s clubs proliferated, as corporations used them to solicit the names, addresses, zip codes, and personal comments of young customers. “Marketing messages sent through a club not only can be personalized,” James McNeal advises, “they can be tailored for a certain age or geographical group.” A well-designed and well-run children’s club can be extremely good for business. According to one Burger King executive, the creation of a Burger King Kids Club in 1991 increased the sales of children’s meals as much as 300 percent.

The Internet has become another powerful tool for assembling data about children. In 1998 a federal investigation of Web sites aimed at children found that 89 percent requested personal information from kids; only 1 percent required that children obtain parental approval before supplying the information.

A character on the McDonald's Web site told children that Ronald McDonald was "the ultimate authority in everything." The site encouraged kids to send Ronald an e-mail revealing their favorite menu item at McDonald's, their favorite book, their favorite sports team—and their name. Fast food Web sites no longer ask children to provide personal information without first gaining parental approval; to do so is now a violation of federal law, thanks to the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, which took effect in April of 2000.

10 Despite the growing importance of the Internet, television remains the primary medium for children's advertising. The effects of these TV ads have long been a subject of controversy. In 1978, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) tried to ban all television ads directed at children seven years old or younger. Many studies had found that young children often could not tell the difference between television programming and television advertising. They also could not comprehend the real purpose of commercials and trusted that advertising claims were true. Michael Pertschuk, the head of the FTC, argued that children need to be shielded from advertising that preys upon their immaturity. "They cannot protect themselves," he said, "against adults who exploit their present-mindedness."

The FTC's proposed ban was supported by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, the Consumers Union, and the Child Welfare League, among others. But it was attacked by the National Association of Broadcasters, the Toy Manufacturers of America, and the Association of National Advertisers. The industry groups lobbied Congress to prevent any restrictions on children's ads and sued in federal court to block Pertschuk from participating in future FTC meetings on the subject. In April of 1981, three months after the inauguration of President Ronald Reagan, an FTC staff report argued that a ban on ads aimed at children would be impractical, effectively killing the proposal. "We are delighted by the FTC's reasonable recommendation," said the head of the National Association of Broadcasters.

The Saturday-morning children's ads that caused angry debates twenty years ago now seem almost quaint. Far from being banned, TV advertising aimed at kids is now broadcast twenty-four hours a day, closed-captioned and in stereo. Nickelodeon, the Disney Channel, the Cartoon Network, and the other children's cable networks are now responsible for about 80 percent of all television viewing by kids. None of these networks existed before 1979. The typical American child now spends about twenty-one hours a week watching television—roughly one and a half months of TV every year. That does not include the time children spend in front of a screen watching videos, playing video games, or using the computer. Outside of school, the typical American child spends more time watching television than doing any other activity except sleeping. During the course of a year, he or she watches more than thirty thousand TV commercials. Even the nation's

youngest children are watching a great deal of television. About one-quarter of American children between the ages of two and five have a TV in their room.

ENGAGING the Text

1. What factors led to an upsurge in advertising directed toward children in the 1980s?
2. How is pester power used to influence what parents buy?

EVALUATING the Argument

1. What sophisticated marketing techniques do advertisers use to identify what children will want in the products they pester their parents to buy for them?
2. How do marketers use the Internet as well as television to reach their audience?

EXPLORING the Issue

1. To research children's advertising you might watch a Saturday morning cartoon show and note the connections between the characters and the products directly linked to them. Write a short essay summarizing your findings.
2. Study an ad in any medium specifically targeted at children and in a few paragraphs analyze the components (characters, music, storyline, images, colors) that contribute to its effectiveness.

CONNECTING Different Perspectives

1. Compare and contrast the marketing strategies directed toward children and adults in Schlosser's essay and in Robert F. Hartley's analysis in "The Edsel: Marketing, Planning and Research Gone Awry."

Loren Eiseley

How Flowers Changed the World

Loren Eiseley (1907–1977) was born in Lincoln, Nebraska, and received his Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania in 1937. His academic career encompassed the teaching of anthropology, sociology, and the history of science at the University of Kansas, Oberlin College, Columbia, Berkeley, Harvard, and the University of Pennsylvania. His abilities as a natural scientist were matched by

an equal sensitivity to language: Darwin's Century (1958) won the National Phi Beta Kappa Science Award and the Atheneum of Philadelphia Literature Award. Eiseley's writing displays imagination, a passionate concern for the environment, and scientific lucidity. His works include The Immense Journey (1957), The Night Country (1971), and All the Strange Hours (1975). In "How Flowers Changed the World," Eiseley reveals the causal relationship between the evolution of flowers and the subsequent development of warm-blooded mammals and human life on earth.

Thinking Critically

Consider how readers without a scientific background can understand Eiseley's essay because of his skill in communicating his knowledge.

If it had been possible to observe the Earth from the far side of the solar system over the long course of geological epochs, the watchers might have been able to discern a subtle change in the light emanating from our planet. That world of long ago would, like the red deserts of Mars, have reflected light from vast drifts of stone and gravel, the sands of wandering wastes, the blackness of naked basalt, the yellow dust of endlessly moving storms. Only the ceaseless marching of the clouds and the intermittent flashes from the restless surface of the sea would have told a different story, but still essentially a barren one. Then, as the millennia rolled away and age followed age, a new and greener light would, by degrees, have come to twinkle across those endless miles.

This is the only difference those far watchers, by the use of subtle instruments, might have perceived in the whole history of the planet Earth, Yet that slowly growing green twinkle would have contained the epic march of life from the tidal oozes upward across the raw and unclothed continents. Out of the vast chemical bath of the sea—not from the deeps, but from the element-rich, light-exposed platforms of the continental shelves—wandering fingers of green had crept upward along the meanderings of river systems and fringed the gravels of forgotten lakes.

In those first ages plants clung of necessity to swamps and watercourses. Their reproductive processes demanded direct access to water. Beyond the primitive ferns and mosses that enclosed the borders of swamps and streams the rocks still lay vast and bare, the winds still swirled the dust of a naked planet. The grass cover that holds our world secure in place was still millions of years in the future. The green marchers had gained a soggy foothold upon the land but that was all. They did not reproduce by seeds but by microscopic swimming sperm that had to wriggle their way through water to fertilize the female cell. Such plants in their higher forms had clever adaptations for the use of rain water in their sexual phases, and survived with increasing success in a wet land

environment. They now seem part of man's normal environment. The truth is, however, that there is nothing very "normal" about nature. Once upon a time there were no flowers at all.

A little while ago—about one hundred million years, as the geologist estimates time in the history of our four-billion-year-old planet—flowers were not to be found anywhere on the five continents. Wherever one might have looked, from the poles to the equator, one would have seen only the cold dark monotonous green of a world whose plant life possessed no other color.

5 Somewhere, just a short time before the close of the Age of Reptiles, there occurred a soundless, violent explosion. It lasted millions of years, but it was an explosion, nevertheless. It marked the emergence of the angiosperms—the flowering plants. Even the great evolutionist, Charles Darwin, called them "an abominable mystery," because they appeared so suddenly and spread so fast.

Flowers changed the face of the planet. Without them, the world we know—even man himself—would never have existed. Francis Thompson, the English poet, once wrote that one could not pluck a flower without troubling a star. Intuitively he had sensed like a naturalist the enormous interlinked complexity of life. Today we know that the appearance of the flowers contained also the equally mystifying emergence of man.

If we were to go back into the Age of Reptiles, its drowned swamps and birdless forest would reveal to us a warmer but, on the whole, a sleepier world than that of today. Here and there, it is true, the serpent heads of bottom-feeding dinosaurs might be upreared in suspicion of their huge flesh-eating compatriots. Tyrannosaurs, enormous bipedal caricatures of men, would stalk mindlessly across the sites of future cities and go their slow way down into the dark of geologic time.

In all that world of living things nothing saw save with the intense concentration of the hunt, nothing moved except with the grave sleepwalking intentness of the instinct-driven brain. Judged by modern standards, it was a world in slow motion, a cold-blooded world whose occupants were most active at noonday but torpid on chill nights, their brains damped by a slower metabolism than any known to even the most primitive of warm-blooded animals today.

A high metabolic rate and the maintenance of a constant body temperature are supreme achievements in the evolution of life. They enable an animal to escape, within broad limits, from the overheating or the chilling of its immediate surroundings, and at the same time to maintain a peak mental efficiency. Creatures without a high metabolic rate are slaves to weather. Insects in the first frosts of autumn all run down like little clocks. Yet if you pick one up and breathe warmly upon it, it will begin to move about once more.

10 In a sheltered spot such creatures may sleep away the winter, but they are hopelessly immobilized. Though a few warm-blooded mammals, such as the

woodchuck of our day, have evolved a way of reducing their metabolic rate in order to undergo winter hibernation, it is a survival mechanism with drawbacks, for it leaves the animal helplessly exposed if enemies discover him during his period of suspended animation. Thus bear or woodchuck, big animal or small, must seek, in this time of descending sleep, a safe refuge in some hidden den or burrow. Hibernation is, therefore, primarily a winter refuge of small, easily concealed animals rather than of large ones.

A high metabolic rate, however, means a heavy intake of energy in order to sustain body warmth and efficiency. It is for this reason that even some of these later warm-blooded mammals existing in our day have learned to descend into a slower, unconscious rate of living during the winter months when food may be difficult to obtain. On a slightly higher plane they are following the procedure of the cold-blooded frog sleeping in the mud at the bottom of a frozen pond.

The agile brain of the warm-blooded birds and mammals demands a high oxygen consumption and food in concentrated forms, or the creatures cannot long sustain themselves. It was the rise of flowering plants that provided that energy and changed the nature of the living world. Their appearance parallels in a quite surprising manner the rise of the birds and mammals.

Slowly, toward the dawn of the Age of Reptiles, something over two hundred and fifty million years ago, the little naked sperm cells wriggling their way through dew and raindrops had given way to a kind of pollen carried by the wind. Our present-day pine forests represents plants of a pollen-disseminating variety. Once fertilization was no longer dependent on exterior water, the march over drier regions could be extended. Instead of spores simple primitive seeds carrying some nourishment for the young plant had developed, but true flowers were still scores of millions of years away. After a long period of hesitant evolutionary groping, they exploded upon the world with truly revolutionary violence.

The event occurred in Cretaceous times in the close of the Age of Reptiles. Before the coming of the flowering plants our own ancestral stock, the warm-blooded mammals, consisted of a few mousy little creatures hidden in trees and underbrush. A few lizard-like birds with carnivorous teeth flapped awkwardly on ill-aimed flights among archaic shrubbery. None of these insignificant creatures gave evidence of any remarkable talents. The mammals in particular had been around for some millions of years, but had remained well lost in the shadow of the mighty reptiles. Truth to tell, man was still, like the genie in the bottle, encased in the body of a creature about the size of a rat.

15 As for the birds, their reptilian cousins the Pterodactyls, flew farther and better. There was just one thing about the birds that paralleled the physiology of the mammals. They, too, had evolved warm blood and its accompanying temperature control. Nevertheless, if one had been seen stripped of his feathers, he would still have seemed a slightly uncanny and unsightly lizard.

Neither the birds nor the mammals, however, were quite what they seemed. They were waiting for the Age of Flowers. They were waiting for what flowers, and with them the true encased seed, would bring. Fish-eating, gigantic leather-winged reptiles, twenty-eight feet from wing tip to wing tip, hovered over the coasts that one day would be swarming with gulls.

Inland the monotonous green of the pine and spruce forests with their primitive wooden cone flowers stretched everywhere. No grass hindered the fall of the naked seeds to earth. Great sequoias towered to the skies. The world of that time has a certain appeal but it is a giant's world, a world moving slowly like the reptiles who stalked magnificently among the boles of its trees.

The trees themselves are ancient, slow-growing and immense, like the red-wood groves that have survived to our day on the California coast. All is stiff, formal, upright and green, monotonously green. There is no grass as yet; there are no wide plains rolling in the sun, no tiny daisies dotting the meadows underfoot. There is little versatility about this scene; it is, in truth, a giant's world.

A few nights ago it was brought home vividly to me that the world has changed since that far epoch. I was awakened out of sleep by an unknown sound in my living room. Not a small sound—not a creaking timber or a mouse's scurry—but a sharp, rending explosion as though an unwary foot had been put down upon a wine glass. I had come instantly out of sleep and lay tense, unbreathing. I listened for another step. There was none.

20 Unable to stand the suspense any longer, I turned on the light and passed from room to room glancing uneasily behind chairs and into closets. Nothing seemed disturbed, and I stood puzzled in the center of the living room floor. Then a small button-shaped object upon the rug caught my eye. It was hard and polished and glistening. Scattered over the length of the room were several more shining up at me like wary little eyes. A pine cone that had been lying in a dish had been blown the length of the coffee table. The dish itself could hardly have been the source of the explosion. Beside it I found two ribbon-like strips of a velvety-green. I tried to place the two strips together to make a pod. They twisted resolutely away from each other and would no longer fit.

I relaxed in a chair, then, for I had reached a solution of the midnight disturbance. The twisted strips were wistaria pods that I had brought in a day or two previously and placed in the dish. They had chosen midnight to explode and distribute their multiplying fund of life down the length of the room. A plant, a fixed, rooted thing, immobilized in a single pod, had devised a way of propelling its offspring across open space. Immediately there passed before my eyes the million airy troopers of the milkweed pod and the clutching hooks of the sandburs. Seeds on the coyote's tail, seeds on the hunter's coat, thistledown mounting on the winds—all were somehow triumphing over life's limitations.

Yet the ability to do this had not been with them at the beginning. It was the product of endless effort and experiment.

The seeds on my carpet were not going to lie stiffly where they had dropped like their antiquated cousins, the naked seeds on the pine-cone scales. They were travelers. Struck by the thought, I went out next day and collected several other varieties. I line them up now in a row on my desk—so many little capsules of life, winged, hooked or spiked. Every one is an angiosperm, a product of the true flowering plants. Contained in these little boxes is the secret of that far-off Cretaceous explosion of a hundred million years ago that changed the face of the planet. And somewhere in here, I think, as I spoke seriously at one particularly resistant seedcase of a wild grass, was once man himself.

ENGAGING the Text

1. How did the appearance of flowers unchain creatures from their dependency on the climate and make possible the existence of mammalian life?
2. If flowering plants had not appeared, why would birds still be flying reptiles?

EVALUATING the Argument

1. How does Eiseley use the illustration of the exploding seed pod to support his hypothesis about the crucial role played by flowering plants or angiosperms?
2. What words and phrases does Eiseley use to explain the chain of causation in which the appearance of flowering plants made it possible for creatures to evolve with higher metabolic rates?

EXPLORING the Issue

1. Using Eiseley's essay as a model, discuss how any other seemingly unimportant plant, insect, or animal plays an indispensable role in nature.
2. What measures does Eiseley use to communicate his knowledge of complex biological processes so that readers without a scientific background could understand his ideas?

CONNECTING Different Perspectives

1. Explore the conflict between Charles Darwin's theory ("On the Origin of Species") and Eiseley's analysis of what Darwin had called the "abominable mystery" of the sudden appearance of flowering plants.