

TASK A:

Classical rhetoricians like Quintilian taught that a solid argument was composed of six parts:

1. **The introduction** (exordium) - an introductory statement or comment designed to attract your audience's attention.
 2. **The narration** (narratio) - an outline of the basic facts, probably already known to your audience.
 3. **The proposition** (propositio) - a statement of your perspective that you will seek to reinforce throughout your argument.
 4. **The confirmation** (argumentatio - confirmatio) – where you argue your view and share your reasoning/thought process.
 5. **The refutation** (argumentatio - confutatio) – where you undermine your opponent's perspective or an opposing viewpoint.
 6. **The conclusion** (peroratio) – a summary of your arguments, leaving your audience with an appeal.
- **On your copy of the text, can you identify and label these six elements of the writer's argument?**
 - **If any are missing, which are they? Does their absence weaken the overall argument?**
 - **How effective are the writer's arguments at persuading you of his/her viewpoint? Why?**

TASK B:

Précis - A précis is a precise form of summary writing. It must completely represent the ideas and thoughts of the author of the original text in a shorter form, without missing out any of the 'essence' of the original.

Rules for writing a précis:

1. The length of a précis should be approximately one third of the length of the original passage.
2. The précis should be written in the third person.
3. The précis should be written in the past tense.
4. The précis should be summary, not expressive of opinions or analysis.
5. Unrelated or extraneous content should be omitted.
6. A précis should be in your own words – no more than four consecutive words should be lifted from the original at any point.

Write a précis of the article, adhering to these rules.

TASK C:

Because all texts are consciously designed to produce an effect upon an audience, they are persuasive; hence all texts are arguments. Because all texts are “staged” within a social context--that is they involve intentional communication between a speaker and an audience in a given situation--they are dramas. The combination of these two frames, argument and drama, creates the “master-frame”--a frame encompassing all the questions a reader might ask about a text. Examining a text from the master frame gives the most comprehensive analysis possible.

1. How successfully can we apply the above statement to the essay – a non-fiction piece?
2. What is the essay’s intended effect on the audience?
3. Does it achieve this effect? How?
4. What might the social context of the essay be?
5. How successful is the essay as a dramatic monologue on its theme?

TASK D:

Encyclopaedic reading – A quotation that is often misattributed to Einstein suggests ‘*You do not really understand something unless you can explain it to your grandmother.*’

1. With this in mind, select three key ideas from the essay and rewrite them in a form a non-specialist (possibly an elderly relative) could understand.
2. Choose three terms not already covered in the glossary – can you define them in a manner a child could grasp?
3. What are the potential uses of simplistic and brief re-writings?