

# ONRAMPS RHETORIC SUMMER ASSIGNMENT

## 2018/2019

Welcome to OnRamps Rhetoric! In this course, you will learn about effective techniques of persuasion, first by analyzing real-world arguments about a variety of contemporary controversies, and then by crafting your own original arguments based on extensive research that you will conduct over the course of the year.

To prepare for this course, your summer assignment is to read the following editorials and write a research summary over one of the articles. Briefly summarizing what other people have said is one of the most important writing skills that you can learn in your first year of college. In school and elsewhere, you will spend a lot of time telling some people what other people believe.

In college classes, you'll have to tell your professors what experts say. In professional settings, you'll have to explain to your coworkers what experienced professionals do. In public writing, you'll have to say what other citizens believe. Even in scientific reports, when presenting a completely new discovery, you will have to summarize existing "literature" to show why your discovery is relevant to other people's primary research. Fairly and accurately summarizing someone else's argument is clearly important, and it can also be challenging, especially maintaining neutrality if you have strong opinions about the topic.

OnRamps teaches two main approaches to summarizing an argument, the play-by-play method and the argument-breakdown method. Read the following information about each method, and then carefully review the instructions for writing a research summary.

### **PLAY-BY-PLAY SUMMARY:**

A play-by-play narrates each step in an argument. This can be done by summarizing each paragraph or by summarizing each major section (sometimes a paragraph, sometimes a whole chapter) in one or two sentences.

The play-by-play summary shows how the argument progresses: What comes first? What comes second? What comes last? The play-by-play summary also guarantees that the summary will accurately present the order that the writer intended. Finally, the play-by-play summary catches all the major parts of the argument. Nothing significant will be left out.

In order to write a play-by-play summary, we recommend that you first read through an article and mark all the places where the topic changes or where the writer seems to stop doing one thing (such as introducing the main idea) and starts doing another (such as giving background information).

Play-by-play summaries show you how an argument unfolds. Play-by-play summaries also give a good sense of how much attention the writer affords to particular topics and subjects. Finally, play-by-play summarizing allows you to capture the feel of the article.

Since you're offering a miniature, paraphrased version of the argument, your summary may well appear to be a short version of the article itself. Carefully inserted direct quotes will additionally capture the author's voice and tone.

## **ARGUMENT-BREAKDOWN SUMMARY:**

The argument-breakdown summary tries to take the argument apart and emphasize both its key components and their relation to one another. You point out, for example, the main claim and the key reasons supporting that claim without exactly repeating the argument's arrangement. We suggest breaking the argument down into its principal claim, its main reasons, and its evidence. Later in this class, we'll explore these parts of an argument in much greater detail. For now, however, a few simple definitions will suffice.

The principal claim is the main idea, the feeling, or the action that an author wants the audience to believe, to feel, or to do after reading, hearing, or seeing an argument.

Reasons are things that we come up with when we're trying to convince someone. Reasons can usually be expressed after the word "because" and help to support the principal claim.

Evidence is the information we find when we're trying to convince someone. Types of evidence include testimony, statistics, and examples. Specific mention of particular people, statements, events, and quotes--all these things count as evidence. And all this evidence can support either a reason or a principal claim.

In order to write your argument breakdown summary, we will suggest the following steps:

1. First label (underline or highlight) the principal claim. If the author doesn't state the principal claim explicitly, summarize the claim in your own words.
2. Then, label all the evidence--the specific examples, statistics, real people or events that get mentioned in the article.
3. Finally, look for the reasons.

You will find the last step the hardest because people rarely say how they're trying to convince an audience. If people announced their plans to persuade, audiences would rarely be persuaded. You might say to someone, "Now I'm going to persuade you by mentioning these three reasons and these five pieces of evidence." But when you say something like this, you put the audience on guard. They will likely try to resist your efforts at persuasion. The better strategy is to simply say what you believe and to give your reasons and your evidence in clear and plain language. Since the person who argues will rarely label the parts of her argument, the person summarizing must find and label these parts.

## **Texas' high teen birth rate is result of lack of contraception and sex education, new study says**

By [Claire Lampen](#) | June 5, 2017

A study published in the June issue of *Obstetrics & Gynecology* suggests the lack of contraception access and sex education in schools is responsible for Texas' remarkably high teen pregnancy rate.

Researchers at the University of Florida-Pensacola looked at live births by girls from the ages of 15 and 19 nationwide between 2006 and 2012. Researchers analyzed areas where at least 100,000 teenage females lived and specifically looked at places with particularly high and low birth rates. As [NPR](#) reported, a number of the high-risk clusters fell in Texas, with teen birth rates that, in some cases, were 40% or 50% higher than the national average.

Texas has one of the highest teen pregnancy rates in the country — the fifth highest, according to the National Campaign to End Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy. In 2014, Texas saw more than 35,000 teen births. Often, teen births mean worse health outcomes for both mother and child, and because pregnancy is likely to interrupt the mother's education, it might set the mother up to earn less in the future.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention cites low education and low income as two driving forces behind teen pregnancy, but as NPR noted, those two variables don't tell the whole story. The University of Florida study "controlled for poverty as a variable and [found] these 10 centers where their teen birth rates were much higher than would be predicted," study co-author Dr. Julie DeCesare told NPR. Notably, four of the top 10 high-risk clusters were located in Texas.

Gwen Daverth, CEO of the Texas Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, told NPR that Texas teens are often left woefully underprepared for sex, thanks to policy engineered by conservative lawmakers.

Whereas other states and cities have lowered teen birth rates by expanding access to birth control and sex ed and making long-acting, reversible contraception — like IUDs or hormonal implants — readily available, especially to Medicaid patients, Texas has largely done the opposite.

Evelyn Flores holds her 1-month-old daughter at a mobile health clinic serving teen mothers in Garland, Texas, in 2006. L.M. Otero/AP

Texas Republicans moved to turn down federal Medicaid funding in 2011, with an eye toward shuttering Planned Parenthood centers. Birth rates and maternal mortality rates rose, and while 31 of the state's 74 Planned Parenthoods did close, there's a good chance that only compounded the problem: States with more Planned Parenthoods have fewer teen births.

"What we see is there are not supports in place," Daverth said. "We're not connecting high-risk youth with contraception services. And we're not supporting youth in making decisions to be abstinent."

In 2015, Texas began offering free birth control to low-income teens, with just one string attached: parental permission. Indeed, the Lone Star State requires most people under the age of 18 to present completed parental consent forms to access contraception. As NPR pointed out, this means a teen mother can't necessarily get birth control on her own — which may help explain why Texas has the nation's highest rate of repeat teen pregnancy.

On top of that, a quarter of Texas school districts do not offer sex education, while nearly 60% teach abstinence-only programs, according to the Texas Tribune. The problem is, that tactic doesn't work: Abstinence-only sex education has repeatedly proven ineffective and often presents inaccurate information that leaves participants even less prepared for sex. States that teach abstinence tend to have — you guessed it — higher teen pregnancy rates.

None of this is surprising: Birth control and sex ed are thought to be twin factors behind the nation's declining numbers of teen births. If Texas really wants to help its teenage population, the path forward is clear — but requires a departure from Republicans' legislative agenda.

Lampen, Claire. "Texas' high teen birth rate is result of lack of contraception and sex education, new study says." Mic Network, 5 Jun. 2017, <https://mic.com/articles/178926/texas-high-teen-birth-rate-is-result-of-lack-of-contraception-and-sex-education-new-study-says#.VA0QYpXTY>. Accessed 5 May 2018.

## **Proposed Changes to SNAP in the Farm Bill Could Leave Rural Texans Hungry**

The changes would waylay working-class families in small-town Texas, where a country-to-city exodus has caused some rural economies to flounder, advocates say.

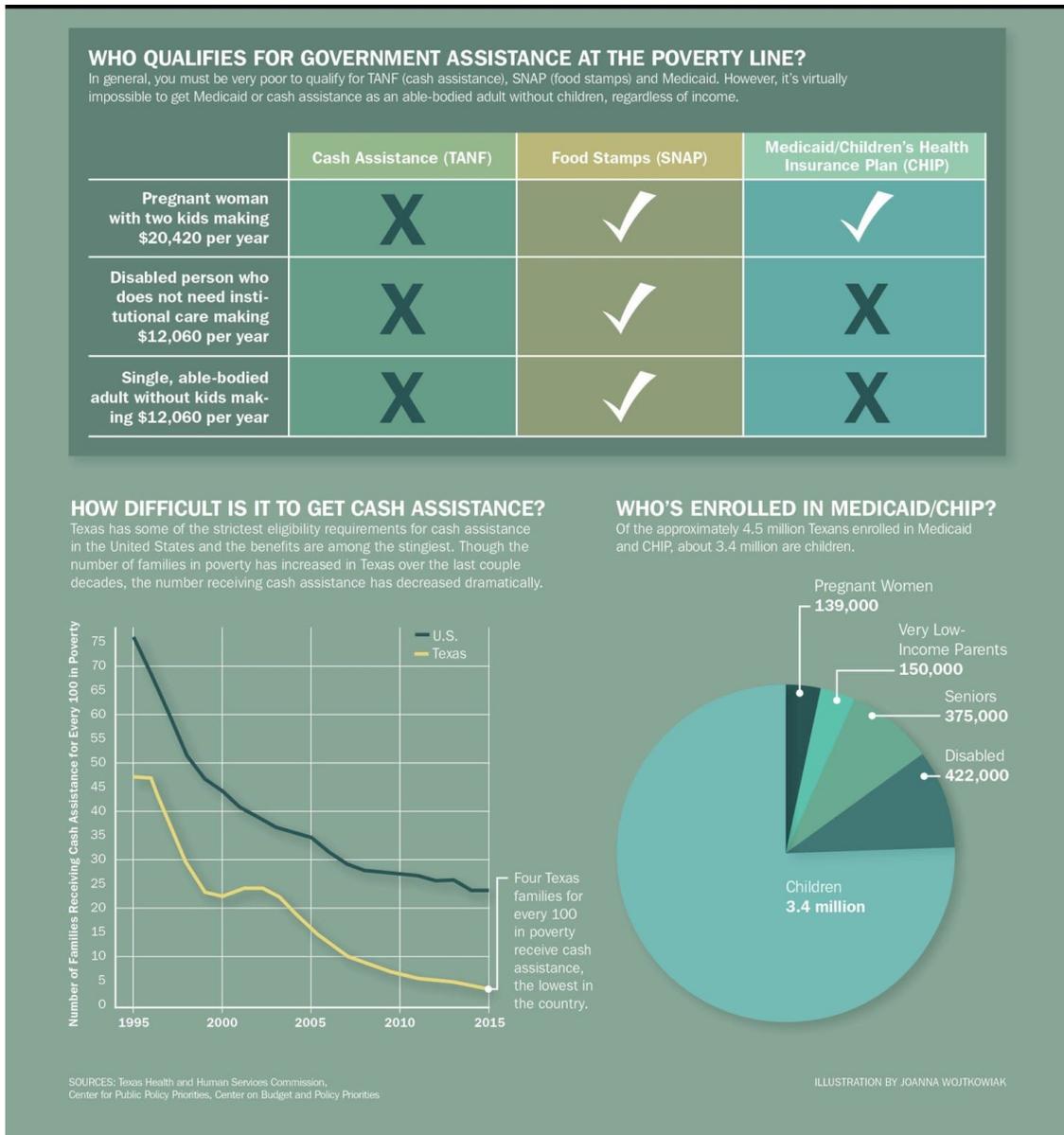
Libby Campbell hates to see people in West Texas go hungry, but that's exactly what could happen if Congressional Republicans follow through with their plan to cut off food aid to those who miss one month of work. Campbell is the executive director of the West Texas Food Bank, which serves 19 mostly rural counties surrounding Odessa. She said some of the region's 56,000 adults and children enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) could

be left in the lurch by lawmakers' get-tough-on-freeloaders rhetoric.

"It's a vast rural community we service," Campbell said. "They are located in food deserts. ... SNAP gives people access to food they wouldn't normally have access to."

This month, the GOP-controlled House Agriculture Committee released its draft of the [2018 Farm Bill](#), the sprawling, \$87 billion omnibus legislation that funds commodity crop price supports, food stamps and a wide range of other farm and nutrition initiatives. Included in the bill's text is a proposal to impose stricter work requirements on people who receive benefits through SNAP, formerly called the food stamp program.

An estimated 5 million to 7 million people nationwide would be affected by the proposed restrictions, and as many as 1 million people could be forced off the program in the next decade, the *Washington Post* [reports](#).



Click to enlarge.

**JOANNA WOJTKOWIAK**

In order to [get benefits](#) currently, Texans ages 18 to 59 who aren't disabled or pregnant must work part-time or agree to take a job if offered. The proposed rules would require those individuals to work at least 20 hours per week regularly within a month of joining the program, or risk being booted from SNAP for 12 months. Though parents of children younger than 6 would be exempt, anti-hunger advocates say the tighter restrictions would waylay working-class families, especially in small-town Texas, where a country-to-city [exodus](#) has caused some rural economies to flounder.

In Texas, SNAP participation is [slightly higher](#) in less populated areas than in big cities, a trend attributed to [rural poverty](#). “They’re going to be hit hard in these areas,” said Celia Cole, CEO of Feeding Texas, an organization that advocates for a statewide network of food banks.

The move to inject stricter SNAP rules into the Farm Bill is part of the larger Republican agenda to reduce what party leadership views as Americans’ over-reliance on government cheese. The problem, the thinking goes, is that we make it too easy for people not to work. Retiring House Speaker Paul Ryan said he views stricter work requirements as “[the final installment](#)” of the agenda. Never mind that SNAP pays on average \$254 a month — hardly enough to stand in for an actual job — and 52 percent of working-age SNAP recipients [work](#) during the month they receive benefits. It’s just that many of them are in unstable jobs with unpredictable hours or in jobs that don’t pay enough to make ends meet.

**“They are located in food deserts. ... SNAP gives people access to food they wouldn’t normally have access to.”**

Under the proposed rules, SNAP recipients who don’t meet the minimum work requirements can instead opt to enroll in a workforce training program. Midland Republican Mike Conaway, who chairs the U.S. House Agriculture Committee and is the lead architect of the Farm Bill draft, [has called](#) the training provisions “a springboard out of poverty to a good paying job.” The West Texas Food Bank is in Conaway’s Congressional district.

Many states, including Texas, already have workforce training programs in place for SNAP recipients, but there’s [little evidence](#) that they’re effective. The most recent U.S. Department of Agriculture [review](#) of the programs, conducted in 1994, found that the programs were mostly unsuccessful. In Texas, a lack of funds for effective workforce training programs means that “training” usually consists of recipients simply applying for jobs to fulfill the program’s quota, said Rachel Cooper, senior policy analyst at the Center for Public Policy Priorities.

“What ends up happening is people jumping through hoops, checking off boxes, pushing paperwork,” Cooper said. “If they can’t do that for one month [under proposed rules], they will be sanctioned. ... That’s not helping any child get fed. That’s not helping any American become a better worker.”

The Farm Bill draft proposes a nearly tenfold increase in funding for SNAP work training programs (from \$90 million to \$1 billion), which Conaway argues will make those initiatives more effective. But Cooper and other critics say scaling up training programs for the estimated 3 million people who suddenly will be required to enroll will be a herculean task for states.

Kermit Kaleba, director of federal policy at the National Skills Coalition, [told](#) Politico this week that embarking on such an effort would be tantamount to building half of the nation’s community colleges from the ground up. An agriculture committee aide said that the proposed work requirements wouldn’t take effect until 2021, more than enough time for states to beef up their training programs. “The states are going to need a little transition time to figure out who can be their partners in providing many of these services,” the aide said.

The worst-case scenario, anti-hunger advocates say, is that people who need SNAP will leave the program, either because they’re forced off it or because the new requirements are too burdensome. In lieu of SNAP, hungry Texans will turn to other forms of assistance, such as Campbell’s food bank. “It’ll put stress on food banks and local feeding agencies to help out and step in,” she said. Campbell said Feeding Texas has a good line of communication with Conaway, and she hopes he’ll take her concerns into account during the “marathon” of passing the Farm Bill. “This is part of the process,” she said.

Collins, Christopher. “Proposed Changes to SNAP in the Farm Bill Could Leave Rural Texans Hungry.” *Texas Observer*, 1 May 2018,

## Research Summary Assignment

Assignment Overview: Write a one-page (8.5 x 11) paper summarizing one of the preceding article.

**Format:** Put your name in the top left-hand corner, and list the writer's name and the full citation information of the piece you're summarizing; set margins at 1 inch, spacing at single, and font at 12 pt. Do not exceed one page in length.

**Specifics:** Introduce the controversy and give background information that the reader will need to understand why people are debating this question.

Introduce the writer, and explain why this person is a stakeholder in the controversy. If necessary, introduce other stakeholders, and explain how this writer and his/her viewpoint relate(s) to these stakeholders and their viewpoints.

Offer a concise but thorough summary of the position this source is advocating. This summary may include a mixture of both play-by-play and argument-breakdown summary.

Stay as close to the text as possible, quoting the writer's exact words at times to tie both you and your readers to the original text itself. Where necessary and appropriate, cite paragraph numbers (in lieu of original page numbers) for any quotations in parentheses after the quote (par. \_\_\_\_). Your aim is to hand your readers your understanding of WHAT this text is arguing for. Attributions and signal phrases such as "Smith says/notes/ states," or "according to Bell," etc., will help you designate what is called intellectual property. You will not have room to cover all the points a writer makes, so you will need to synthesize the information for us, tell us what position the writer is advocating, and then offer quotes from the text itself to demonstrate (to show us) that the writer is arguing what you say she or he is arguing. Do not offer your own commentary, opinions, or arguments about what the text says, and do not offer a rhetorical analysis of the writing. Stick to content: What is the writer saying in this text? What position is he or she advocating?

Use proper MLA parenthetical citation, and include a works-cited entry (formatted according to MLA guidelines) at the top of the page.

**Lastly, be aware that academic integrity is of the utmost importance in this course. The three high school instructors teaching OnRamps will be working together closely, and any kind of plagiarism or academic dishonesty will result in harsh academic and disciplinary consequences.**

## Research Summary Rubric 1

Research Summary Rubric 1					
Criteria	Ratings				Pts
Fair Summary: The summary fairly presents the argument without exhibiting any bias, without inserting the student's ideas, and without misrepresenting the author's claim, reasons, or evidence.	The writer fairly and accurately explains the stakeholder's position, without suggesting or stating that this viewpoint is right, wrong, well-argued, or unreasonable. 20.0 pts	The writer accurately explains the stakeholder's position but suggests that this viewpoint is right, wrong, well-argued, or unreasonable. 15.0 pts	The writer openly states that this viewpoint is poorly (or well) argued, or the writer states that the article presents a true or false viewpoint. At times, the summary is unfair or inaccurate. 10.0 pts	The summary is neither fair nor accurate. The writer openly disagrees (or agrees) with the viewpoint summarized. 0.0 pts	20.0 pts
Integration of Quotes: The quoted material is sufficient to demonstrate that the summary is accurate to the source. The student has chosen to paraphrase when appropriate, to quote lengthy passages when necessary, and to use brief quotes otherwise. Quotes are attributed to the source. Nothing is plagiarized.	Quotes are elegantly inserted into the summary, following proper grammar and punctuation for quotations and smoothly integrating into the writer's prose. When appropriate, the writer uses lengthy quotes, brief quotes, or paraphrased passages to demonstrate that the summary is fair and accurate. 15.0 pts	Quotes are adequately inserted into the summary, though occasionally the writer does not use proper grammar and punctuation when quoting. At times, the quotations interrupt the writer's voice or do not integrate smoothly into the writer's prose. The writer uses lengthy quotes, brief quotes, or paraphrased passages but may rely too much on one of these techniques. 10.0 pts	Quotes are present but insufficient, or far too much material is quoted. The writer regularly does not use proper grammar and punctuation when quoting. The quotations are regularly dropped into the writer's prose with little effort at smoothly integrating this material. The writer uses the same kind of quote repeatedly and/or neglects to paraphrase when quoting is unnecessary. 5.0 pts	The writer quotes entirely too much, quotes without attributing material, or paraphrases everything. Proper grammar and punctuation are not followed. 0.0 pts	15.0 pts
Contextualization of Quoted Material: The quotes are preceded by sentences or phrases that introduce the speaker and that feature a variety of verbs of attribution. Additional contextual information is provided to help the reader understand each quote, such as:	When first mentioned, authors are introduced using first and last names and some relevant biographical information to show the reader why this person is relevant to the controversy. Additionally, information about the context of this quoted material (where it was said, in response to whom, etc.) is sufficiently offered. Finally, the writer	Some biographical information about the speakers is offered, but it is insufficient, excessive, irrelevant, or placed in an unhelpful location (such as a sentence or two after the quoted material). As a result, when reading the quote, a reader has trouble understanding why this person or this viewpoint matter to the controversy. Or, information about the	Little biographical or contextual information is given, and what the writer provides does not help the reader to understand the quoted material or the importance of the viewpoint. The quote seems tangentially related or unrelated to the viewpoint being summarized.	No helpful biographical or relevant contextual information is offered before or after the quoted material. No effort is made to relate the quoted material to the larger argument or viewpoint. 0.0 pts	15.0 pts

**Research Summary Rubric 1**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Ratings</b>				<b>Pts</b>
<p>explanation of where the quote appeared;                      explanation of what the quote was responding to;                      explanation of what the quote contributed to the argument.</p>	<p>explains what this quote demonstrates about the viewpoint or the argument being summarized.                      15.0 pts</p>	<p>context of this quoted material (where it was said, in response to whom, etc.) is insufficient, irrelevant, excessive, or unhelpfully placed in the summary. The writer begins to but does not sufficiently explain what this quote demonstrates about the viewpoint or the argument being summarized.                      10.0 pts</p>	<p>5.0 pts</p>		
<p><b>Complete Summary:</b>                      The summary covers all the major parts of the article, giving a sense not only of the content but also the structure and the author's style.</p>	<p>The writer adequately summarizes the main argument (the thesis) of this article. Additionally, the writer explains the main reasons or the principal evidence in support of this reason. And the writer explains how these reasons or this evidence support the principal argument. Finally, the writer gives a sense of how the argument is structured and presented, offering reflections on the argument's organization and the author's writing style.                      20.0 pts</p>	<p>The writer summarizes the main argument (the thesis) of this article. The writer also presents some of the evidence or the reasons in support of the article, but the connection among the reasons, the evidence, and the main argument is at times vaguely explained or simply not mentioned. The writer mentions the argument's arrangement and style but neglects to give the reader a clear sense of how the viewpoint is organized or presented.                      15.0 pts</p>	<p>The thesis is mentioned but not sufficiently summarized, leaving the reader with a sense of what the argument might be but questions about the particular claim. Some evidence and reasons in support of the claim are mentioned, but they are not connected to one another or to the main argument. There is little or no explanation of the article's arrangement and style.                      10.0 pts</p>	<p>The main argument in this article is not explained, or it is offered in a confusing manner that leaves the reader with little idea about the argument. Other information about the article is presented, but the reader cannot discern how this information contributes to the summary. She finishes each section of the summary with questions, such as: Are these reasons or evidence? Is this background information? No mention is made of the article's arrangement or style.                      0.0 pts</p>	<p>20.0 pts</p>
<p>This criterion is linked to a Learning Outcome Proper Use of Parenthetical Citation: The summary uses MLA parenthetical citation</p>	<p>MLA citation guidelines are followed closely in the parenthetical citations. If there are any errors, they are few and</p>	<p>MLA citation guidelines are mostly followed in the parenthetical citations. The errors, though noticeable, will not interrupt the</p>	<p>Some attempt has been made to include parenthetical citations, but the number of errors in citation overwhelm the reader and</p>	<p>Little or no effort has been made to document where the source material can be found. Parenthetical citations are either completely absent or formatted so poorly</p>	<p>15.0 pts</p>

**Research Summary Rubric 1**

<b>Criteria</b>		<b>Ratings</b>			<b>Pts</b>	
(where appropriate).		easy to overlook. 15.0 pts	reader's ability to understand where the source material can be found. 10.0 pts	regularly interrupt his or her ability to see where the source material came from. 5.0 pts	and inconsistently that they interrupt the reader's ability to follow the summary. 0.0 pts	
<b>Proper Formatting of Works-Cited Entry:</b> At the top of the page is a works-cited entry that follows MLA guidelines.		The works-cited entry at the top of the page very closely follows MLA guidelines, including proper use of italics, underlining, and punctuation. 15.0 pts	The works-cited entry at the top of the page includes a few errors in punctuation and formatting, but the reader is still able to understand where this source can be found. 10.0 pts	The works-cited entry at the top of the page is missing crucial information (such as the author, the press, the magazine, or the year of publication). Additionally, the works-cited entry includes several errors in punctuation and formatting. 5.0 pts	There is no works-cited entry at the top of the page, or the works-cited entry makes no effort to follow MLA guidelines. 0.0 pts	15.0 pts
<b>Total Points: 100.0</b>						