Essay 1: From Batman to Beyoncé – Analyzing a Cultural Icon

☐ proposal (1+ page, 1 pt.) due
☐ research notes (2+ pages, 1 pt.) due
☐ outline (2+ pages, 1 pt.) due
☐ rough works cited page (1 page, 1 pt.)
☐ rough draft (4+ pages, 2 pts.) due
☐ meet with a tutor or me by
☐ final draft (4+ pages, 15 pts.) due

All of these must be typed using MLA format.

Topic

In the 1989 song “Fight the Power,” Chuck D of Public Enemy raps, “Elvis was a hero to most / But he never meant shit to me, you see / Straight up racist that sucker was . . . Most of my heroes don’t appear on no stamps.” These lyrics point out that one person’s hero is another person’s “sucker” and raises important questions: How do we decide who our revered celebrities are? Who decides what faces appear on our postage stamps? Which celebrities, politicians, or even fictional characters are long remembered and revered? Why?

In this essay (6+ paragraphs, 4+ pages), you will analyze a pop culture icon or phenomenon, such as an athlete, actor, celebrity, musical artist, movie or series of movies, television show, etc. No matter what subject you choose to focus on, you must address these questions in your thesis and your supporting paragraphs:
• How has this pop culture icon or phenomenon affected you personally? Why is it so memorable or special to you?
• How popular or well-known is this pop culture icon or phenomenon? Is nostalgia part of the appeal?
• How has this pop culture icon or phenomenon influenced the specific industry or genre? Is that impact long-lasting?
• How has this pop culture icon or phenomenon impacted popular culture more broadly? What is the historical significance? Is that impact positive, negative, or both?

Analyze examples from popular culture and incorporate at least one quotation from research in every supporting paragraph. You should include your personal insights, opinions, or feelings in the essay.

Audience & Purpose

Imagine that your readers might not be familiar with your subject or may not agree with your evaluation. Your purpose is to analyze the cultural icon / phenomenon while persuading your reader that your position is valid.

Reading Requirement

• various articles (posted on my website: English 1B – Essay 1)

Research Requirement

No matter which topic you choose, you must include and analyze specific examples from popular culture and include supporting quotations from at least two recent research articles as well. You may use any of the articles listed on the course website. You can also use the library’s electronic databases to find articles (Academic Search Complete, JSTOR, etc.) and credible, academic internet websites.
Structure & Content Checklist

___ Write a creative, informative title for your essay; write an interesting, inventive hook as well.
___ The introduction should introduce the subject of your essay and provide background information.
___ The thesis of your essay must clearly state the significance of the pop culture icon or phenomenon and preview the supporting paragraphs.
___ Use clear topic sentences and transitions to provide a structure for your essay.
___ Organize the supporting paragraphs in a logical order that matches the thesis statement.
___ Incorporate analysis of specific examples as well as research to support your thesis.
___ Include at least one quotation from research in every supporting paragraph.
___ Remember to I C E: introduce, cite, and explain each quotation, example, or paraphrase.
___ Write a strong conclusion that summarizes the entire essay and includes a reflection.
___ It is acceptable to use first-person (“I,” “my,” “we”) but not second-person (“you,” “your”).
___ Include a properly formatted works cited page.
___ Format your paper properly: double-spaced, one-inch margins, 12-point Times New Roman font.

Do not plagiarize (copy, borrow, steal, or buy someone else’s writing); if you do, you will receive zero points for this assignment and possibly fail the course.

Process – You must complete and submit all of the following with the final draft:

___ final draft & works cited page
___ printouts of research article(s) used
___ rough draft(s)
___ outline
___ research notes
___ tutoring receipt or my comments**
___ peer review form
___ rough works cited page
___ proposal

** If you are unable to see a tutor for this essay, you may visit my advice hours.

• Bring your assignment sheet, notes, draft, etc. with you when you see a tutor at the Language Success Center.
• Please feel free to visit my advice hours (MW 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. & TTh 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.) or email me (neil.watkins@chaffey.edu) at any point in your writing process.

Proposal Questions

1. List five or more of your favorite celebrities, athletes, music, television shows, movies, etc.
2. Which three might be most interesting to write about? Why?
3. Choose one to focus on for this essay. Why did you choose this one?
4. What information do you already know about this subject?
   What do you need to find out?
5. What type of research do you think you need to find?
6. What do you want your reader to learn or understand from your essay?
7. What obstacles or challenges might you face as you write?
   How will you overcome those?
8. When & where will you write the essay?

Students’ Advice for Essay 1

“Do a little of the essay every day. Do NOT procrastinate. Trust me. Do every assignment.”
“Keep track of deadlines. Make sure you give yourself time to complete all of the work, because it benefits you.”
“Think more critically than you think you might have to.”