

The Virtue Vice Paper

Mr. O'Leary — Philosophy

The Question: How does a philosophical essay arrive at a truth?

The Challenge: Michel de Montaigne called the writing genre he created “*essays*.” In each essay, he attempts to put his belief on a subject on trial, to weigh the evidence from great minds of history and from events of the past and to arrive at a conclusion about the belief. He often wrote of virtues and vices, but also wrote about such diverse subjects as thumbs, coaches and cannibals.

Your task is to research a topic, be it a virtue, a vice or a statement on the human condition, and write a philosophical essay about it, using the essays of Montaigne and Bacon as models. I will expect research, logic and references to what people said and did around your chosen topic, as well as your own personal experiences with it. Of course, as we have learned, metaphors and/or an allegory will be expected of you to make your ideas clear.

The essays should serve to inform the reader’s judgment on the subject, supported with quotes from historical figures and thinkers, anecdotes from history and/or literature, and a statement based upon personal experience.

The intent of this assignment is, through research, logic and personal experience, to arrive at a personal belief about a issue or characteristic of importance to your audience. It is intended to provide the student with experience in research, character development, essay writing and personal growth.

You may use block quotes as did Montaigne, or incorporate the quotes into the text. Use parenthetical quotes with the source’s name and quote source. You do not need a bibliography. You may want to start your research by getting quotes on the subject from a quotations source, then researching it in more depth in the library. The library has an Encyclopedia of Philosophy, an encyclopedia of Bio-Ethics and a reference book on historical anecdotes.

Some topics might be: on the use of foul language, on honesty, on lying, on temperance, on greed, on chastity, on promiscuity, on friendship, on cheating, on pride, on lust, on faith, on envy, on hope, on charity or on the greatness of the Irish.

*Minimum
Product
Standards:*

The essay is on time.
The essay is shared in class.
The essay has a subject appropriate for sharing in class.
The essay contains quotes taken from research.
The essay contains anecdotes or events taken from research.
The essay contains a personal statement based upon experience.
The essay bears a resemblance to the model essays.
The essay has a bibliography.