LETTER TO A STAKEHOLDER ASSIGNMENT

Write a formal letter to a stakeholder, someone for whom this topic is a concern. Follow formal formatting (see handbook). Describe the context from which the topic arises: historic and or local background information, including people/situations/objects involved. Summarize at least two credible sources (journal articles, interviews, newspapers). Conclude with an Analysis of the situation or topic, placing your own interpretation or opinion alongside your sources. Point out how your analysis relates or connects to the description of context and summary of views.

Remember that “when you summarize something you boil it down to its essence, picking out the major points or ideas and restating them in a succinct way” (The New Century Handbook 2).

- Identify key points (words, phrases, ideas).
- Put the thoughts in your own words, condensing information as you go.
- Create lists or tables as appropriate.
- Check the summary for accuracy. Have you been fair to the author’s intent?
- Document the source. Place author’s actual words in quotation marks and cite page numbers.

Be sure to separate summary of material from personal opinions or interpretations of that material. Summaries are not interpretations. Interpretations are analysis and may include opinion.

Remember that “when you analyze something you have read or heard, you mentally divide it into its parts, such as main claim, sub-claims, tone, audience, purpose. Then, you look for any relationships there might be among the various parts. [. . .] decide how the [parts contribute to the whole]” (New Century 2).
EXPLANATION OF A CONCEPT: MEMO ASSIGNMENT

Write a formal memo to your employer explaining a concept s/he has asked you to research. Follow formal formatting (see handbook). Synthesize the various local perspectives on this concept and compare them to one national or historic perspective. Conclude by recommending one action your employer could or should take regarding the concept.

When you synthesize, you “examine an issue from a variety of perspectives, not simply pro or con, with an eye to finding the relationships among them. When you synthesize, you seek to articulate the ways in which sources are related” (New Century 2). This might be accomplished by examining definitions and by comparing ideas through similarities and differences. When you synthesize, pay attention to and evaluate each author’s stance in relation to the others. What bias occurs? What is at stake for each author?

- Do any essays/articles agree or disagree on any points?
- Does one essay/article provide background for another?
- Does one essay/article take up where another leaves off?
- Does one essay/article provide general ideas that apply to the more specific information of the other essays?
- Does one essay/article provide an example of some idea discussed in another?
- Do any common ideas or viewpoints run through all the essays/articles