

Essay 2— “Myth of the Model Family” paper

Assignment:

After all of our readings on the “model” family of the fifties, the variety of family make-ups, and the opinion of “experts” on what a family should be and what it should not be, choose one of the following three approaches and write a thoughtful paper, using the essays as your primary source of evidence to support your ideas:

1. **What is a family?** Use readings, personal experience, and other observations or research to support your definition of what a successful family is, regardless of its makeup.
2. **Examine an alternative family** (e.g. single-parent, foster, adoptive, gay, polygamous, ethnically, culturally, or religiously distinct). What are its particular benefits and challenges, advantages and disadvantages?
3. **Examine a family from film or TV.** By your definition (or by Coontz’s model of the idealized family of the 1950’s) is it successful? Why or why not? What are its strengths and weaknesses as a family?

Got another idea you want to try? Whatever you do, write something you care about, that has something to do with you and your perspective, experience, and belief about the world. If you have trouble coming up with an idea you like, talk to me. I’ll help you brainstorm.

Required research:

- 1) Use *at least one* the essays in the “Myth of the Family” section in the text. There are good quotes, ideas, numbers, and examples from all of the essays that you can use to develop a point.
- 2) Find *at least one other* source from the electronic databases from the library website. If you have searched and searched and don’t feel like anything is in the databases, contact me. I’ll either help you locate something in the databases or allow another possibility.
- 3) In order to properly *synthesize and triangulate* your paragraphs (that is, keep from using just one source over and over within a paragraph and/or paper), you should use *more than one* source in each body paragraph that’s making a point. That’s a general rule; there are always exceptions.
- 4) At least *two* sources and no more than *five*.

Other Requirements:

Length: 3-4 pages + Works Cited page that includes the essays from the book that you use and the extra one you find.

Documentation: MLA formatting and Works Cited. NOT using correct MLA format or Works Cited will cost you ½ a point.

Self-critique: in paragraph form, answer these questions:

1. What is the greatest strength of your essay?
2. What was the most difficult part of the assignment?
3. What were the most valuable comments given to you by your readers and what subsequent revisions did you make?
4. What did you learn about yourself or your writing that you didn't already know? (-1/2 pt. for missing draft, or self-critique, or MLA format)

Other stuff:

- 1) *A well-developed body paragraph* is 6-10 sentences long.
- 2) *Supporting evidence* includes quotes and/or paraphrase (both) from authorities (use both, for variety. Use quoted passages to make your strongest points, paraphrase for more summarized points); facts; statistics; studies; history or background; example (real life or hypothetical); observation.
- 3) *Sandwich your quotes.* That is, introduce a quote in a sentence before you use it, and tie it back to your point in a sentence after it. Never end a paragraph with a direct quote without adding a sentence of your own.
- 4) *Don't drop quotes:* Introduce them with a phrase or tag like: Dr. Jones writes, “. . . “
- 5) This is a more formal paper than “Class in America.” You can still use first person, but avoid contractions, second person “you,” and other informal language.
- 6) Write an *interesting opening* that draws us in and a *conclusion* that makes us think about what you've said.
- 7) *Don't stop too soon* in your thinking or writing. Once you've made your point in your paper, ask, “So what?” It's the “so what” that may make all the difference.