

Anchor Essays for Critical Thinking

The following sample responses are intended to represent student answers to Critical Thinking assignments that reflect the various levels of proficiency identified in the panel's rubrics. It is important to keep in mind that these responses are merely examples, and may be more useful to some disciplines than others. The panel has had particular difficulty finding appropriate student assignments and sample responses in some disciplines (e.g., Natural Sciences), and we welcome such exemplars from faculty members across SUNY. If you have assignments or sample responses you think might be helpful in this regard, please contact David Hunter at hunterda@buffalostate.edu. In addition, as campuses continue to develop instruments to assess critical thinking a pool of assignments will likely emerge, ideally from a wide variety of disciplines.

The First Critical Thinking Learning Outcome

The first critical thinking learning outcome is that students will identify, analyze, and evaluate arguments as they occur in their own and others' work. The Rubric characterizes EXCEEDING the expectations for this learning outcome as follows:

The student's work

1. Identifies the target argument(s) and clearly distinguishes it from any extraneous elements such as expressions of opinion and descriptions of events.
2. Carefully articulates the argument's conclusion, clearly distinguishes it from its premises and identifies most relevant definitions and/or hidden assumptions.
3. Clearly and correctly assesses whether the argument's premises provide sufficient logical support for the conclusion, independently of whether the premises are true.
4. Clearly and correctly assesses the reasonableness of the premises, including the credibility of their sources (e.g., observation, testimony, measurement, experiment, etc.), independently of whether the premises support the conclusion.

THE ASSIGNMENT

The anchor essays for this learning outcome are drawn from a critical thinking course where students were asked to write a four page essay on the following topic.

In his essay "The Ethics of Belief", William Clifford claims that the ship owner he describes had no right to believe on the basis of the evidence he had before him that his ship was safe. What does Clifford mean by that? What reasons does he offer in support of it? Are these reasons good? Why/ why not? What, in your view, is the strongest reason against his view? How do you think he might reply to it?

The question contains a lot of directions. Student are told to analyze the meaning of key claims, to present Clifford's reasons in support of those claims, to evaluate the worth of those reasons, to raise objections to Clifford's claims (or his reasons), and to consider how Clifford might reply to those objections. Because it explicitly identifies these tasks, the assignment is not so good at assessing whether students would do them unprompted. Still, the assignment can be used to assess whether students can perform the tasks properly, whether they know what is required. And, of course, some students will not follow the directions.

In his essay, William Clifford argues that there are moral obligations that govern what we believe, in addition to those that govern what we do. More specifically, he argues that it is wrong to believe anything on insufficient evidence, even when that belief is true. He offers two lines of support for this. First, he points to the role belief plays in building community and in scientific progress. Second, he appeals to several fictional stories, including one about a ship owner who is about to let sail his ship full of poor immigrants. The ship owner has good reason to believe that the ship is unsafe, but overcomes these doubts by thinking about the costs involved in repairing it. So although the ship owner sincerely believes the ship is safe, Clifford claims it was morally wrong for him to believe this because his belief was based on insufficient evidence and Clifford insists that it would have been morally wrong for him to believe this, even if the ship had in fact been safe. Whether a belief is morally wrong, for Clifford, does not depend on whether it is true, but on whether it is based on adequate evidence.

It is reasonable to expect that in answering this essay question students will:

- 1. correctly identify the conclusion as concerning the ethics of belief, not of action;*
- 2. identify both the general reasons Clifford offers and his use of the story of the ship-owner;*
- 3. raise a thoughtful objection to Clifford's conclusion, and provide a thoughtful response on Clifford's behalf.*

THE ESSAYS

ESSAY 1

This essay will discuss the meaning of what Clifford calls the "right to believe" and his reasoning. It will then discuss its merits and its faults.

Clifford said that the owner of the ship had no right to believe in the ship's seaworthiness. What Clifford meant was that the shipowner did not earn the ability to believe that the ship was safe, that because he did not earn this he did not deserve it and therefore should not exercise his ability to believe.

Clifford said that the shipowner had no right to believe based on the evidence that was before him because his belief in the ship's quality was not based on a purely objective and intellectual judgment, but a subjective judgment. The decision to allow the ship to sail was not based on facts and not on information given by trustworthy authorities; the decision was based on his desire to allow the ship to go, that is, he wanted

Comment: The author clearly identifies the issue as about the wrongness of belief, not of action.

Comment: The author identifies one of the reasons Clifford offers for the view that the ship owner's belief was wrong.

the ship to sail and convinced himself that it was able to make the trip safely. Sufficient information for making an informed decision was not gathered, nor was an attempt made to collect it; the shipowner did not try to make an objective decision, so he did not earn the ability to believe that the ship could sail across the ocean.

Clifford also said that because our beliefs are handed down from generation to generation everyone has a responsibility to ensure that each belief is worth passing on to the next generation. Every belief that is formed, regardless of whether or not we consciously recognize it or think that it is a relevant belief, shapes our actions in the future. The next generation will learn how to act and how to form judgements from what it observes from the previous generation. All people must carefully monitor what is taught to their children, to do that they must carefully monitor what they do, and to do that they must carefully monitor what they believe. A harmful or dangerous belief can manifest itself in action and be taught just as easily as a beneficial belief, so taking responsibility for all of our beliefs is imperative. Further, each belief is amplified with each generation, so even a mild conviction can become stronger and stronger from generation to generation, possibly with horrible consequences. The shipowner had not considered this and had acted irresponsibly given the gravity of the situation.

Comment: The author identifies Clifford's reasons for the view that it is always wrong to believe on insufficient evidence, and the author does a great job of elaborating those reasons.

Clifford also said that even one unearned belief leaves a "stain" on the purity of earned beliefs. To protect the earned belief is to protect the efforts that humanity has gone through in the past to find truth, beliefs that have stood firmly despite careful and repeated questioning and examination. To believe when one has no right to believe is to attempt to place an unearned belief beside the earned belief, thereby lowering the stature of the earned belief and lowering its value in humanity's eyes. Clifford's shipowner has done precisely this, he has replaced the earned belief with one that he has no right to have; the belief that should not be has usurped the rightful one.

Clifford said that from a purely emotional standpoint the shipowner was in the wrong. Although the shipowner was comforted and pleased when he formed his belief and grew in his conviction he was truly robbing himself. He may well have been satisfied at the end of the day, he may well have gone to bed with his mind at ease, but by forming a belief without having earned it he has robbed himself of a much greater feeling of satisfaction: that of knowing that what he believed is truly right, that the belief has firm ground in reason, and that he could have done no more at the end of the day, when laying down to sleep, than what he had done. A stolen, unearned belief, by nature, should not be as sweet as an earned one. Much like stolen currency, it does not give the fullest extent of possible fulfillment and satisfaction until you have known toil in an effort to acquire it. The shipowner should have checked himself early in the process of the confirmation of his ill-founded belief and reasoned with himself, "Is this stolen pleasure worth the sacrifice?"

Clifford has given yet another reason for the shipowner's belief to be considered unearned. For every miniscule belief, there is consequence. One isolated incident of belief without right does not exist, for all beliefs are tied, as all of humanity's beliefs and subsequent actions are connected; a belief cannot be isolated because it is connected with humanity as a whole. One incident would be harmful alone, but collecting them, adding them together, gathering the sum of all unearned beliefs would show their impact upon society, as Clifford put it, the difference between an isolated act of theft and a den of

thieves. To protect society, individuals, even the shipowner, must realize that the effect of their own and other's unearned beliefs combined is enormous.

Clifford's reasons for why society must earn the right to belief are very good, generally speaking. If society wants to survive, individuals are needed who will make responsible decisions, not for the good of themselves, but for the good of society. A belief without firm basis is useless, it cannot withstand scrutiny and it absolutely cannot be relied upon in real-world applications. People in society will function better when believing rightfully, as dispute over established facts will disappear and wishful illusions will fall into obscurity.

There is, however, something in his view which is particularly objectionable. His doctrine does not allow for faith. Faith is disavowed by Clifford by his unwillingness to allow judgements based on subjective judgements or on insufficient data. It is important to people to have faith, an "unearned" yet firm conviction. Allow me to illustrate the importance of faith through an example: A man who supports his family single-handedly gets into an accident while on the job. Let us say, for example, that it is something that may be lethal, or may not be lethal. His family needs him to survive, without him, they will be forced to take extreme measures to earn money, some of which are illegal, let us say prostitution or theft. The man, knowing this, forms the conviction that he will survive. He cannot say that he will based upon scientific evidence, for it says that there is a chance for survival and a chance for death. But his "unearned" belief, his faith that he will survive, is extremely beneficial. The body responds to the state of mind, it will respond to his choice to live and fight much harder. The mind will be strengthened despite hardship, for he knows that in the end he will live. And his family takes comfort in knowing that the fight will be won, and they shall provide the utmost care and assistance freely without reservation. How could this not be a good result? The benefits granted far outweigh the harm that this faith in his survival could do.

Clifford would probably say that this is a "stolen" belief that should not be satisfying. It is, however, both satisfying and beneficial, regardless of any sort of fuss that Clifford may raise.

Let us look at another, more general example of faith: religion. Religion, as Clifford so appropriately took care to mention, completely defies his criterion that belief must be rooted in objective observations. Does this mean that religion will have the aforementioned negative effects that "unearned" belief has? Certainly not. Religion is extremely beneficial to the faithful. Religion gives to people a reason to live, instructions on how to be a good member of society, and a reason to strive for a betterment of society. What Clifford asked for was an abolishment of religion, a deprivation of purpose from a society that cannot find purpose elsewhere. Allow me to provide another fictitious example: a young man reaching adulthood abandons his childhood faith in his parent's particular religion, because he cannot objectively believe that there is truth to be found in it. He finds himself in a turbulent, chaotic world in which nigh everyone is in some way harming others, and all of this without his faith to stand behind. In this society, he finds no reason not to carry on as they do, for they do not care for his welfare and he cannot think of a reason to care for theirs. He has no scruples about harming others, and does as much damage as all around him have done. Had this man had a religious faith, he would have had a reason to strive for the betterment of society, but he did not, because it cannot be allowed for in Clifford's criterion, so he has nothing.

Comment: The author provides a thoughtful discussion of whether Clifford's reasons are acceptable and sufficient.

Comment: The author raises an important objection to Clifford's conclusion and elaborates it well.

Clifford would, I believe, have said that the betterment of society is reason enough to strive for earned beliefs. I would say that Clifford's belief in the purpose given by society is as "unearned" as that of any religious belief. *Society does not give purpose*, any purpose that is attributed to it is given from a purely subjective standpoint and therefore is of absolutely no merit to Clifford. Having established this, we can come to the conclusion that *without a subjective judgment, Clifford's argument for earning the right to believe simply falls apart.*

There is no reason to attempt to believe that belief is to be earned, for to do so you must decide that there is a reason to do so. However, a subjective judgment must be made to find this reason, which immediately discredits itself according to Clifford's criteria. This leaves Clifford with absolutely nothing, as he immediately negates himself when trying to make the first step.

Comment: The author considers how Clifford might have responded to the objection.

Essay 1 EXCEEDS the standards. The author does an excellent job of identifying the reasons Clifford offers for his view. First, the author describes the reasons Clifford offers for thinking that the ship owner's belief was based on insufficient evidence, and so was wrong. But the author also discusses Clifford's reasons for the more general view that it is always wrong for anyone to believe on insufficient evidence. The ability to identify and distinguish multiple, related conclusions is a very advanced critical thinking skill. The author provides a thoughtful discussion of whether these reasons are acceptable and whether they support Clifford's conclusions. . Finally, the author raises a very serious objection to Clifford's view, namely that it implies that faith, belief based on no evidence at all, is always wrong. This is a fundamental objection, one that goes to the very heart of Clifford's view. The author not only raises the objection, but also provides support for the view that faith is not always wrong. In summary, the author's analysis of Clifford's argument is exceptional.

ESSAY 2

Let me start of with a question to lead us into the discussion at hand. Tobacco companies try and get us to purchase cigarettes, but we are taught all throughout school that it is horrible for your health. Now, let us say your grandparents started smoking when they were teenagers, and they are now 95 years old. It would be easy to say, "They have been smoking for years now," and ignore the warnings in school and start smoking. Now, if you were to die ten years later from lung caner would it be your fault? Clifford explains how to reason through questions like this, and about responsibility in his "Ethics of belief," using the example of a ship owner and his ship. Let us see what he has to say.

In the first version of the ship owner story, Clifford states that the ship owner should not have believed the ship was sea-worthy based on the evidence that was right in front of him, he also feels the ship owner should be blamed for the sinking of the ship. The ship owner knew his ship was very old and had traveled many journeys, not to mention the many repairs done on her in the past. These thoughts rested uneasily on his mind until the ship owner thought about having the ship looked over and repaired, he did not like this thought because it would be very costly to fix his ship. So instead of fixing

the ship, he brainwashed himself into believing she was still seaworthy after many successful voyages. The ship set sail and sank to the bottom of the ocean. Clifford is finding fault with the ship owner for believing his ship was seaworthy, regardless of all the doubts that went through his mind. This evidence is what Clifford is talking about when he states that the ship owner had no right believing, based on the evidence, that his ship was worthy of sailing. Clifford also feels that acting on a belief and having a belief are two different things, but we should be held accountable for both.

Comment: The author identifies the reasons Clifford offers for thinking that the ship owner was wrong to believe the ship was safe, but does not consider the reasons Clifford offers for the more general conclusion that it is always wrong to believe on insufficient evidence.

In the second version of the story, the ship does not sink; however, the ship owner still has doubts about the voyage. In this version Clifford feels he is still at fault because he had doubts that he did not investigate. It makes him just as bad of a person in Clifford's mind whether the ship sinks or not.

Comment: The author clearly identifies the issue as about the ethics of belief and not of action.

Clifford's reasons for feeling this way are few, but strong. The ship owner is at fault for the ship's sinking because he did not investigate the ship to determine if it should be fixed or not, instead he merely subdued his doubts. Clifford feels that no matter how sure the ship owner made himself feel about his ship, he still had doubts go through his mind, and the fact that he did not investigate and obtain facts that his doubts were folly, he must be held accountable for the death of the emigrants aboard the ship. I believe his reasoning in feeling that the ship owner is just as wrong if the ship does not sink is, either way he put the lives of those immigrants at stake, and he took a risk that he had no right to take. All the evidence pointed to a not seaworthy ship.

I believe these reasons Clifford establishes are very good indeed. If the lives of many people are in your hands, and are relying on your ship to carry them safely across the sea, it is your responsibility to make sure the ship is sea worthy. Not only for the people on board, but for your own moral character and conscience. If you do not have sufficient funds to repair any flaws that might have been obtained on past voyages, then you should not volunteer your ship to take such an important journey. So when do you decide she is seaworthy? A ship is seaworthy when all reasonable doubt of a failed voyage has been ruled out by careful investigation and has undergone any necessary repairs that may have been needed. Perhaps even go a step further and perform a test voyage first. I feel that if you have not taken the precautions listed above, then the ship should not sail. In the case of this particular ship owner, he did not take the precautions necessary, and his conscience will be affected eternally, as well as the view of his moral character by others after hearing about the innocent people that died because of his combination of ignorance and apathy. I feel that he is just as guilty if the ship does not sink, the only difference is that no one will know he had those doubts but himself.

I completely agree with Clifford, however, if I had to say something that others might disagree with it would be the part of his statement where Clifford feels that the man is just as wrong for having doubts even if the ship does not sink. First of all, how would we be able to judge that person by their thoughts and doubts? We have doubts every day and if we were to stop and think about every one and make sure nothing bad would happen, we would not be able to go through our day. For example, there are positives and negatives to every decision we make. One way or another we convince ourselves of the best decision and many times we do not suffer from our choice. The choice of walking or driving to school is a perfect example for me. I live an hour away, if I was to walk to school, I'd never make it on time however; there is always the risk of getting into a car accident if I drive. I then consider my options and choose to drive.

Comment: The author raises an objection to Clifford but it is not clear what it is.

Does that make me a bad person for driving; it could because I am endangering myself and the others on the road. Clifford states that I am just as guilty for having thoughts about crashing and still choosing to drive, as I would be if I chose to drive and did in fact crash. I feel the same way. However this is where I could see people having opposing views. Many may feel that it would be much worse if I crashed than if nothing happened at all because more people would get hurt. I can understand why someone would think this way, but I still agree with Clifford, either way I am still taking a risk.

I think Clifford would just reiterate what he said previously to those who feel that you are just as guilty for having doubts, as you are when you act on them and something bad happens. Either way there are risks involved, and it is your responsibility to reason through the pros and cons. And if there are doubts in your head, you are guilty unless you can think of a way to factually prove that there is nothing to worry about.

Comment: Clifford's imagined response might have been more interesting if the objection itself had been better developed.

In conclusion, Clifford states that the ship owner had no right to believe his ship was seaworthy based on the evidence at hand. I completely agree with him on this point, I feel that it is necessary to be sure about everything you do, and understand the risks involved. If any kind of doubt comes to your mind, be sure you have reasoned factually through it before you make a decision that could be fatal.

Essay 2 MEETS the standards for this learning outcome. The author clearly identifies Clifford's claim about the ethics of belief and carefully distinguishes it from the claim that there are ethics of action. The author of the essay clearly identifies and thoughtfully evaluates the reasons Clifford offers for this claim but only as it applies in the case of the ship owner. However, the author does not discuss Clifford's reasons for thinking that this obligation is a universal one, applying to all beliefs by anyone on any topic. The author raises an objection to Clifford's claim and then considers what he might have said in response. But the objection is not very strong, and it does not help us to understand the broader context of the debate. Compare this to the objection in the EXCEEDS paper.

ESSAY 3

William K Clifford's Essay on *The Ethics of Belief* starts with a story about a Ship owner who neglects to properly examine a worn out ship before sending it off with a cargo full of passengers. The man does come to conclusions of the ship's worth and safety before sending it off. In the end the ship does go down and the man gets reimbursed for his boat. Clifford states that *he had no right to believe on such evidence as was before him*. He argues that the man's beliefs were not sufficiently backed and that he was totally wrong. Let's look at some of his reasons why.

One Reason Clifford holds the man accountable is that the ship owner knew that there were some potential problems with the boat. There had been many break downs in the past and higher mileage doesn't equate to less maintenance. Instead of getting a diagnosis of what could be ailing the boat, the man quiets his questions by using beliefs of hope that have nothing to do with the boat's performance. This is one of the biggest problems Clifford finds. The man didn't get accurate information about the seaworthiness of his boat in order to plug that information in as evidence for his belief. Instead he disregarded the truth completely and didn't pay attention either way. Clifford

Comment: This would have been a good place for the author to make clear that it is the wrongness of the ship owner's belief, and not his actions, that is at issue.

then gives the man the benefit of the doubt so to speak and tells an example of the boat making the return instead of sinking. He does this because it doesn't matter whether the boat sank but whether the owner was right or wrong. His decision not to act was based on irrelevant thoughts.

My own example of explaining the boat story is this: I have a dog and I take him for walks around the sidewalks of my neighborhood. The dog is really friendly and he likes people quite a bit. When out on a walk I will move the dog and myself to an adjoining sidewalk or in the grass when other pedestrians pass by. This is just in case, to prevent any kind of incident from happening. The dog doesn't know the strangers and I never like to take a chance with a mixed signal coming from the dog or the pedestrian. A frightened dog could bite. Now one of the sidewalks in my neighborhood that I walk my dog down has a real narrow street with a sidewalk right next to the street and a hedge on the other side of the sidewalk. When I pass through with the dog, I have to keep the dog on the sidewalk with no room to step off if some pedestrian happens to be there too. In the past I would wait until anyone in that path had past through and then make my way with the dog. A cramped spot like that can be dangerous. There are cars zipping by you on the one side with a wall of bushes on the other. It could scare the dog. But, one day as I was coming up to that narrow street, I was in bit of a rush. I was behind in my schedule that day and walking the dog at this pace wasn't helping any. There were several people on that congested sidewalk and they were taking their sweet time. So I decided to start walking through before they were past. The way I figured it, the dog was well tempered. He loved people. He would be fine with passing some people on a sidewalk, even if it was a little cramped. I took a firm hold of the lease, and walked the dog by the pedestrians, passed without incident, and went on my merry way. I knew nothing would happen. That just proves my point further.

But what if the opposite outcome happened? The dog could very well have gotten spooked by a loud car passing by so close. And he could have become so uncomfortable with the stranger near him that he might off lashed out. Somebody could have gotten attacked by the dog. The pedestrian might have tried to escape the dog, jump into the street, and get hit by a car, or vice a versa. The point is I had several real options and choices that I could have made. I might have waited until the sidewalk was clear. I could have turned around and taken a different route. Then there is the choice that now seems wrong: to go on anyway without having any idea on how the dog would react. To think that the dog is really nice doesn't give any light to that situation. It doesn't make sense to go on the merits of the dog's temperament. Maybe if I conducted experiments or studied the effects that claustrophobic spaces have on my dog, then I might have better evidence on how he would act which in turn backs up my choice. But just going on gut isn't going to take away the fact that I was wrong.

Clifford's reasons are pretty sound. They keep the truth in an objective light. These reasons form truthful actions as well as hold just accountability. To a large degree they are followed through with traveling vehicles now. If they weren't, ships, planes and trains would be sinking, crashing and derailling on a quite larger frequency. It is also true that trains do sometimes derail and the like because of negligence. Companies are run into the ground because of a lack of attention to detail. Wars are started without all the facts and evidence clear. And mistakes are made because people are sometimes so

Comment: The author seems to confuse or not clearly distinguish the ethics of belief from the ethics of action.

Comment: The author tries to assess the acceptability and sufficiency of Clifford's reasons, but does little more than claim they are sufficient.

attached to their beliefs, that they over look the truth. That is also why accountability is just as important.

One argument that might be raised against Clifford is that these principles demand too much perfection. After all we were just human and were not machines. We are going to make mistakes and some people are going to be crooked. Some might claim that these mistakes have to be made in some instances in order to learn from them. Belief is not something that people want to give up easily.

In Clifford's time, he points out many of the problems that lack of evidence cause. Progress is not something that I think he expected to happen soon, if ever. I think that Clifford expected that most people will never reach this level of objectivity. I think it's more about raising the bar of judgment in order to incrementally get better as we go. He doesn't expect people to throw away their beliefs either. You should just know why you believe them or how they were developed, that's what is important.

In conclusion, the ship owner and all of us can be guilty of holding beliefs or ideas without any knowledge why. In those instances we are wrong in how we formulated our reasons. If awareness to this statement of fact was emphasized more, I believe that society would run a lot better.

Comment: This is an interesting and thoughtful objection to Clifford's conclusion, and deserves credit. Without this, the essay would have failed to meet expectations.

Essay 3 APPROACHES the standards for the first critical thinking learning outcome. The author correctly identifies Clifford's conclusion, but does not do much to clarify what it means. Importantly, the author seems not to distinguish it from the claim that there are obligations that govern our actions. The author does try to identify the reasons Clifford offers for his claim. But the author discusses only Clifford's story, which is meant to illustrate the reasons and the conclusion. As a result, the author does not state the reasons in a general way. But the author does raise an interesting objection to Clifford's claims. On balance, this essay APPROACHES the expectations.

The Second Critical Thinking Learning Outcome.

The second critical thinking learning outcome is that students will construct well-reasoned arguments. The Rubric characterizes the standards for exceeding expectations in this outcome as follows.

The student's work

1. Develops a clearly articulated argument, using evidence and/or systematic logical reasoning in support of a conclusion or point of view.
2. Identifies relevant qualifications or objections or alternative points of view and prioritizes evidence and/or reasons in support of the conclusion.
3. Describes the broader relevance, significance or context of the issue and/or applies the reasoning to a novel problem.

THE ASSIGNMENT

Students were asked to answer the following:

Should Articles 23, 24 and 25 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights be added as amendments to the US Constitution?

This question provides no explicit guidance on what the student needs to do to construct the argument, though it does clearly identify what the conclusion should be. Still, it is reasonable to expect that in constructing an argument students will:

- *Clearly state their opinion on the question and places it in a the broader context;*
- *Offer reasons in support of their opinion;*
- *Consider an objection or alternative to their view and show why it is inadequate.*

THE ESSAYS

ESSAY 1

Article twenty-three of the U.N. declaration of Human Rights should become an amendment to the United States' Constitution. Everyone has the right to work wherever they want to do whatever they are capable of doing. Someone should not be denied a chance at a job just because of that person's race or color or beliefs, and everyone should be able to get a job that pays at least a good minimum wage. People who do the same job should get paid the same no matter what they believe or what race they are from. Skin color and religion has nothing to do with being able to do a job. Also, unions are good because they help workers get together to discuss how to work better and more safely. Companies should not be allowed to bust unions. My father worked a long time in a steel union and he benefited a lot from that.

Comment: The author is giving clear reasons to support his or her view and makes an effort to indicate why it matters.

The 24th article in United Nations' declaration should also be in the United States Constitution. Everyone who works needs a break every now and then. They need food or a rest to relax or else they will get too tired and might get hurt or not work as well. If everyone got some time off every day and some holidays too then not only would they be happier but their work would be better. So everyone can benefit from having it in the US constitution.

Finally, everyone needs the minimum for a good life, like health care and education, even in the US which is the richest country in the world and still has lots of people who are not educated and cannot get healthcare when they need it. We saw this after the hurricanes in the south. That is wrong.

I talked about this with my father, and he agrees that these UN articles are good, but he said that we already have these rights in one way or another, and that trying to change the US constitution is too hard. It is better, he said, to just keep fighting with the unions to get what is right. This is a good point. But I still think it would be better if the rights were written down in the constitution because this would be more permanent.

So, I think we should revise the US constitution even if it is hard to do to make sure that these rights are secured. Everyone has a right to a job and to rest and to what they need for a good life.

Comment: The author raises a strong objection to his or her conclusion, and then responds to it.

Essay 1 EXCEEDS the expectations. The author offers reasons for his or her view, and most significantly raises and responds to an objection to that view. It is reasonable to expect that students will, in developing a well-reasoned argument for some conclusion, consider objections to that conclusion, reasons to think that the conclusion is false. Raising and responding to objections to one's conclusion is part of providing a thorough and complete argument. Defending their view against objections is not the same as providing reasons in support of their view, and it is reasonable to expect that students will be able to see this difference.

ESSAY 2

The United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights has some very great articles. The declaration says that all human beings should enjoy freedom, and all humans should have equal rights.

I think that article twenty-three of the declaration should become one of the United States Constitution amendments. Everyone has the right to work wherever they want to do whatever they are capable of doing. People should have an equal shot at a job no matter their sex, race, color, or religious background. Also everyone should have the right to receive reasonable pay. Say two people of different race start a job at the same time, they both should be getting the same amount of pay. They should not get paid any differently because their skin is a different color. People working should never have their dignity taken away just because they are different from society's view of the perfect person. Workers also should be able to get together with their coworkers and discuss work issues. People can get together and talk about their interests which are allowed to be protected.

Comment: The author does a good job of supporting the conclusion by illustrating it with an example.

I also believe that the United Nations' declaration twenty fourth article should be part of the United States Constitution. Everyone working has the right for a break. Most people work eight hour or more shifts a day, seven days a week and they can harm themselves if they don't have some rest or some food. So everyone should get like a half of an hour to eat some food and like two fifteen minute breaks just to rest or smoke a cigarette whatever they do. The same people should not have to work every single holiday in a row because everyone should have a chance to rest and spend time with their families and loved ones.

Article twenty-five of the United Nations' declaration should also be part of the United States Constitution. I think that everyone should have the minimum needs of adequate living to survive in the world. Say the father of a family gets laid off his job and the mother is ill and does not work, this family should be able to receive the necessary supplies to live such as clothing, food, medical care, and housing. Some other people would say that the family was just a bunch a bums who don't have a job and they don't deserve any of these things but they are wrong because everyone is human and we all have them bad days so we should all have a shot at life with all the adequate needs.

Also all children should have the right to special care and assistance. Even if children are born before marriage or after they should receive adequate care because the fact that they are just little human beings that do not know how to take care of themselves yet so we must keep them safe and protected no matter what.

In conclusion, many of the articles of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights have some good points and I think that we should revise the United States Constitution and see if we should add any of these articles to help keep our human rights and equality between everyone.

Comment: The author raises an objection and then responds to it. But it is an objection to one of the reasons given in support of the conclusion. It would be better to consider objections to the conclusion itself, as in Essay 1.

Essay 2 MEETS the standard for the second Critical Thinking learning outcome. In the first paragraph the student makes a good attempt to clarify the meaning of Article 23 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights. The student also uses an illustration to support the claim that it ought to be included in the US Constitution. Again, paragraph three begins with an attempt to clarify the meaning of Article 24, and the offers some support for the claim that it ought to be included in the constitution. Most significantly, the students considers in paragraph four an objection ("some other people would say that...") to one of the premises they offer in support of the conclusion, and while this might not be the strongest objection, it is good that the student considered an objection. Raising and responding to objections to reasons they offer in support of their view is not the same, and not quite as valuable, as raising and responding to objections to that view itself.

ESSAY 3

The United States Constitution is full of amendments that protect the rights of the citizens. There is a section that protects from judicial mistreatment, a section that protects one's free speech, and even a section that gives one the power to protect oneself. Remarkably, one aspect of a citizen's life that the Constitution does not account for is the rights of the worker. However, the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights does. The United States Constitution should include articles twenty-three, twenty-four, and twenty-five, in order to adequately covers the rights of the great American laborer.

Comment: This is a very good discussion of the issues in the background, and it helps the reader understand why the author's conclusion might matter.

Article twenty-three of the UN Declaration of Human rights states that everyone has the right to work, free from discrimination, and able to work enough to provide for one's self and family. This article simply put, guarantees anyone with the will to work to get a job. No one should be turned away that wants to earn an honest day's pay. Additionally, the article also protects the workers right to join a union to protect his career and protect himself from unfair labor practices. This is an extra civil right that the Constitution does not offer explicitly, therefore it needs to be amended.

Comment: The author merely restates the claim rather than offer independent support for it.

Article twenty-four of the UN Declaration of Human Rights ensures a laborers right to a rest from work. No one should be forced to work more than one can bear, this article protects the laborer from unfair hours. Additionally, holidays would be protected as well, especially the ones that are religiously observed by a certain worker. This needs to be added to the constitution as well. A happy government and economy is powered by happy laborers, or at least workers that aren't pushed to the limit. Setting protections for work hours is a must in today's society of sweatshops and over exerting hours.

Comment: The first sentence hints at independent reasons to accept the conclusion, but the next sentence simply restates the conclusion in other words.

Article 25 of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights is less about the worker and more about the ones' that can't control certain life experiences. Occasionally, things happen in ones life that cannot be accounted for. A primary bread winner may pass away, leaving a family with no income. Maybe someone was the victim of a massive layoff and is not able to find replacement work. There is no United States Constitutional Amendment to take care of this issue. In the UN Declaration of Human Rights, it states that everyone has the right to live in a certain standard of living that is acceptable for survival and health of a family. This means provision of certain services such as medical care, food services, and housing if necessary. The United States currently has programs set up to handle situations like this, but this is not a right that one is explicitly entitled to. It should be a right. The United States Constitution protects the welfare of the citizen in so many ways but the actual health and lifestyle. Article 25 of the United Nations Declaration of Human rights needs to be added to solve this issue.

Though the United States Constitution provides for many things, the basic health and welfare of the laborer and the family are just not taken into account. However, if articles twenty-three, twenty-four, and twenty-five were added from the United Nations Declarations of Human Rights, a full spectrum of rights for a US citizen would be accounted for.

Essay 3 APPROACHES the standard for the second Critical Thinking learning outcome. The author's view is clearly stated, but little is done in paragraphs two or four to support the view (apart from simply restating their view in other terms. Some support is provided in paragraph three (the claim that "a happy government and economy is powered by a happy people"). The author deserves some credit for making clear the background issues, but this is less valuable than providing reasons in support of the conclusion. This is why this essay merely approaches, and does not meet the standards.

ESSAY 4

Articles 23, 24, and 25 in the UN Declaration of Human Rights are under the question of if they should be added to the US Constitution. Each amendment has certain qualities that people have different opinions on. Some believe that they should be added, some do not.

Article 23 has four parts. The first part discusses everyone having a right to work. This should be added to the constitution because if everyone is said to be equal, they should also have a right to work somewhere. I'm not sure about the part of being protection against unemployment. If everyone is free from unemployment, then everyone would be working regardless of if they do their work correctly or not. Or maybe I just understand the concept in the wrong direction. The second part of the article states that everyone has the right of equal pay. This should be added because if two people are doing the same exact job then they should get the same pay. The only way that it could be different is if a person has received a raise from doing the job very well or has been working for the business for a while. I'm for the third part being in the constitution because if a man or women is working, then he or she should have the respect of any other working person. And finally the fourth part is about forming and joining unions. Unions should be welcomed to anyone as long as it's made to fight for what they want and open to all.

Comment: It is reasonable to expect students to make a serious effort to define the key concepts, or at least to consider several possible definitions.

Comment: Here the author simply restates the conclusion rather than providing any independent support for it.

Article 24 states: "Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay". This should be added to the constitution. It should be added because everyone needs time off. But it should have the limitations also. There should be time when they could take time off and a time that they can not. People should only be allowed time off for a special reason or if it's an emergency, not just because they do not feel like working that day. If it was like that, everyone would take off because they could and they are getting paid for it.

Article 25 has two parts. The first part says that people should be given the right to a standard of living that is adequate. This should be added. Some people can not take care of themselves and need assistance. They should have proof. If they are desperate need, then they should receive it. The second part says that: "Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection". Again they should be given this only if they are in need. If they can take care of themselves and their children in a good standard of living, then they should not get assistance.

Articles 23, 24, and 25 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights are articles that should be taken into consideration. All the articles should be added. But, the articles should just be in more detail. The more specific they are, the better people will

understand them; therefore there should be no question whether they should be in the US Constitution.

Comment: Again, the student should make some effort to add the qualifications and details.

Essay 4 FAILS to meet the standard for the second Critical Thinking learning outcome. The author seems not to understand the issues at all. It is reasonable to expect students to make some effort to analyze complex claims and concepts. But in paragraph two no attempt is made to clarify or try to understand the complex claim that everyone has a right to work. Instead of refusing to analyze the concept, the student should have considered some different things it might mean. Again, in paragraph four, the student fails to show sensitivity to meaning. The word “adequate” is crucial in Article 25, and the student seems to mistakenly identify the absence of “adequate standard of life” with an “inability to take care of themselves”. The student should have been more careful in analyzing what an “adequate” standard of life might be. The final paragraph makes clear that no effort was made to clarify the meanings of the Articles under consideration. Finally, in paragraph two, the author offers no independent support for the view that Article 23 should be included. The claim “I’m for the third part being in the constitution because if a man or woman is working, then he or she should have the respect of any other working person.” seems to repeat the claim being supported rather than provide independent support for it.