

Perspectives on the Evolution of Structures

Writing Assignment #2 (draft for peer-editing)

Assignment: Write a two-page, double-spaced essay about a structure of your choosing. Writing about the structure you outlined in your last writing assignment would be a natural choice; however, if you feel that this structure does not lend itself well to the assignment, you are encouraged to consider choosing another structure.

The objective of this assignment is to present an effective argument about whether your structure does or does not represent an efficient, economical and elegant design. You should consider your structure from the scientific, social and symbolic perspectives. Please note that the assignment is to *critique* the structure, which includes both making a claim (eg. The structure is efficient in its use of materials) and supporting it with facts (eg. The structure uses less steel because of its innovative design). Either of these aspects alone is not enough to make an argument; do not simply present facts or make unsupported claims.

Guidance: In thinking about the scientific qualities of the structure, consider the following: Of what material is the structure made? What loads act on the structure? How do the structural members transmit loads to the ground? What technical purpose does the structure serve? Some social/economic considerations include: Is the structure expensive (in consideration of the time and location in which it was constructed and the society which constructed it)? How is the structure used by society? In considering the symbolism of the structure: How is the structure thought of? Is it an emblem of a city, state, or country or is it named after a person, a war, a cultural movement, etc.? If so, why? What qualities of the structure make it elegant and attractive as a symbol?

Your paper should have an introductory paragraph with a clear thesis statement, a concluding paragraph, and several well-organized paragraphs in which you explain the social, scientific, and symbolic aspects of the structure. You should include a picture of your structure. You must clearly cite all sources, including the source of the picture. If you feel you do not have enough information to complete an adequate assessment of the structure, state clearly what you are missing, and how you would proceed if the information was available.

Details: This draft of your essay will be used in a peer-editing exercise in class. Do the following things to prepare for the peer-editing exercise.

1. Mark your thesis statement by typing it in boldface.
2. Bring 4 printed copies of your essay to class
3. Prepare to offer constructive criticism of your classmates' writing