

GYC2002: Green Economy and Social Justice

Deiters COM 102

I'll use these Wal-Mart essay and presentation assignments in my COM 102 course, which focuses on multisource research writing an argumentation. The first half of the course ask students to read, think, and write about their personality types and how they connect to others—with different personality types—in the classroom, in social situations, and with their families. Then students consider how they connect to different texts—different genres/mediums and different viewpoints presented in those texts. Finally, students will focus on how they connect with the environment. In class, we'll watch the Story of Stuff and No Impact Man. We'll also consider Tryon Farms (in Indiana) and similar “green” and “simple” communities. Of course, we'll also look at the impact that Wal-Mart has had on small towns and downtowns, and then we'll take on Wal-mart's “next big idea” challenge.

Considering Wal-Mart

COM 102 Course Content Learning Outcomes (as well as outcomes for the assignments)

- Create connections among texts discussed and other texts
- Analyze a writer's stylistic choices, such as the perspective or tone adopted for a particular audience and purpose.
- Construct an argument based on a text or texts.
- Develop strategies for reaching more than one type of audience in a piece of writing.
- Select source material (library, print, digital, or fieldwork-based) appropriate to a writing project's purpose and audience.
- Integrate research material from multiple sources into a piece of writing while maintaining one's own voice.
- Demonstrate ethical awareness in writing by incorporating and documenting source material responsibly according to a guidelines system (MLA, APA).
- Correctly document sources through appropriate in-text citations and a Works Cited
- Move beyond managing correctness in writing and toward making deliberate choices about stylistic elements such as clarity, concision, cohesion, and emphasis.
- Demonstrate skill at the stylistic aspects of integrating sources, such as employing a variety of transitional effects or integrating a quote into the grammatical structure of a sentence.

Part I. We've talked about smart growth in relation to cities and their suburbs. Now consider the below articles regarding the effects of Wal-mart in small cities across the country. In the end, how do you feel about Wal-mart's developments? Your three page essay should present your opinion, and you'll need to weave in the findings of Anderson, Johnston, Moore, Norman, Ortega, and Stone. Indeed, some of the articles will not support your thesis; however, good and fair argumentation requires the acknowledgment (and refutation) of other viewpoints.

Because you'll be quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing from the following sources, you will need to follow MLA style documentation rules in-text and on the works cited page. In addition, as with any essay, you will need an engaging introduction, multiple body paragraphs, and a satisfying conclusion. Of course, the COM 102 Grading Standards will be applied.

Anderson, Sarah. "Wal-Mart's War on Main Street."

Johnston, Jo-Ann. "Who's Really the Villain?"

Moore, James F. "Savvy Expansion and Leadership."

Norman, Albert. "Eight Ways to Stop the Store."

Ortega, Bob. "Ban the Bargains."

Stone, Kenneth E. "Competing with the Discount Mass Merchandisers."

Part II.

Wal-mart has indeed affected small cities and towns in both negative and positive ways. Now, along with so many other companies, Wal-mart is offering green and sustainable choices to shoppers. In addition, their Green Room offers a blog regarding “green” ideas, a poll for visitors to consider their own “green” choices, and an invitation to develop the next “big idea.”

Your group assignment is to develop the next “big idea” to share with the class, Wal-mart, or Moraine Valley. First, in your assigned small groups, generate a list of your own green ideas. What could individuals, Wal-mart, and Moraine do to support sustainable living, eco-friendly shopping, green jobs?

Your group should also do some research. What have other people and institutions invented, promoted, and applied. Perhaps you’ll research by using the public internet. Perhaps you’ll access the online databases for previously published newspaper, magazine, and journal articles. Perhaps you’ll interview actual employees of these companies and institutions.

Finally, your group will develop a ten minute presentation to share your big idea. Perhaps the idea is specifically geared toward your classmates—what can they do to be more green? Perhaps the true audience of the presentation is the folks at Wal-mart—what can the corporation do in their stores, with their products, or for their employees? Perhaps the presentation is meant for Moraine Valley’s Green Team—what can the school do for the campus, for the students, for the employees? Truly, the “big idea” might not be brand new; however, it might be new for us, for Wal-mart, or for Moraine, and it’s the group’s job to convince us to implement the idea. Of course, it would be a good idea to make sure that the idea is new for Wal-mart or Moraine.

All members of the group must participate in the presentation. In addition, research sources must be referred to specifically—with authors’ names, titles, and dates. The presentation should also include visuals to help keep the audience engaged and to emphasize significant ideas or clarify more difficult concepts. Finally, as with an essay, the presentation should have an engaging opening, multiple points of discussion, and a satisfying conclusion.

Both Assignments will be evaluated based on the COM 101 and COM 102 Grading Standards:

Any piece of writing reflects the writer's choices in response to his or her understanding of the purpose of writing, its intended audience, and the form (or genre) the writer takes. These criteria attempt to evaluate the writer's choices.

THE A PAPER: The assignment's requirements are met. The writer is in command of the essay's ideas; details to illuminate or support those ideas are specific, relevant and carefully crafted or presented. The work is tightly unified, and ideas are arranged logically with creative transitions. The introduction is original; it provides necessary context and engages the reader; the conclusion provides new insight and leaves a strong final impression. The writer's sense of style is reflected in a variety of sentence constructions and sophisticated word choices; there are virtually no mechanical errors. Finally, if needed, MLA documentation rules have been applied precisely. The piece thoroughly satisfies, compelling the reader to think, reflect, or act.

THE B PAPER: The assignment's requirements are met. The writer is in consistent control of the ideas of the essay; details to illuminate or support those ideas are specific and relevant. The organization and use of transitions are consistent. The introduction provides a context for the writing, but may miss the opportunity to fully engage the reader; the conclusion doesn't repeat but rather pulls the essay's ideas together. The essay demonstrates awareness of stylistic choices, in spite of a few mechanical errors (none of which are distracting to the reader or impede comprehension). Finally, if needed, MLA documentation rules have been applied with few formatting errors. The piece adequately satisfies, offering the reader some opportunity for thought and reflection.

THE C PAPER: The assignment's requirements are met. The writer seems initially in control of the ideas of the essay, but is unable to maintain it; details to illuminate or support the essay's ideas are typically relevant and/or specific. Organization is inconsistent, with few effective links between ideas. The introduction does not engage and provides little context for the reader; the conclusion repeats what's already been said. The sentences demonstrate little awareness of stylistic options; mechanical errors are somewhat distracting, but generally do not distort the meanings of sentences. Finally, if needed, MLA documentation rules have been applied; formatting errors don't mislead or confuse the reader. The piece prompts no further thought or reflection, leaving the reader indifferent.

THE D PAPER: The assignment's requirements are not met. The writer maintains a false sense of control over the essay's ideas (by mistaking a statement of purpose for a main idea, for example); details meant to illuminate or support the essay's ideas are often generic and/or irrelevant. The organization is confusing, with little or no attempt at linking ideas. The introduction is unoriginal and fails to provide enough context for the reader; there is very little attempt at closing the essay. Sentences tend to be monotonous, with multiple mechanical errors that distract the reader from or even distort the ideas of the essay. Finally, MLA documentation rules have been attempted, but formatting misleads or confuses the reader. The piece is dissatisfying; it frustrates the reader's attempts to further engage with the essay.

THE F PAPER: The assignment's requirements are not met. The writer has no control over the essay's ideas; details are severely lacking or missing altogether. The organization is incoherent or illogical, with no transitions between ideas, creating a total lack of unity. There has been no attempt to introduce or close the essay. Mechanical errors are distracting to the reader, distort meaning, and ultimately negate the writer's credibility. MLA documentation rules, when needed, have not been attempted. The reader feels that his or her time has been wasted.

