Sample Textual Analysis Essay Assignment

Instructions: Read the sample student essay carefully and answer the Response Questions. Before reading the essay, please review the brief comments I’ve provided below as they will help you better understand how the essay can work as a model for you. When you are done answering the Response Questions, upload your activity to the appropriate link in MyHills.

Comments on the Sample Essay:

I’ve provided a sample essay for you; it will illustrate an approach to the Textual Analysis essay.

- The essay titled “Racial Segregation: Still Making an Appearance” (which analyzes “Still Separate, Still Unequal” by Jonathon Kozol) develops the analysis by making claims about the author’s methods. That is, she does not move chronologically through Kozol’s essay. Instead, to support the thesis, the student makes main points about the essay’s rhetoric and then develops each point by providing and discussing examples from throughout Kozol’s essay.

Note: You can use your own method of development and organization, depending on the points you would like to make in your essay. Please be aware, though, that using a chronological organization can sometimes lead to mere summary of (or retelling of) the essay. Be sure that if you analyze the essay chronologically, you focus on discussing what method the author uses, why she would use this method, and how it would affect the audience’s or build the argument.

Response Questions: Answer the following questions for the sample essay.

1. How effective do you think the introduction is? Why?
2. What is the student’s thesis statement? Write it here.
3. Please list the student’s main points (to support the thesis).
4. What stood out to you as particularly good about the student’s essay?
5. How does the author answer the “So-what?” question in the conclusion? In other words, how does the author move beyond summary and reflect on the significance of the topic?
6. How do you think the essay could be improved?