

English 112  
Dr. Julianne Newmark  
Essay One: Definition Argument

**Draft Due for Peer Review: Monday, September 21 (email to your groupmates, 10 a.m.)**  
**Email of Peer Review Worksheets to Me: Midnight, Monday September 21**  
**Final Version Due: Monday, September 28**  
**Required length: four to five pages**  
**Must include a Works Cited page (as an additional page)**

Please choose one of the following readings:

Michael Moore, "Idiot Nation"  
Jonathan Kozol, "Still Separate, Still Unequal"  
Mike Rose, "I Just Wanna be Average"  
Anyon, "Social Class and the Hidden Curriculum of Work"

You will need to create your own definition argument (by this I mean, do not recreate the argument in the essay you've chosen; that author's argument might not be a definition argument) that addresses the issue considered in the essay you've chosen. So, you will be crafting an argument about one of the following:

- the pervasive mediocrity of and stupefaction caused by the American public school system,
- the deeply entrenched inequalities and the persistence of segregation in our nation's (primarily urban) schools,
- the possibility for transforming academic mediocrity as a result of inspiring and respectful teaching, or
- the existence of a kind of "track" system for preparing children for future employment commensurate with their class position.

As you can see, you have several different possible foci for this essay. Regardless of what topic you choose, you will need to:

1. Create a claim that will follow the formula of a definition argument: "Something is (or is not) a \_\_\_\_\_ because it has (or does not have) features a, b, or c." Please see the "Definition Argument handout posted online.
2. Think about "what's at stake" (this is a pre-writing exercise).
3. List the criteria and analyze potential readers (these are pre-writing exercises).
4. Craft an essay that begins by revealing what issue you are discussing and proceeds, at the end of the first paragraph, to a declaration of your definitional claim.
5. Your essay, in the body paragraphs, will include evidence pulled from the essay you've chosen above. By "evidence," I mean quotes. This evidence can either support or refute your definition.
6. Your essay will need to include "evidence" from (at least) one other source (but not more than three other sources). We will discuss the criteria for this in class.

Please refresh your memory of the criteria for a successful paper, listed on your Response Paper assignment. These hold for this essay as well.