

Methodology of the opinion piece

(X-ENS-ESPCI Part B)

Step 1: Search the paratext to contextualise the opinion piece

- What does the title and subtitle tell you about the position being adopted in the opinion piece?
- Which newspaper published the opinion piece? Do you know anything about it (political leaning...)?
- Who wrote the opinion piece? Do you know anything about them (job, political views...)?
- When was the opinion piece published? Does this help contextualise it?

Step 2: Study the opinion piece

- What is the main thesis of the opinion piece?
- What arguments are used to defend this thesis?
- What examples are used to illustrate these arguments?

Make sure to rephrase these ideas using your own words.

Step 3: Formulate the key question of the opinion piece

- What are the 2-3 key concepts that are related to the opinion piece? Fill in the boxes.
- How are these key concepts related to one another? Annotate the links between the boxes, focusing on points of tension between them.
- What question encapsulates the tensions between these key concepts? Formulate the key question.

Step 4: Brainstorm your position vis-à-vis the opinion piece

For each of the opinion piece's arguments, consider the following questions:

- Do I agree with the argument or not? Why so?
- What example can I use to illustrate my argument?
- Are there any ideas from the other four documents (which were used for the synthesis) that are relevant to mention? Remember to reference any ideas you borrow.

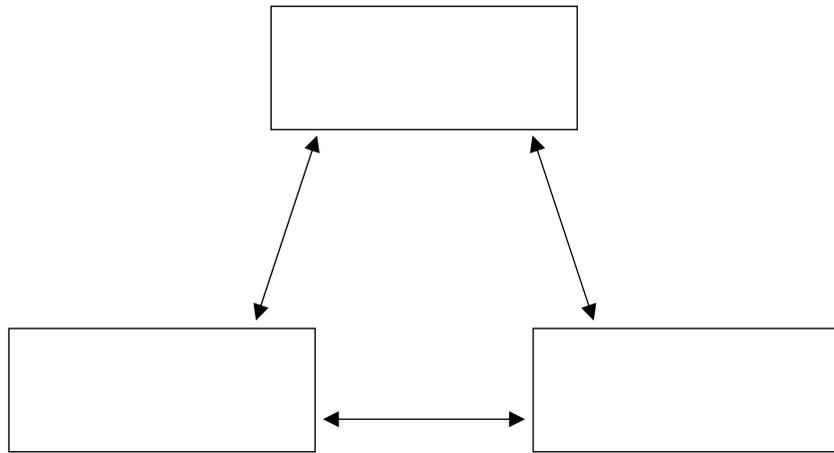
Take a step back and consider the following questions:

- Overall, do I agree with the opinion piece or not? Why so?
- If I agree only partially, which points do I support and which points do I want to nuance?
- How would I answer the key question of the opinion piece?

Step 1: Paratext

Step 6: Introduction

Step 3: Key Question



Step 7: Conclusion

Step 2: Opinion piece	Steps 4/5: My arguments	Steps 4/5: My examples
Thesis:	My thesis:	

Step 5: Structure the outline of your paper

Based on the outcome of step 4, organise your ideas into a 3- or 4-part outline. As you do so, consider the following principles:

- Each section of the outline must clearly identify one argument from the opinion piece and develop your argument and its accompanying example in response to it.
- Each section of the outline must offer a more complex level of analysis than the previous one, i.e. the most obvious and simple ideas must be discussed first whereas the most implicit and complex ideas must be kept for last.
- Each section's title should be a full sentence. It will later be used as the topic sentence of the section.

Step 6: Write your draft introduction (~100 words)

The introduction must include:

- A catchphrase to identify the topic of the opinion piece;
- The presentation of the opinion piece and the identification of its main thesis;
- The key question of the opinion piece;
- Your thesis statement.

Note: there is no need to present your outline.

Step 7: Write your draft conclusion (~30 words)

The conclusion aims to:

- Reaffirm your position;
- Open up the discussion.

Note: there is no need to repeat what you have just said, such as by running through your outline again.

Step 8: Write your paper

Write your full answer out directly on the paper you will be handing in.