

# Independent Documentary Analysis

Read the questions before you watch the film so that you will know what to look for while you watch. At breaks during the showing or at the movie's end, record notes. If you make notes while the movie is playing, make sure that your note taking doesn't interfere with carefully watching the film. You do not need to make any notes on the worksheet, but after the movie is over, you will be required to fully respond to the questions.

Complete the assignment by answering each question in paragraph form. Answers need to be complete and comprehensive, demonstrating that you paid attention to the film and thought about what was shown on the screen. You may use more than one paragraph if necessary. Be sure that the topic sentence of your first paragraph uses key words from the question. All responses should be typed, complete sentences using proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

You will choose **one** of the three sets of documentary type questions included below. (A, B, OR C)

**This assignment is due on Wednesday, November 29. It will count as a test grade. Follow directions.**

## A. Informational Documentary

1. State the title of the film and the year it was released. Then briefly describe what the film is about.
2. Identify the people, places, events, or aspects of people, society, or nature that are the focus of this film. Describe and clarify the significance of each.
3. List six facts described in the film that impressed you and explain how each fact relates to the film's premise or theme.
4. Nonfiction can enrich viewers in several important ways. Describe an aspect of the film that showed you something you hadn't seen before, caused you to think in a new way, or helped you understand something more thoroughly than before. In addition, describe how it changed your thinking.
5. Was there anything that you saw or heard in the film that was unconvincing or which seemed out of place?
6. What particularly appealed to you in the cinematic presentation of the film, such as the way in which particular scenes, images, or sounds were presented?
7. If the filmmakers were to ask you how the film could be improved, what would you tell them? Describe the changes you would suggest in detail and the reasons for your suggestions.
8. If someone asked you whether you would recommend this film, how would you respond? Fully explain your reasons.

1. Briefly describe what the film is about and the argument that it makes.
2. List six facts described in the movie that impressed you and explain how each fact relates to the film's argument (*logos*).
3. What were the strongest logical arguments given in support of the filmmakers' position (*logos*)?
4. Did any of the reasoning given in support of the positions advocated in the film seem to be weak or misleading? If so, describe the concept put forward in the movie and why you thought the reasoning was flawed (*logos*).
5. Look for cinematic techniques such as camera angle, color, scene juxtaposition, and music. Select three scenes, and describe how cinematic techniques support the positions advocated by the filmmakers.
6. List three scenes in the movie designed to appeal to a viewer's emotions (*pathos*), and describe the ways in which they present their emotional appeal.
7. How did the filmmakers use the element of *ethos*, or appeal to authority? Was it effective? Explain your reasoning.
8. Describe a scene in the movie that serves as the cinematic equivalent of a concession (bringing up the opposing argument in order to refute it).
9. How well did the filmmakers use the Aristotelian rhetorical appeals to *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos*? Did any one predominate over the others? Justify your response.
10. Was there a call to action in this movie? How do you think you will respond to that call? Describe your reasons.

**C. Documentary Seeking to Persuade the Viewer on a Matter of Political or Social Significance**

1. State the title of the film and the year it was released. Then briefly describe what the film is about and the position that it advocates.
2. Describe the progression of the film: how it begins, what stages it passes through, and how it concludes.
3. List six facts described in the film that impressed you and explain how each fact relates to the film's premise or theme.
4. How did the filmmakers try to convince you of the position that the film supports? Look for appeals to logic, emotion, and prejudice.
5. Did any of the reasoning given in support of the position advocated by the film seem to be weak or misleading? If so, describe the concept put forward in the film and why you thought the reasoning was flawed.
6. Describe any cinematic techniques used in presenting particular scenes, images, or sounds which were designed to appeal to the viewer's emotions and to encourage the viewer to agree with the position advocated by the film, without reliance upon fact or logical argument.
7. If the filmmakers asked how this film could be improved, what would you tell them? Describe the changes you would suggest in detail.
8. Did the film change your mind about any aspect of the subject that it presents? What information, argument or persuasive technique caused you to change your mind?