Reading Selection for This Module:

Reading Rhetorically
Prereading

Activity 1

Getting Ready to Read
This module asks you to consider the “history and future of wilderness and civilization on planet Earth.” Written by an internationally known professor emeritus of history and environmental studies, this presentation will engage you in the complex cognitive task of entering an ongoing conversation about issues that face all of humanity. Through a close study of the often controversial views presented by the author, you will have the opportunity to challenge the viewpoints of the author while also developing, refining, and conveying your own solutions to the challenging issues presented in this reading.

You may encounter this module in an English language arts class, a science course, a political science class, a philosophy class, a sociology class, an American studies class, an American history class, or in an environmental studies class.

Question at issue: What will civilization look like on planet Earth in the distant future?

Read each statement. Then, in Column I, write a plus sign if you agree with the statement, a minus sign if you disagree, or a question mark if you are unsure about your opinion. For most statements, there are no right answers. After reading the text of the presentation, you will indicate your reactions in Column II.
Agree = +  Disagree = –  Don’t know = ?

1. _____ _____ Humans lack foresight.
2. _____ _____ Future generations will be thankful for the manner in which we treated the Earth “on our watch.”
3. _____ _____ In 1,000 years, life will be better for humans than it is today.
4. _____ _____ In 1,000 years, the Earth will be a healthier planet than it is today.
5. _____ _____ Having a goal is a vital first step to solving problems.
6. _____ _____ “Wilderness” and “civilization” can coexist in harmony.
7. _____ _____ Life in modern cities is preferable to the life of hunter-gatherers, who live off the land.
8. _____ _____ “Nature” is an oppressed minority that needs to be liberated.
9. _____ _____ Civilization is vulnerable and may not last.
10. _____ _____ Wilderness is vulnerable and may not last.
11. _____ _____ Human progress should take precedence over the rights and needs of other species.
12. _____ _____ Humans in the future will have the ability to control nature completely.
13. _____ _____ If humans plan well now, life in the year 3010 will be better for humans and all other life forms on planet Earth

Exploring Key Concepts—Quickwrite

React to this statement from the Anticipation/Reaction Guide: “‘Wilderness’ and ‘civilization’ can coexist in harmony.” Respond in a five-minute quickwrite. Explain why you agree or disagree with this particular statement—or why you are unsure about your response. Discuss your completed quickwrite in groups.
Activity 3

**Surveying the Text**

Before you read Nash’s “Island Civilization: A Vision for Human Occupancy of Earth in the Fourth Millennium,” discuss the following questions:

1. What does the title, “Island Civilization: A Vision for Human Occupancy of Earth in the Fourth Millennium,” tell you about Nash’s position on this issue?

2. Why does Nash use the term “island” when describing his vision of civilization in the future? What does it mean to live on an island?

3. Why are there two parts to Nash’s title (one before and one after the colon)? What does the subheading, “A Vision for Human Occupancy of Earth in the Fourth Millennium,” suggest?

4. Take a quick look at the author’s biography that is next to the presentation transcript. What do you think is Nash’s purpose for writing this piece?

Activity 4

**Making Predictions and Asking Questions**

Read each section of the text below, one at a time. Before you continue on to the next passage, answer these questions: (1) What do you notice? (2) What words and ideas seem to be important? (3) What do you predict the next section will be about?

- “The new third millennium we are just entering affords an excellent opportunity to think big about the history and future of wilderness and civilization on planet Earth.” (par. 1)

- “opportunity to transcend our species’ characteristic myopia” (par. 1)

- “So my mission here is to review the history of human-nature relations and to extend our concern to the big picture. What could the human tenure on Earth be like a thousand years from now—at the start of the Fourth Millennium? My proposal involves some really major changes and will be controversial.” (par. 2)

- “As a starting point, let’s consider wilderness. It’s a state of mind, a perception, rather than a geographical reality, and prior to the advent of herding and agriculture about ten thousand years before the present, it didn’t exist.” (par. 3)

Pairs Conversation: Now make a prediction with a partner about the rest of the piece. What type of a future do you think the text of the presentation might describe? What do you think the text might say humans should be thinking about now in order to plan for the future of our species?
**Introducing Key Vocabulary**

Read through the list of words in the self-assessment chart. Identify your familiarity of each word by checking the appropriate column: Know It Well, Heard of It, or Don’t Know It.

**Vocabulary Self-Assessment Chart**

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<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Know It Well</th>
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Activity 6

Understanding Key Vocabulary

For this activity, you will work in pairs. There will be one list A student and one list B student per pair.

List A students will write down one word from list A. Student one takes number one, student two takes word two, etc.

List B students will write down one word from list B. Student one takes number one, student two takes word two, etc.

Once you have a word chosen, you will meet with your oppositional team member. For example, the two students who have been assigned to cover word one will meet and discuss their words: wilderness (list A word) and civilization (list B word).

Within these paired conversations, you should consider the meaning of your word when set against the oppositional word that your partner has. You should be able to discuss the meaning of your word and also be able to appreciate how your partner’s word acts as an antonym for your word. You should discuss why the author might have used this kind of oppositional language throughout his presentation.

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<tr>
<th>List A</th>
<th>List B</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1. wilderness</td>
<td>1. civilization</td>
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<td>2. uncontrolled</td>
<td>2. controlled</td>
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<td>3. wild</td>
<td>3. tame</td>
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<td>4. hunter gatherers</td>
<td>4. pastoral society</td>
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<td>5. untempered</td>
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<td>6. sustainable</td>
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<td>7. primitivistic</td>
<td>7. technological</td>
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<td>8. asset</td>
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<td>9. biocentric</td>
<td>9. anthropocentric</td>
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<td>10. paradise</td>
<td>10. cursed land</td>
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<td>11. conservation/preservation</td>
<td>11. destruction</td>
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<td>12. garden scenario</td>
<td>12. wasteland scenario</td>
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<td>13. primitive</td>
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<td>14. miracles</td>
<td>14. sinking arks</td>
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<td>15. caring</td>
<td>15. cancerous</td>
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</table>
Following the “Arc” of the Argument

Nash’s argument in “Island Civilization” has several steps that are developed in different sections. Before you begin to read the text of the presentation, look over the following list of argumentative moves. As you read, write the number of each section of the argument in the margin where the section begins.

1. Humans tend to think short-term, small picture. They need to think long-term, big picture.
2. Humans think about wilderness as uncontrolled space and civilization as controlled space.
3. Over the last 10,000 years human control of the land has increased to the point where very little uncontrolled space is left.
4. The loss of wilderness has increased its value in the minds of humans, but efforts to protect it have been unsuccessful.
5. The human population is increasing rapidly, ecosystems are collapsing, and biodiversity is diminishing.
7. The best scenario will require some “compromise” of human freedom, but it is worth it. The whole planet is at stake.

Reading for Understanding

As you read “Island Civilization,” think about the predictions you made. You may notice words you worked with in the previous activities. Listen to your teacher as he or she “thinks aloud” about the meaning-making strategies he or she uses to understand selected portions of the text.

After you finish the piece, discuss the following questions with your classmates:

1. How accurate were your predictions?
2. When you read the whole presentation, did anything surprise you?
3. Are there any parts of the presentation that you found confusing?
Activity 9

**Noticing Language—Bookmark Activity**

Scan the reading for any terms that you think the whole class needs to talk about. You need to find the one word that is most important for the class to discuss. Once you have chosen your word, complete your bookmark handout so that you are prepared to discuss in small groups or as a whole class.

A sample bookmark appears below.

```
Name_____________________

BOOKMARK

A word that I think the whole class needs to talk about is....

Why is it important?

Paragraph number:
```

Activity 10

**“Ticket out the Door”**

You must turn in your ticket in order to leave class today. Completed bookmarks will be accepted as your “Ticket out the Door.”
Activity 11

Annotating and Questioning the Text—Reading from Different Perspectives

Choose one of the perspectives from the list below:

- A subsistence farmer living in India
- The leader of a national environmental organization
- A single mother with several children
- A conservative religious leader
- Rush Limbaugh
- A futurist
- A sociologist whose expertise includes population forecasting
- A family planning expert
- A Catholic priest
- The president of an airline company
- A philosopher
- A climatologist
- A river rafting guide
- A Native American
- A philosopher
- A Kalahari bushman who is still living a hunter-gatherer existence

1. Reread the text (or parts of the text) with this perspective in mind.

2. Complete your Perspectives Guide by listing the most important concerns and needs for your perspective (see sample Perspective Guide below.).

3. As you complete your Perspectives Guide, identify statements from the text that are most important to your assigned perspective.

4. Consider whether there is any information missing from the selection that would be important to your perspective.

When your Perspectives Guide is completed, be prepared to discuss the insights that you gained through your rereading from this different perspective.
Your Perspectives on...

Role: _______________________

Needs <-> Concerns

Read and React

Text Statements <-> Your Reaction

Summary Statement

Activity 12

Analyzing Stylistic Choices—Loaded Language

Look through “Island Civilization” again, this time silently. This time, your purpose is to look for “loaded” words. These are words that Nash uses purposively to draw a strong emotional reaction from the reader. List at least five words and explain whether each has a positive or a negative emotional connotation for you. Consider more neutral words that Nash might have used as a substitute for the words he chose to use. Think about why Nash chose the specific “loaded” language that he did. Do you think it worked for him?
### Considering the Structure of the Text

Working in pairs, highlight with one color the claims made by the author that have major support. You will likely notice that when Nash cites sources and provides credible support for his points, he is discussing historical events that have already occurred. For example, when Nash discusses Aldo Leopold’s work, he references the author and his major work by name: “In essays written in the 1920s and 1930s, and particularly in his book *A Sand County Almanac* (1949), wildlife ecologist Aldo Leopold became the major American articulator of what he called ‘the land ethic.’”

Using a different color, highlight those claims that lack meaningful support. For example, claims such as a greatly reduced human population, human ‘islands’ capable of existing “on the poles,

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Nash’s Word</th>
<th>Positive/negative connotation</th>
<th>Neutral word as a substitute</th>
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<tr>
<td>cancer</td>
<td>Immediate feelings of fear and dread A sense of not being in control of your fate</td>
<td>problem, wound, or blemish</td>
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around mountains, in the air, underground, and undersea” are claims without real support. They are ideas that may or may not materialize.

Locate the last spot where Nash cites a source in his text. Where is this? Discuss why he stops citing sources at this point. What do you think causes him to shift his approach as an author? Why are many of his claims about the future lacking solid support? Explore as a class why Nash adopts a different tone and stance when he discusses the future as opposed to the past.

Postreading

Activity 14

Summarizing and Responding—Five-Word Summary

Your teacher will now lead you through a four-step process for writing a summary of “Island Civilization” using key words from the text of the presentation.

STEP ONE: Using actual words from “Island Civilization” create a list of the five most important words in the text. These should all be words that you think are essential to the presentation’s main idea.

STEP TWO: Now, compare your five-word list to a partner’s. The two of you will then have five minutes to create a new list of the five most important words from the text by synthesizing your two original lists (you’ll need to make some cuts unless the two of you wrote exactly the same list.). Be sure to choose those terms from your lists that represent the text’s main idea.

STEP THREE: As a pair, now join another set of partners to form a group of four. Each pair will share its five-word list; then, the group of four will once again discuss which words are really most essential to the text’s main idea. The four of you will also have five minutes to create a newly synthesized list of five key words from “Island Civilization.” While you can try to persuade your peers that your word choices are the best, your group must be in agreement about its final list.

STEP FOUR: On your own, use the final list of five key words your group of four agreed on to write a summary paragraph for “Island Civilization.” Use all five words from your final list in your paragraph. Be sure to identify the main idea of the text in your summary.
Activity 15

Thinking Critically

Discuss the following questions with your partner.

Questions about Logic (Logos)

1. What kind of evidence does Nash include to support his claims? Do you find it credible?

2. What evidence does Nash provide that suggests humans really are hurting other species’ natural rights to self-realize? Do you find the evidence Nash provides convincing?

3. Can you think of other examples of the consequences of human actions on our planet that Nash doesn’t discuss?

4. Does Nash discuss any benefits of civilization? If so, what are they?

5. Can you think of any future scenarios that Nash doesn’t discuss?

6. Who is likely to disagree with Nash’s viewpoint? Why?

7. Are you persuaded that humans will have to reorient themselves in the future in order to achieve a more harmonious relationship with the natural world? Why or why not?

Questions about the Writer (Ethos)

1. After learning more about Nash’s background and credentials, do you find him to be a credible authority on this topic?

2. How would you describe the writer’s tone when he is expressing his own opinions? How is his tone different from when he’s citing authors, historical events, and laws?

Questions about Emotions (Pathos)

1. Which words and phrases from the text express a sense of risk or threat? Do these references to danger help you have more or less sympathy for Nash’s main point?

2. Why does Nash preface his presentation with four quotes? Why do you think Nash chooses these four quotes in particular?

3. Why did Nash use a personals ad at the end of his presentation? How do you think he wants his readers to react to this ad? What about his final paragraph, which is a response to this ad? Do you find his choice of language (e.g., “cancerous to caring”) to be effective?
Activity 16

Challenging the Arguments

The commentary below summarizes the main sections of Nash’s presentation and provides strategies for challenging the arguments. This commentary is designed to help you think critically about the text of the presentation. When you first read the text, you may have found that you mostly agreed with the author. However, Nash asks for big changes in the way humans live on the planet. His claims should be carefully analyzed. If you were asked to write a response to Nash’s text, what points would you raise questions about? If you were asked to argue against him, what would be your main line of attack? Read through the commentary and the strategies for challenging the arguments and decide where Nash is most vulnerable and why. Then complete the following statement:

“If I were going to write an essay against Nash’s conclusions in “Island Civilization,” my main point would be . . .”

After you complete this statement, list your reasons for making this argument and what you might have to find out to back it up. Share your statement with a partner to see if you agree on where Nash is weakest and why.

Paragraph 1: Even though the concept of thousand-year periods called “millennia” is artificial, entering into the third millennium (and the 21st century) is a good opportunity for humans to think about the big picture, especially since we are normally nearsighted, short-term thinkers.

Comment: It is hard to argue with this. We could argue that some people think in a longer term than others. Some cultures are better at this than others.

Paragraph 2: The author says that he is going to review the history of the relationship between humans and nature, and then help us think about the big picture. He acknowledges that his “Island Civilization” proposal will be controversial, but he asks us to go beyond criticism. (We might say that he asks us to play the believing game first and then if we disagree, come up with our own proposal.)

Comment: This is fair enough. He asks us to give his arguments a chance.

Paragraphs 3-4: Nash argues that “wilderness” came into being only after humans started farming, herding, and building walls and fences to keep nature out. Civilization is where humans have control. Wilderness is uncontrolled, or has its own will. He uses the history of the word “wild” as meaning “having its own will” to support his contrast of “controlled” and “uncontrolled” spaces.
Comment: We could certainly attack the controlled/uncontrolled definition of civilization and wilderness. Are humans a part of nature? Is everything that humans do by definition “unnatural”? Don’t other animals influence the environment? Is agriculture about controlling nature, or guiding and helping it?

Paragraph 5: Nash asks if the growth of civilization is really progress if the growth is unsustainable. He compares our “technological, capitalist-driven culture” to cancer. Here he introduces the idea that our political and economic system might be the cause of our environmental problems. Implicit in his argument is the idea that a capitalist economy depends on continuous growth, but such growth is unsustainable in the long term.

Comment: Nash doesn’t dwell on the political argument very much, but we could certainly question it. Is he against capitalism? Later, he says that certain “compromises” in human freedom will be necessary to create his vision of an “Island Civilization.” Does that mean he is against democracy?

Paragraphs 6-7: Nash marks the pronouncement of the U.S. Census Bureau in 1890 that there was no more frontier as a turning point in American attitudes toward wilderness. He argues that rather than being a liability, a negative factor that needed to be explored, eliminated or controlled, wilderness became an asset that should be appreciated and preserved. He points out that the pioneers went camping out of necessity, not for fun, but today we visit the wilderness to enjoy the scenery.

Comment: One could question his analysis of how we feel about wilderness today versus in the past. How do we define wilderness? Is it an unknown scary place? Is it a lovely place to visit and take photographs?

Paragraphs 8-12: Nash points to shift in the last 50 years of the 20th century from an “anthropocentric” human-centered view of wilderness based on tourism and enjoyment to a “biocentric” view that was more concerned with ecology. He quotes a number of famous nature writers in support of his argument and also cites environmental laws that were passed.

Comment: Many people do seem to be concerned about the environment today. However, there are also a lot of people who mock environmentalists and call them “tree huggers,” so maybe Nash is wrong about this.

Paragraphs 13-14: Nash argues that although humans have begun to appreciate wilderness and have passed laws to protect it, environmental damage continues. The human population grows by a billion people every 15 years, while other species become extinct. Human activity may even be changing the climate. He points
to past civilizations that have declined and disappeared because of unsustainable practices. He also notes that there is very little wilderness left. He cites Jared Diamond’s book *Collapse* in support of his arguments about past civilizations and ecological collapse. Diamond’s book is about the mystery of what happened at Easter Island. His conclusions are somewhat controversial. An interesting blog post about Diamond’s book, with a response from Diamond, can be found at this link: http://www.marklynas.org/2011/09/the-myth-of-easter-islands-ecocide/

**Comment:** This is one of the most controversial sections so far in this piece. Is this rate of population growth sustainable? Have we done enough to protect the environment? Does it matter if thousands of species become extinct? Should we halt development and land use because of endangered species? Is climate change caused by human activity? Even the Easter Island example he alludes to from Jared Diamond’s book is still being debated.

**Paragraphs 15-20:** Nash moves from describing the history of the human-nature relationship to imagining the future. He outlines four scenarios for the Earth: 1) a trashed, poisoned, used up wasteland, 2) a human controlled garden planet with good management policies but little biodiversity and no wilderness, 3) a return to wilderness, perhaps through some catastrophe, with small numbers of humans living a primitive hunter-gatherer existence, and 4) what he calls “Island Civilization,” small city states occupying 100-mile circles, surrounded by wilderness.

Nash acknowledges that the last scenario would involve “compromises with human freedom.” The human population would have to be reduced to 1.5 billion from the current 7 billion. This would be accomplished through what amounts to a cap and trade system for births. Each woman would be allowed one child. If a woman doesn’t want a child, she could sell her right to have a child to someone else who wants more. The other limitation on freedom would be where people could live. If people wanted to live outside of a city state in the wilderness, they would have to live as hunter-gatherers without technology. Most of the planet would be wilderness.

**Comment:** These four scenarios are all debatable. Of course, he is trying to imagine what the world will look like in 1,000 years, which is not an easy task. We could argue that he dismissed scenario 2, the garden planet, too easily. His distinction between controlled and uncontrolled might be getting in the way here because the garden planet is all controlled, and he has been arguing for less control. Because of the conclusion of the essay, we might decide that he thinks scenario 1, the wasteland, is the most likely to happen. We could certainly challenge that assumption. Scenario 4, the Island Civilization, is the most interesting, but also the most problematic.
because it would require economic and political structures that are very different from what we practice today.

**Paragraphs 21-26:** The rest of the essay is a description of the possibilities of the “Island Civilization” scenario and a justification for the policies that would produce it. Clearly some sort of authoritarian control or strong indoctrination would be necessary to keep people from using technology or practicing agriculture in the wilderness. The benefits of this way of living would have to be great enough to justify the loss of freedom.

**Comment:** We could certainly argue that giving up freedoms to create the Island Civilization is not worth it. However, as he notes in paragraph 2, if we disagree, we should come up with our own plan.

**Paragraphs 27-28:** Nash concludes with a fictional personal advertisement posted by the planet Earth seeking a “long-term relationship with a compassionate lifeform.” But then he says that we might be the right lifeform if we change our ways.

**Comment:** An interesting response might be to answer this advertisement for humans, promising to change our ways, or for a group of fictional aliens, promising not to do what those nasty humans did.

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**Reflecting on Your Reading Process—Anticipation/Reaction Guide**

Now that you’ve read “Island Civilization,” it’s time to respond or react to the views expressed in the presentation. Complete Column II of your Anticipation/Reaction Guide again using a plus sign (+) if you agree with a statement, a minus sign (-) if you disagree, and a question mark (?) if you are unsure of your opinion.

Pairs Conversation: With a partner, discuss whether or not any of your opinions were changed or confirmed as a result of reading the text. Were any of your views challenged by the text? Affirmed?

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**Connecting Reading to Writing**

**Discovering What You Think**

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**Activity 18**

**Considering the Writing Task—Selecting Your Writing Tools**

Review the writing assignment that your teacher has assigned. Consider the questions and instructions of your assignment so that you are clear on what you are expected to do.
Assignment: Letter to the Author

The purpose of this assignment is for you to interact through writing with the author of this reading, acknowledging that there is a real person behind these ideas.

In your letter, you should summarize and acknowledge Nash’s major points. Then, you should respond to him, taking one of these stands: support his view, challenge his ideas, or present your own thoughts on the topic.

The audience for these letters will be your teacher and your classmates. (If your teacher encourages you, your letter may actually be sent to Dr. Nash.) Your purpose as a writer is to write persuasively enough to convince the author of this text that you have thoughtfully engaged with his ideas and that you have the ability to present your own opinions on this topic.

As you consider the assignment described above, jot down answers to these questions. They will help you as you consider how to craft your letter.

- To whom will you be directing your writing?
- Do you agree with Nash or want to challenge him?
- What is your thesis or main point?
- What is your rhetorical aim? Do you intend to be combative, logical, persuasive, and/or affirming?
- What kind of evidence do you need to gather? For example, will you be quoting directly? If so, you should choose quotes and be able to explain why you are choosing them. If you are summarizing and paraphrasing, you should be clear on what passages you need to work with.
- Have you completed any activities or assignments that will help you with this letter? For example, could the summary paragraph that you completed earlier in the module be useful to you here?

Alternative Assignments: Op-Ed Essays

1. Taking into account what you know of human nature in our current society, which of Nash’s four scenarios is most likely to happen: the wasteland, the garden world, the primitive world, or the Island Civilization? Or do you think there is another alternative that is more likely?

Write an Op-Ed essay (“Op-Ed” means an opinion piece that usually goes on the opposite page from the newspaper’s own editorials) that argues for your view of what will happen, why it will happen, and what we should do about it.
2. One of the ethical issues inherent in Nash’s argument is how much the present generation is responsible for preserving the environment and the planet for future generations. Is it wrong for us to engage in practices that make us rich and happy now, but will cause economic and environmental damage for our descendants?

Using the Nash presentation as an example of what might happen in the future, write an Op-Ed essay that defines how much responsibility we bear for the quality of life of future inhabitants of our world, and what, if anything, we should do to fulfill our responsibilities.

Taking a Stance—Entering Academic Conversations

Imagine that you are going to debate Nash’s views with others from your class. Do you agree with Nash, or would you want to challenge him? How would you present your views? How would you refute the views of your opponents? How could you agree with part of Nash’s position while disagreeing with him at the same time?

These are difficult tasks that professional speakers/writers often are able to pull off with little effort. That is because they have a great deal of practice framing these kinds of discussions.

This activity is designed to give you practice presenting your own ideas using established academic frames.

Choose from among the academic frames below, and jot down a few points that you would use in a debate with classmates. The topic of this debate could be one of the following: Is humanity doomed? Is the Earth doomed? What will civilization look like in a thousand years? Are humans selfish?

Here are sentence frames that will help you enter the conversation:

Introducing “Standard Views”

- Americans today tend to believe that ________.
- Conventional wisdom has it that ________.
- Common sense seems to dictate that ________.
- The standard way of thinking about topic X is that ________.
- It is often said that ________.
- My whole life I have heard it said that ________.
- You would think that ________.
- Many people assumed that ________.

Making What “They Say” Something You Say

- I’ve always believed that _______.
- When I was a child, I used to think that _______.
- Although I should know better by now, I cannot help thinking that _______.
- At the same time that I believe _______, I also believe _______.

Introducing Something Implied or Assumed

- Although they have never said it so directly, my teachers have often given me the impression that _______.
- One implication of X’s treatment of _______ is that _______.
- Although X does not say so directly, she apparently assumes that _______.
- While they rarely admit as much, _______ often take for granted that _______.

Introducing an Ongoing Debate

- In discussions of X, one controversial issue has been _______. On one hand, _______ argues _______. On the other hand, _______ contends _______. Others even maintain _______. My own view is _______.
- When it comes to the topic of _______, most of us will readily agree that _______. Where this agreement usually ends, however, is on the question of _______. Whereas some are convinced that _______, others maintain that _______.
- In conclusion then, as I suggested earlier, defenders of _______ can’t have it both ways. Their assertion that _______ is contradicted by their claim that _______.

Capturing Authorial Action

- X acknowledges that _______.
- X agrees that _______.
- X argues that _______.
- X believes that _______.
- X denies/does not deny that _______.
- X complains that _______.
- X concedes that _______.
• X demonstrates that _______.
• X deplores the tendency to _______.
• X celebrates the fact that _______.
• X emphasizes that _______.
• X insists that _______.
• X observes that _______.
• X questions whether _______.
• X refutes the claim that _______.
• X reminds us that _______.
• X reports that _______.
• X suggests that _______.
• X urges us to _______.

Disagreeing, with Reasons

• I think X is mistaken because she overlooks _______.
• X’s claim that _______ rests upon the questionable assumption that _______.
• I disagree with X’s view that _______ because, as recent research has shown, _______.
• X contradicts herself; she can’t have it both ways. On the one hand, she argues _______. But on the other hand, she also says _______.
• By focusing on _______, X overlooks the deeper problem of _______.
• X claims _______, but we don’t need him to tell us that. Anyone familiar with _______ has long known that _______.

Agreeing, with a Difference

• I agree that _______ because my experience in/with_______ confirms it.
• X is surely right about _______ because, as she may not be aware, recent studies have shown that _______.
• X’s theory of _______ is extremely useful because it sheds insight on the difficult problem of _______.
• I agree that ________, a point that needs emphasizing since so many people believe _______.
• Those unfamiliar with this school of thought may be interested to know that it basically boils down to _________.

• If group X is right that ________, as I think they are, then we need to reassess the popular assumption that _________.

Embedding Voice Markers
• X overlooks what I consider an important point about _________.
• My own view is that what X insists is a ________ is in fact a _________.
• I wholeheartedly endorse what X calls _________.
• These conclusions, which X discusses in _________, add weight to the argument that _________.

Agreeing and Disagreeing Simultaneously
• Although I agree with X up to a point, I cannot accept his overall conclusion that _________.
• Although I disagree with much that X says, I fully endorse his final conclusion that _________.
• Though I concede ________, I still insist that _________.
• Whereas X provides ample evidence that ________, Y and Z’s research on _________ and _________ convinces me that _________ instead.
• X is right that ________, but she seems on more dubious ground when she claims that _________.
• While X is probably wrong when she claims that ________, she is right that _________.
• I’m of two minds about X’s claim that _________. On the one hand, I agree that ________. On the other hand, I’m not sure if _________.
• My feelings on the issue are mixed. I do support X’s position that ________, but I find Y’s argument about ________ and Z’s research on _________ to be equally persuasive.

Signal Who Is Saying What
• X argues _________.
• According to both X and Y, _________.
• Politicians ________, X argues, should _________.
• Most athletes will tell you that _________.

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• My own view, however, is that ________.
• I agree, as X may not realize, that ________.
• But ________ are real, and arguably, the most significant factor in ________.
• But X is wrong that ________.
• However, it is simply not true that ________.
• Indeed, it is highly likely that ________.
• But the view that ________ does not fit all the facts.
• X is right that ________.
• X is wrong that ________.
• X is both right and wrong that ________.
• Yet, a sober analysis of the matter reveals ________.
• Nevertheless, new research shows ________.
• Anyone familiar with ________ should see that ________.

Entertaining Objections

• At this point, I would like to raise some objections that have been inspired by the skeptic in me. She feels that I have been ignoring ________. “_______,” she says to me, “_______.”
• Yet, some readers may challenge the view that ________. After all, many believe ________. Indeed, my own argument that ________ seems to ignore ________ and ________.
• Of course, many will probably disagree with this assertion that ________.

Naming Your Naysayers

• Here many feminists would probably object that ________.
• But social Darwinists would certainly take issue with the argument that ________.
• Biologists, of course, may want to dispute my claim that ________.
• Nevertheless, both followers and critics of Malcolm X will probably argue that ________.
• Although not all Christians think alike, some of them will probably dispute my claim that ________.
• Non-native English speakers are so diverse in their views that it’s hard to generalize about them, but some are likely to object on the grounds that _________.

Introducing Objections Informally
• But is my proposal realistic? What are the chances of its actually being adopted?
• Yet, is it always true that ________? Is it always the case, as I have been suggesting, that ________?
• However, does the evidence I’ve cited prove conclusively that ________?
• “Impossible,” you say. “Your evidence must be skewed.”

Making Concessions While Still Standing Your Ground
• Although I grant that ________, I still maintain that ________.
• Proponents of X are right to argue that ________. But they exaggerate when they claim that ________.
• While it is true that ________, it does not necessarily follow that ________.
• On the one hand, I agree with X that ________. But on the other hand, I still insist that ________.

Indicating Who Cares
• ________ used to think ________. But recently [or within the past few decades] ________ suggests that ________.
• What this new research does, then, is correct the mistaken impression, held by many earlier researchers, that ________.
• These findings challenge the work of earlier researchers, who tended to assume that ________.
• Recent studies like these shed new light on ________, which previous studies had not addressed.
• Researchers have long assumed that ________. For instance, one eminent scholar of cell biology, ________, assumed in ________, her seminal work on cell structures and functions that fat cells, ________. As ________ herself put it, “________” (200). Another leading scientist, ________, argued that fat cells “________” (200). Ultimately, when it came to the nature of fat, the basic assumption was that ________.
• If sports enthusiasts stopped to think about it, many of them might simply assume that the most successful athletes ________. However, new research shows ________.
• These findings challenge dieter’s common assumptions that _______.

• At first glance, teenagers appear to _______. But, on closer inspection, _______.

Establishing Why Your Claim Matters

• X matters/is important because _______.

• Although X may seem trivial, it is in fact crucial in terms of today’s concern over _______.

• Ultimately, what is at stake here is _______.

• These findings have important consequences for the broader domain of _______.

• My discussion of X is in fact addressing the larger matter of _______.

• These conclusions/This discovery will have significant applications in _______ as well as in _______.

• Although X may seem of concern to only a small group of ________, it should, in fact, concern anyone who cares about _______.

Adding Metacommentary

• In other words, _______.

• Essentially, I am arguing that _____.

• My point is not that we should ________, but that we should ________.

• What ________ really means is ________.

• To put it another way, ________.

• In sum, then, ________.

• My conclusion, then, is that ________.

• In short, ________.

• What is more important is_______.

• Incidentally, ________.

• By the way, ________.

• Chapter 2 explores _______ while Chapter 3 examines ________.

• Having just argued that ________, let us now turn our attention to ________.
• Although some readers may object that ________, I would answer that ________.


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**Activity 20**

**Gathering Evidence to Support Your Claims**

Return to your readings, notes, summaries, annotations, descriptive outlining, and other responses to identify evidence to use in your writing assignment. Consider the following questions to evaluate your evidence:

• How closely does this piece of evidence relate to the claim it is supposed to support?

• Is this piece of evidence a fact or an opinion? Is it an example?

• If this evidence is a fact, what kind of fact is it (statistic, experimental result, quotation)?

• If it is an opinion, what makes the opinion credible?

• What makes this evidence persuasive?

• How well will the evidence suit the audience and the rhetorical purpose of the piece?

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**Activity 21**

**Getting Ready to Write**

As you prepare to write, think carefully about your reactions to the various viewpoints you’ve read on the issue of human beings’ relationship with the natural world. Which ones most closely represent your own opinion? Do you agree with parts of a writer’s argument but disagree with other parts? Use the activity below to think through how you see human beings’ relationship with the natural world.

_Polar Opposites Guide (Bean and Bishop, 1992)_

This strategy can help you take a stand on an issue; however, it doesn’t have to mean choosing between two opposite positions.

Place a check mark closest to the adjective that best describes your view on the issue of human beings’ relationship with the natural world. Then, in a small group discussion, defend your choices by using examples from the readings, class discussions, and your outside experiences and observations.
Human beings’ relationship with the natural world is...  

helpful ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ harmful  
humble ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ egotistical  
enlightening ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ discouraging  
needed ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ unnecessary  
generous ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ self-serving  
empowering ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ disabling  
beneficial ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ dangerous  
important ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ unimportant

Getting Ready to Write—Generating Key Words

Once you’ve identified a possible argument for your essay, it can help to brainstorm key words that you may want to use throughout your paper. (Remember the five-word summary you wrote for Activity 14.) Creating lists of synonyms and antonyms for your key words can sharpen your focus and enhance the variety of your language. Using some of these key words in your topic sentences can also be a terrific way to make connections back to your thesis statement.

Complete the following lists with your own words:

sustainable

Synonyms:  
Antonyms:  

primitive

Synonyms:  
Antonyms:  

destructive

Synonyms:  
Antonyms:  

balanced

Synonyms:  
Antonyms:  

Activity 22
No-Points Quiz

Explain the differences between the following terms:

- wilderness and civilization
- humanity and nature
- tame and wild
- sustainable and unsustainable
- primitivistic and technological
- stewards and dominion
- caring and cancerous

Writing Rhetorically

Entering the Conversation

Activity 24

Composing a Draft—Formulating a Working Thesis

Writing down a tentative thesis at this point is a good habit to develop in your writing process. Your thesis should be a complete sentence and should be revised several times. A focused thesis statement will keep your writing on track.

Record your responses to the following questions in preparation for writing your tentative thesis statement:

- What specific question or issue will your letter or essay address? What is your response to this question/issue? (This is your tentative thesis.)
- What support have you found for your thesis?
- What evidence have you found for this support? For example, you can use facts, statistics, quotes from authorities, personal experiences, anecdotes, stories, scenarios, and examples.
- How much background information do your readers need to understand your topic and thesis?
- If readers were to disagree with your thesis or the validity of your support, what would they say? How would you address their concerns? (What would you say to them?)

Now, draft a possible thesis for your letter or essay.
Activity 25

Considering Structure

The following guidelines will help you write a convincing letter or op-ed essay:

1. **Choose evidence that supports your thesis statement.** Evidence is probably the most important factor in writing a persuasive letter or op-ed essay. Without solid evidence, your letter or essay is nothing more than opinion; with it, your letter or essay can be powerful and persuasive. If you supply convincing evidence, your readers will not only understand your position but may agree with it.

2. **Evidence can consist of facts, statistics, statements from authorities, and examples or personal stories.** Examples and personal stories can be based on your own observations, experiences, and readings, but your opinions are not evidence. Other strategies, such as comparison/contrast, definition, and cause/effect, can be particularly useful in building an argument. Use any combination of evidence and writing strategies that supports your thesis statement.

3. **Consider the opinions of people who might disagree with you.** How will you address their concerns? Nash acknowledges that many readers will disagree with him. He almost invites readers to confront him on his ideas. You too should be ready for readers who will disagree with your positions.

Consider these general guidelines as you craft your letters or essays:

**Introduction**
- Background information (explain who you are, why you are writing)
- Introduction of subject (show Nash that you know his text well)
- Statement of your opinion (state your opinion clearly and forcefully)
- Thesis (develop a strong thesis that propels your letter or essay)

**Body Paragraphs**
- Lots of evidence (what evidence will you be using?)
- Opposing point of view (are there opposing points of view?)
- Response to opposing point of view (If there are opposing viewpoints, have you considered them?)

**Conclusion**
- Restatement of your position
- Call for action or agreement (Do you want Nash to do something? Change something? Believe something? Act on your behalf?)
Using the Words of Others

Nash uses many brief quotations (one word, a short phrase, or a sentence) to help him make his arguments more forceful and persuasive. The purpose of this exercise is to help you identify how writers introduce and explain quotations. Review the examples below from “Island Civilization.” Consider how these quotes were integrated into Nash’s presentation. Discuss what you notice with a partner.

1. “What we call wildness is a civilization other than our own.”

2. In essays written in the 1920s and 1930s, and particularly in his book The Sand County Almanac (1949), wildlife ecologist Aldo Leopold became the major articulator of what he called “the land ethic.”

3. It was significant that wilderness preservation was one of Leopold’s highest priorities. It constituted, Leopold argued, “an act of national contrition” on the part of a species notorious for “biotic arrogance.”

4. A better goal, I feel, is that of Henry David Thoreau who wished “to secure all of the advantages” of civilization “without suffering any of the disadvantages.”

Now, locate quotes from the text that can help you to make your arguments stronger. As you revisit the text in search of possible quotes to use, consider the questions below:

• What parts of the readings are most relevant to the assignment?
• What parts do you agree with the most?
• What parts do you disagree with?
• What is one statement that sums up your opinion about this issue?
• What specific information could you use to support this opinion?
• Is there a sentence or passage that sums up or is representative of the author’s position or approach?
• Is there something in the text that is particularly well said?
• Is there something that will support (or refute) the position you are going to take in your paper?
• Are there any controversial statements?
Negotiating Voices—Framing Quotations

Choose a direct quote (word, phrase, or sentence) that you can use in your response to the assignment. You should note the page number of the quote so that it can easily be located when preparing the assignment.

Once you have chosen a quote, use one of the frames below (or develop your own) to introduce and explain your quoted material. Share your work with a partner. In this activity, the following should be clear:

1. The identity of the author of the quote
2. The source of the quote
3. The reason you chose the quote
4. The significance of the quote

**Introducing Quotations**

- X states, “________.”
- As the prominent philosopher X puts it, “________.”
- According to X, “________.”
- X himself writes, “________.”
- In her book, ________, X maintains that “________.”
- Writing the journal *Commentary*, X complains that, “________.”
- In X’s view, “________.”
- X agrees when she writes, “________.”
- X disagrees when he writes, “________.”
- X complicates matters further when he writes, “________.”

**Explaining Quotations**

- Basically, X is saying ________.
- In other words, X believes ________.
- In making this comment, X argues that ________.
- X is insisting that ________.
- X’s point is that ________.
- The essence of X’s argument is that ________.

Revising Rhetorically

Activity 28

Revising Rhetorically

Write answers to the following questions to help you think about your audience, your purpose, your image as a writer, and your argument and the evidence that supports it. Then revise your letter or essay to clarify and strengthen each of these areas.

1. What is your purpose in writing? What questions are you trying to answer? What are you trying to accomplish?

2. What sort of image, or ethos, as Aristotle would say, do you want to project to your reader? How will you achieve it? What words or type of language might you want to use to help construct your ethos?

3. What are your main arguments? (Aristotle would call this “logos.”) What support do you have? For example, you can use facts, statistics, quotations from authorities, personal experiences, anecdotes, stories, scenarios, and examples. What is your strongest evidence?

4. Do you include quoted material? If not, why not?

5. Are there any emotional appeals (pathos) you want to use?

6. If readers disagree with your thesis or the validity of your support, what would they say? How would you answer them?

If your writing assignment was to write a letter to the author, this scoring guide may be used to evaluate your final product.

Scoring Guide for Letters to the Author

Categories

- Focus
- Word choice, including the use of text from the text
- Argument and support
- Grammar and mechanics

Scoring

Score of 4—Superior

- The letter is tightly focused on the issue or issues raised in the presentation to which it responds.
• The writer uses words effectively and efficiently and quotes key words and phrases from the text.
• The writer makes a clear point or points and provides convincing support for those points.
• There are no grammatical or mechanical errors.

Score of 3—Good
• The letter focuses on an issue or issues raised in the text to which it responds.
• The writer uses words accurately and effectively.
• The writer makes a clear point or points and provides support for those points.
• Grammatical or mechanical errors, if present, are minor.

Score of 2—Fair
• The letter discusses an issue or issues raised in the text to which it responds but may be unclear or vague as to its focus.
• The letter is sometimes repetitive or vague in language.
• The writer does not make a clear point or does not provide support for the letter’s points.
• Grammatical or mechanical errors inhibit communication.

Score of 1—Poor
• The letter fails to clearly address an issue raised in the text.
• The letter is vague, repetitive, or confusing.
• The writer fails to make a clear point.
• Grammatical and mechanical errors confuse and distract the reader.

Activity 29

Considering Stylistic Choices
Consider the effectiveness of your stylistic choices by responding to the following questions:
• How will the language you have used affect your reader’s response?
• Which words or synonyms have you repeated? Why?
• What figurative language have you used? Why did you use it?
• What effects will your choices of sentence structure and length have on the reader?

• In what ways does your language help convey your identity and character as a writer?

• Is your language appropriate for your intended audience?

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**Activity 30**

**Editing the Draft**

You now need to work with the grammar and mechanics of your draft to make sure that your use of language is effective and conforms to the guidelines of standard written English.

**Individual Work**

Edit your draft based on the information you have received from your instructor or a tutor. Use the editing checklist provided by your teacher. The suggestions below will also help you edit your own work.

**Editing Guidelines for Individual Work**

• If possible, set your essay aside for 24 hours before rereading to find errors.

• If possible, read your essay aloud so you can hear your errors.

• Focus on individual words and sentences rather than overall meaning. Take a sheet of paper and cover everything except the line you are reading. Then, touch your pencil to each word as you read.

• With the help of your teacher, figure out your own pattern of errors—the most serious and frequent errors you make.

• Only look for one type of error at a time. Then go back and look for a second type, and if necessary, a third.

• Use the dictionary to check spelling and confirm that you’ve chosen the right word for the context.

• If you are writing a letter, it should be brief (one-two pages). Every word counts. Are there words that serve no purpose in your letter? Can they be deleted? If so, delete them. If you are writing an op-ed essay, it may be longer but should still not contain unnecessary words.
Responding to Feedback

It is important to consider all the feedback you receive while you are writing your letter or essay and decide what changes you will make. The following questions can be considered at various points in your writing process:

- What are the main concerns my readers had in reading my draft?
- Do all of the readers agree?
- What global changes (thesis, arguments, evidence, organization) should I consider?
- What do I need to add?
- What do I need to delete?
- What sentence-level and stylistic problems do I need to correct?
- What kinds of grammatical and usage errors do I have? How can I correct them?

Reflecting on Your Writing Process

When you have completed your letter or essay, answer these six questions:

1. What was most difficult about this assignment?
2. What was easiest?
3. What did you learn about arguing by completing this assignment?
4. What do you think are the strengths of your argument? Place a wavy line by the parts of your essay that you feel are very good.
5. What are the weaknesses, if any, of your paper? Place an X by the parts of your essay you would like help with. Write any questions you have in the margin.
6. What did you learn from this assignment about your own writing process—about preparing to write, writing the first draft, revising, and editing?