

## Rhetorical Analysis Essay # 1: Week #4 of Distance Learning

The letter below was written by Samuel Johnson in response to a woman who had asked him to obtain the archbishop of Canterbury's patronage to have her son sent to the university. Read the letter carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze how Johnson crafts his denial of the woman's request.

MADAM,

I hope you will believe that my delay in answering your letter could proceed only from my unwillingness to destroy any hope that you had formed. Hope is itself a species of happiness, and, perhaps, the chief happiness which this world affords: but, like all other pleasures immoderately enjoyed, the excesses of hope must be expiated by pain; and expectations improperly indulged, must end in disappointment. If it be asked, what is the improper expectation which it is dangerous to indulge, experience will quickly answer, that it is such expectation as is dictated not by reason, but by desire; expectation raised, not by the common occurrences of life, but by the wants of the expectant; an expectation that requires the common course of things to be changed, and the general rules of action to be broken.

When you made your request to me, you should have considered, Madam, what you were asking. You ask me to solicit a great man, to whom I never spoke, for a young person whom I had never seen, upon a supposition which I had no means of knowing to be true. There is no reason why, amongst all the great, I should chuse\* to supplicate the Archbishop, nor why, among all the possible objects of his bounty, the Archbishop should chuse your son. I know, Madam, how unwillingly conviction is admitted, when interest opposes it; but surely, Madam, you must allow, that there is no reason why that should be done by me, which every other man may do with equal reason, and which, indeed, no man can do properly, without some very particular relation both to the Archbishop and to you. If I could help you in this exigence by any proper means, it would give me pleasure: but this proposal is so very remote from usual methods, that I cannot comply with it, but at the risk of such answer and suspicions as I believe you do not wish me to undergo.

I have seen your son this morning; he seems a pretty youth, and will, perhaps, find some better friend than I can procure him; but though he should at last miss the University, he may still be wise, useful, and happy.

June 8, 1762

## "Free Response" Essay #2: Week 4 of Distance Learning

American essayist and social critic H. L. Mencken (1880–1956) wrote, "The average man does not want to be free. He simply wants to be safe." In a well-written essay, examine the extent to which Mencken's observation applies to contemporary society, supporting your position with appropriate evidence.

\*Both essays will need to be typed and emailed to the following address: [tmullen@tusd.net](mailto:tmullen@tusd.net)

The length of the essay, since it's typed, will probably be about 1.5-2 pages. It will need to be double spaced. The header information to use for all of our assignments during distance learning will need to look like this:

Student Name:  
Teacher Name:  
Class Name/Subject:  
Period:  
Assignment Week #:

**\*Due Date: May 15th**