

Your Name

COMM 3305

Date

Bringing the Dissection and Critique Pieces Together worksheet

Note: The following worksheet brings together the “dissection,” “extraction,” “questioning,” “mapping,” and “probing” techniques from Chapters 1 & 2 of Shore’s book. Use those techniques to begin organizing and making sense of Chapter 6 from McChesney’s book. This will lay the foundation for your chapter critique.

PHASE 1: TEXT-DISSECTION

Step 1: Analyze the Chapter’s Title (see Shore, pp. 14-15 & 23 for guidance)

- Your notes here,
- and here,
- and so on for the steps below...

Step 2: Scrutinize the Chapter’s Subheadings (see Shore, pp. 15-16 & 23-25 for guidance)

- Tip: Book chapters and journal articles rarely have a “table of contents,” but they often have headings/subheadings that you can reconstruct as a sort of table of contents. So, jot down the major headings/subheadings from the chapter and scrutinize those.

Step 3: Read the Last Section of the Chapter First (see Shore, pp. 16-17 & 25-30 for guidance)

- Reminder: The last section is where you’re likely (but not guaranteed) to find the thesis in any scholarly work. When you think you find a paragraph (or paragraphs) containing the thesis, restate and write down those ideas in your own words.

Step 4: Read the Chapter’s Introduction (see Shore, pp. 18-19 & 30-36 for guidance)

- Remember: The Introduction is also a place you’re likely to find the author’s thesis. Again, when you find key ideas, restate and write down.

Step 5: Target the Chapter’s Most Important Sections (see Shore, pp. 19-22 & 36-38 for guidance)

- Reminder: This is the if-you-have-time-for-it part of the text-dissection process. Don’t read every word in the Chapter. Instead, use Shore’s more targeted approach: 1) Identify the most important sections; 2) Skim the first sentence of each paragraph in those sections; 3) Decide which paragraphs to read more carefully; 4) Restate and write down key arguments and evidence.

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PHASE 2: QUESTION/THESIS/PREMISE-EXTRACTION

Step 1: Extract the Core Question (or Questions) that the Author Tries to Answer in the Chapter

- Jot down the core question(s) the author tries to answer in the chapter here.
- Note: Take into account your dissection notes (above) regarding the chapter's title, the subheadings, and the final and first sections of the chapter.

Step 2: Extract the Thesis/Conclusion for the Chapter

- In your own words, restate the author's thesis for the chapter here in one or two short, declarative sentences.
- Reminder: This is the whole reason we dissect the text (above) – so we're in a good position to identify the author's thesis.

Step 3: Extract the Premises that the Author's Thesis Rests Upon (see Shore, p. 47)

- Premise 1: List Premise 1 here as a short, declarative statement.
- Premise 2: List Premise 2 here as a short, declarative statement.
- Premise 3: List Premise 3 here as a short, declarative statement.
- Reminder: The premises are the components of the thesis, formulated as distinct statements, that must be true if the thesis is true.
- Note: 3-4 premises should usually suffice.

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PHASE 3: LOGIC-CHALLENGING

List Each Premise (from Step 3 above), and Then Ask a Tough Question or Two That Gets at Whether That Premise is Incorrect or Incomplete (see Shore, pp. 49-54)

Premise 1: List Premise 1 here

- Question that gets at whether Premise 1 is incorrect or incomplete.
- Another question.

Premise 2: List Premise 1 here

- Question that gets at whether Premise 2 is incorrect or incomplete.
- And so on...

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PHASE 4: ARGUMENT/EVIDENCE-MAPPING & PROBING

Scan Must-Read Sections for Important-Sounding Topic Sentences; Note Key Pieces of Argument & Evidence; Ask Probing Questions (See Shore, pp. 47-49).

- Note: For this week, I'm JUST going to have you focus on two must-read sections from Chapter 6: "Farewell to Journalism" (pp. 176-184) and "Digital Journalism: Gold Mine or Shaft (pp. 184-194). Next week, we'll turn to the chapter's other key sections.
- Scan these two sections for important-sounding topic sentences (sentences that relate closely to the thesis/premises). When you find an important-sounding topic sentence, make note of the key pieces of argument and evidence in that paragraph. Restate and write down. Ask probing questions as you go.
- For an example of this process, see these notes I produced on the section titled, "Labor and Inequality" (pp. 29-36).