

How to Write a Great First Essay for PNP 200

PNP 200, Spring 2008

Due: February 14, 4:45 pm

What is the assigned topic?

By February 12, we will have discussed six approaches to theory formation in the cognitive sciences: Logic, Rules, Concepts, Analogies, Images, and Connections. Each of these approaches has many relations to each other. Sometimes these relations point to common conclusions; for example, concept-based approaches and connection-based approaches both help explain why some instances of a concept seem to be “better” examples of the concept than others. Sometimes relations between the approaches point to limitations in one approach or the other; for example, trying to apply logic-based approaches to concepts has shown some of the limitations of logical accounts of human cognition.

Take two of the approaches we have covered and describe an issue in cognitive science for which they point to the common conclusions or to limitations of one (or both) approaches. Your essay should make use of the material we have read so far; I also encourage you to look ahead to future readings that may be relevant. Both of your textbooks also provide suggestions for further reading. You may find these helpful if you are unsure of something.

How should it be formatted?

Provide an informative title, your name and student ID number at the top of the first page. Please double space, and number your pages.

How do I cite others' writing?

If you refer to ideas in the textbooks, you should cite them using the following format: “(First-Author, page range).” For example, “Here is one citation (Thagard, 20-21); here is another (Friedenberg, 7).”

If you bring in material outside the textbooks you may use this simplified version of APA style:

- In the text, provide a citation of the form “(Author, Year, page range)”, e.g. “Hochberg & Brooks, 1996, 207)”
- After the end of the essay, include a page titled “References,” with one line for each work cited. Those lines should list the author(s), year published, and title. If the work is a journal article, also list the journal it was published in.

If you are more comfortable using strict APA style, Chicago style, or MLA style, you are welcome to do so.

How long should it be?

Your paper should be double-spaced, and should be between 4 and 6 pages in length, not including the reference page (if needed). (That is, it should end somewhere between the top of the 5th page and the bottom of the 6th page.)

How should I turn it in?

Please turn in your essays to the Philosophy Department office. They generally lock up at 4:45 pm, so be sure to leave enough time to drop off your essay at the end of the day. Late work will receive a reduced grade.

Can you remind me when the essay is due?

Sure! February 14 at 4:45pm.