**Movie Analysis**

**The Assignment**

Choose a movie or television show that depicts writing, reading, and/or research. Explain how the depiction does or does not offer a helpful model based on what you’ve learned about the habits of effective writers.

**Audience, purpose, nuts & bolts**

* Write for an audience who is interested in learning more about writing and will appreciate learning through an organized discussion of the way writing research is (or is not) reflected in popular culture
* Your aim is to help raise awareness about where our understanding of writing, reading, and research come from while working to correct unhelpful myths
* 3-4 pages, MLA format

# Process Guidelines

1. *Complete course readings* and *take notes*. You can use course readings from any point in the semester to analyze the accuracy of portrayals of writing, reading, and research in the movie you choose.
2. *Choose the movie* you will analyze *and take detailed notes*: How is writing, reading, and research portrayed? Be as detailed as possible; these details will serve as evidence as you make an argument about the primary source. What messages about writing, reading, and research are implied through these portrayals? The answers to this question will show that you’ve been thoughtful and analytical with the movie portrayal. (Note: You may want to use the handout “Movie Analysis: Generating Ideas” to help you think clearly about the movie you’ve chosen. The handout reflects steps 2 & 3.)
3. Summarize for yourself: what point(s) does the movie make about writing, reading, and research? Now figure out whether these points are accurate by reviewing essays about writing we’ve read for class. Take notes from the sources so that you can use these notes as evidence in your draft.
4. Write a draft. Often, it’s easiest to
   * write your main point (either the movie offers a helpful model, an unhelpful model, or a mix of the two in its portrayal of writing, reading, and research)
   * write body paragraphs based on your main reasons for taking this stance. Usually, researchers begin with secondary sources (what writing experts say) and then turn to primary sources (what you’ve analyzed in the movie). Consider, then, organizing your ideas in one of these ways, being sure to make assertions and develop an argument:
     1. Writing experts say a, b, and c; the movie is helpful / unhelpful as it portrays a, b, and c
     2. Writing experts say a, and the movie is helpful / unhelpful as it portrays a; writing experts say b, and the movie is helpful / unhelpful as it portrays b; and so on.
   * develop your intro that previews your main reasons and ends with your thesis/main point
   * develop a conclusion that briefly reviews your main point and explains why it matters
   * include an accurate Works Cited page
5. Revise your draft based on feedback, perhaps integrating more sources into your argument or developing ideas to be more organized and clear for readers.
6. Proofread and edit by reading aloud; consider printing out a draft to work on rather than doing all the work on a screen.
7. Congratulate yourself on creating a strong and thoughtful argument that was based on evidence and analysis. That’s just the sort of work that should become a habit as you progress through college!

**What you can expect to learn**

Completing this essay will help you

* synthesize what writing researchers have learned about writing, reading, and research
* notice the way popular portrayals and ideas about writing, reading, and research may be appropriate or may be misleading
* practice using secondary research (course readings about writing, reading, and research) to provide a framework for primary research (analysis of a movie or television show)
* use your interest in a particular movie or television show to energize your writing
* use workshops and peer review to improve your writing
* engage an audience who is interested in what you have to say and who expects your argument to be clear, organized, well-supported, and easy to follow