**Close Reading Assignment**

**Note to instructors:** We have included a sample response to a student essay also included in the materials for this chapter, Stevie Jeung’s “I Did Not Get My Spaghetti-Os.” However, this activity could be done in response to any reading selection. University of California, Davis, has a large archive of excellent student-authored essays and articles on its *Prized Writing* website: <https://prizedwriting.ucdavis.edu/>

1. Identify the author and title. Where was it published (if it was)? Identify the genre (in other words, is this a peer-reviewed journal article? A newspaper article? A poem? Note that the piece you're working on might not be one of the three genre examples listed here).
2. State, in your own words, the author’s MAIN point.
3. What **question** is the main point answering?
4. Identify three to four other important claims the author makes.
5. What is the purpose of the essay? (to persuade, to inform, to entertain, to explore (remember that exploration is rare)) —how do you know?
6. Describe the essay’s intended audience: to whom do you think the author is writing, and what clues in the essay aided you in identifying this audience? (There is no such thing as “general” for this question.) (Think about how the author uses pronouns for both this question and for # 7.)
7. Describe the author’s language and tone. Give a few examples from the text.
8. Identify at least five warrants.
9. What kind of evidence does the essay rely on most?
10. Is this a forensic, epideictic, or deliberative argument?
11. If the purpose of the argument is to persuade, overall, is this an argument of fact, definition, evaluation, a proposal, or a causal argument? Are any other argument styles used for minor claims or evidence? (Hint: think about the central question the text is answering. If it's "what's happened," then it's likely an argument of fact. If it's "should we do x," it's probably a proposal. If it's "why did/does this happen" or "what will this cause," then it's probably a causal argument.
12. Where do you see logos, ethos, and pathos operating in the text? Which does the author rely on the most? What emotions are being called upon for the pathos to work?
13. Identify at least two places where the author engages a counter-argument. If the author does not engage in counter-argument, detail certain counter-arguments the author could have/should have engaged. (If the piece is informative, then where does it bring up all sides/concerns?)
14. How is the essay organized? Why do you think it is organized the way it is? (This question requires you to look at how the writer opens and closes the argument, where they put their main point, how they organize their evidence, where they do counter-argument, etc.)
15. Is there anything about the essay that confuses you? Any questions that remain unanswered? Be specific.
16. What rhetorical strategies were the most important for this piece to succeed?