



Week Four Writing Assignment

Please **email** me your paper in MS Word format before 5 p.m. on Wednesday, September 21.

This week's focus is Turing. We are reading an excerpt of Alan Turing's 1950 article and a dialogue by Douglas Hofstadter loosely based on (maybe "inspired by" would be a better way to put it) Turing's article.

In roughly two to three pages:

1. Describe as briefly as possible what the Turing test is.
2. Explain – again, as briefly as possible – why Turing proposes the test. (Is the test merely *evidence*, or is it something deeper?)
3. Choose one issue raised by Hofstadter's dialogue and critically discuss.

I haven't given you a lot of space, so you clearly can't cover all topics in Hofstadter's wide-ranging dialogue. Narrow in on one issue that you find interesting and try to discuss that issue in some detail. When I say "narrow," I really mean narrow: I'm not looking for your reaction to the entire dialogue. What I want you to bring to Thursday's discussion is a critical perspective on one narrow issue that you can share with the rest of the class.

Some Suggestions

You are *extracting* Turing's position and your Hofstadter issue the text. In both cases, this is not the same as summarizing the entire article from beginning to end. You may find, for example, that your issue comes up in several places in the dialogue. Try to focus on an issue, rather than on a page or range of pages.

The intended audience for your paper is not myself, nor the other students in the class — you know we are familiar with the argument and the vocabulary in which it is stated. Your aim is rather to make this argument easily understandable to someone completely *unfamiliar* with the material, like your average college student. Pretend your reader will be another Pomona first-year who switched in to our ID1 section, and your paper is all they have to catch them up. By far the best way to do this is to express the view or arguments in your own words. If you introduce a bit of new terminology you think your average reader won't know, you should explain what it means.

Mechanics and Style

I'm looking for an essay: you may *not* write a dialogue.

Please use a large, easy to read font (at least 12 point); **double spacing**; standard margins; page numbers; correct spelling and grammar.

Do not use quotations, unless you think a crucial claim either is so dense or so confused that it has to be unpacked word-by-word.
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This is not a complete essay, so you do not need an introduction or a conclusion.

Avoid rhetorical flourishes; e.g., "Throughout the ages, humans have been mystified by everything from thunder to drought to the meaning of life..." Get right to the point.