

# one little word argument guidelines

"Who is to say who is the villain and who is the hero? Probably the dictionary." ~ Joss Whedon

## The Scenario

Now that you've analyzed the characters in the show, the next step for our online guide to season 4 of *The Wire* is analysis of issues. To that end, you are going to write an [eight- to ten-paragraph synthesis paper](#)—bringing together information from multiple sources (in our case, the characters in the show) to [argue for a complex definition of one little word](#).

The characters in this show have different lives, different backgrounds, different experiences with the world that inform their perspectives. We've already talked a great deal about how simple binaries like good/bad, right/wrong, smart/dumb don't hold up in this show (or in life). You're going to build on those conversations by studying how [different characters in the show understand one very simple word](#): home, family, parent, school, justice, law, or another word of your choosing.

We are also going to use this paper to introduce source use and documentation, so this one will [include in-text citations and a Works Cited page, using MLA](#).

- \*  8-10 paragraphs
- Argue for complex definition of one little word
- Use synthesis (multiple sources to support points)
- Sources are different characters/scenes from season 4
- Use MLA documentation

## The Process

- Choose a word.
- Find scenes and conversations between characters that relate to the word.
- Analyze those to gain some insight into how the characters involved think of your word.
- Complete synthesis plan.
- Submit rough draft.
- Review your classmates' drafts and find someone you want to write for.
- Submit peer eval letter.
- Complete one little word revision workshop.
- [Submit revised draft](#).

## What to do

- This is not a linear process. You will research, write, research, write, research, write. You're going to keep going back to old episodes to find more evidence. You're going to find out in the middle of a paragraph that you need to revisit a scene. You're not done with research just because you've started writing.
- Use multiple examples in each paragraph. The idea here is that you're looking at different understandings of the word (T) and supporting those with more than one perspective/character/scene (E).

## What not to do

- Don't base organization on characters. We should not see one character per paragraph here.
- Don't skimp on evidence collection and analysis. You're going to have to really think about what goes on in the scenes and conversations you analyze to see important distinctions in how characters understand your word.
- Remember that argument doesn't mean pro/con. Your argument is your complex definition, and you're using the characters in season 4 to support that.