

*The Handmaid's Tale* Blog Posts

As we read *The Handmaid's Tale*, we will be focusing on making arguments. You will be doing this in two ways. Every week, you will be writing an argumentative blog post in which you take a stance on the weekly question. For the final assignment, you will be conducting debates. In both assignments, you will be making your arguments based on passages you locate in the text.

**Reading and Blog Schedule:**

Please complete the reading and compose a blog post in response to the corresponding questions in which you take a clear stance. For each blog post, QUOTE AT LEAST TWO PASSAGES from the novel.

Blog Due	Read through	Question
1/27	75	What elements of Atwood's future do you find most realistic? What elements do you find least realistic? Could it happen? Why or why not?
2/3	147	The slogan which Offred says is used to justify the existence of handmaids is "From each... according to her ability, to each according to his need" (pg. 117). Offred says she thinks the slogan comes from the Bible. In fact, it is a variation of a slogan popularized by Karl Marx, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need." What is Atwood suggesting by changing the pronoun and the accredited source for this saying? Are men's needs actually being met? Find examples of utopia breaking down into dystopia and how others are suffering.
2/12	223	What role does the past play for Offred? What might Atwood be saying about the ways in which people engage in the present?
2/19	311	Given the contents of the " <i>Historical Notes</i> on the <i>Handmaid's Tale</i> ," is Offred a reliable narrator? Does that matter? Why or why not?

**Blog Guidelines:**

Length:

- Approximately 400-600 words long.
- Posts should be three paragraphs minimum.

Format:

- single space paragraphs
- double space between paragraphs (indicate a break in paragraphs, give your reader's eye a rest)
- do not indent paragraphs

Quotes from text:

- Every post should have **at least two quotes** from *The Handmaid's Tale*.
- Each quote should be written in quotation marks, and NOT italicized. You should include the punctuation for the quote after the page number. For example:
  - "From each... according to her ability, to each according to his need" (pg. 117).

## Tone/voice

- You should write your posts in your own style. This might mean being witty and clever, or it could mean being serious and straightforward. There is no one way to do this, as long as you remember to be school appropriate.
- Yes, you may use first person pronouns if you'd like.
- You may express your opinions in your posts, but remember that any time you take a side for anything, you need support FROM THE TEXT for your argument.

Only 16% of people read word for word when they are online, and another study found that the average person only comprehends about 60% of what they read (Jakob Nielsen, How Users Read on the Web). Rather than read word for word – web users ‘Scan’ pages for information – looking for key words, phrases and visual cues.

## Tips and Techniques to make your blog posts pop

- **Lists** – posts with bullet point lists in them get linked to much more than posts with similar topics written in essay style
- **Formatting** – Use bold, CAPITALS, italics, underlining to emphasize points and/or organize ideas. Don't go overboard, as you run the risk of frustrating your reader. Also consider changing font size, color and style to draw your readers' eyes to your main points.
- **Headings and Sub Headings** – Using headings midway through posts helps with post structure, but they also are great for drawing your readers' eyes down the page and helping them find the parts of your article that will interest them most.
- **Pictures** – clever use of pictures in your posts can grab attention, emphasize points and draw people down into your post. There's nothing worse than long chunks of text on a page – break it up!
- **Borders/Block quotes** – boxes around quotes and key points can get the attention of readers.
- **Space** – don't feel you have to fill up every inch of your screen – rather create spaces because they help readers not to feel overwhelmed and again tend to draw readers eyes to what is inside such space.
- **Short Paragraphs** – Web users tend to get lost in large blocks of text – break it into smaller bites, and you'll stick with it for longer.
- **Don't Bury your Points** – Make your main points as clear as you can. One technique to ensure this is to get your main point across in the first few sentences rather than burying it in your conclusion. You also might like to set your main point off with a one-sentence paragraph.

Page two of this assignment adapted from [Ms. Lampinen's Blog Assignment](#)