

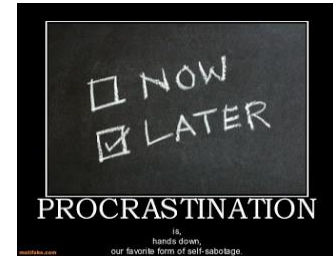
Response Essays

Step-by-Step Guidelines

Three Characteristics of a Response

1. Are subjective
2. Vary in content
 - Personal experience
 - Application
 - Agree/Disagree
3. Vary in length

Step 1



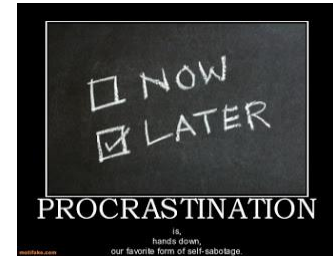
“Coping with Procrastination” (pp. 20-22 in *Sourcework*)

Rebecca Moore, Barbara Baker and Arnold Packer

College Success, 1997

1. Read the article, underlining the last sentence in the first paragraph and the first sentence in subsequent paragraphs
2. Go back and read the entire article
3. Write a one-sentence summary of the article in your own words. Be sure to cite the authors and year of publication.
4. Write a one-paragraph summary of the article in your own words. Be sure to cite the authors and year of publication.

Step 2



Organize your response essay

1. Introduction
2. Summary of article
3. First response
4. Second response
5. Third response
6. Conclusion

Introduction

Procrastination always brings memories of my roommate Laura Kelley to mind. I used to tell her that if procrastination was a kingdom, she was its queen. She would spend at least a week or two talking about an upcoming assignment, how hard it was, and how she was dreading it. No matter how many times my other roommates and I told her to just start and get it over and done with, she would always begin it the night before it was due. Once the clock struck midnight, her fears would dissolve into panic. She would get on her laptop and open up a countdown website. I still have a very vivid image of her sitting in front of the screen with a massive digital clock counting down the seconds blinking at her face. She would always set it for 12 hours. After a few seconds of staring, she would get started, furiously pounding away at the keyboard. I used to try and stay up with her for support, but most of the time, I would fall asleep. By morning, the alarm would go off, loud and insistent, as if the world was on fire. She would fumble quickly to print the assignment and rush out the door in yesterday's rumpled clothes. The whole process was exhausting both physically and mentally, but she wouldn't do it any other way.

Summary of Article

Memories of Laura drew me to a particular essay in Sourcework. In their article “Coping with Procrastination,” Moore, Baker and Packer (1997) focus on discovering the major reasons why we procrastinate so that we can change that habit and turn it into something useful. The authors point out that low self-esteem and over worrying about consequences lead many people to put off completing tasks. Another culprit is being a perfectionist, which might be traced back to a fear of failure. There is also the lack of motivation to do what is supposed to be done. In addition, procrastination can be a result of burnout or continuous exhaustion. Finally, Moore, Baker, and Packer mention the absence of proper knowledge or assistance in doing the task as a possible reason for why people procrastinate. The article suggests solutions for each of these problems.

First Response

While I agree with all the reasons the authors give, I feel that they are lacking. The authors fail to mention those people who are simply too lazy to start an assignment early, those who have poor time management skills, and those who have too much to do all at once; a single mom, for instance, who has to work, go to school and take care of the kids. There also those who need pressure to motivate them to perform. The article states that “there are situations where lack of motivation is an indicator that you have taken a wrong turn,” but I've come across students who cannot start an assignment without the deadline right around the corner to spur them into activity. The article advises that “when you seriously do not want to do the things you need to do, you may need to reevaluate your situation.” This is true, but there are those who are simply indifferent or lazy about everything in general. Although the article brings up the main causes of procrastination, there are a myriad of reasons that have been left out.

Second Response

Not only does the article leave out major issues that cause procrastination, but also it implies that people procrastinate because of one implicit reason, and if “the underlying cause is not uncovered,” it becomes “selfdestructive.” This is not true, in my opinion. Procrastination isn't caused by just one issue, like perfectionism for instance; it is usually a combination of issues. A good example is my roommate Laura. While her procrastination was caused by “a real or imagined fear or worry” that she wouldn't do a good job and “will feel calmer about it tomorrow,” it was also caused by her ineffective time management skills. The combination of her fears, her perfectionist nature, and her poor time management skills is what caused her to procrastinate in the first place.

Third Response

Although the article gives us readers valuable insight into the causes and issues behind procrastination, it doesn't give any valid solutions on how to overcome them. The authors describe “some of the serious underlying causes of procrastination,” and they ask the readers to “think about them the next time you find yourself struck by this problem,” but they don't exactly tell the reader how to overcome procrastination. There are little tidbits of advice like “the best way to relieve your anxiety would be to dig in and prepare well so that you can't possibly do poorly,” but these are too broad. The article needs a final paragraph that details the process that people can follow to eliminate procrastination. An eliminating procrastination playbook of sorts.

Conclusion

After reading Moore, Baker, and Packer's essay, I found myself wishing the authors had done more than just skim the surface of their subject. Being assigned to read this essay was much like being invited to a dinner where your host only serves you appetizers but no main course, leaving ravenous at the meal's end. In a similar vein, "Coping with Procrastination" leaves its readers wanting a more in-depth, more sophisticated examination of the causes of procrastination and some real cures. Otherwise, Laura Kelly will continue to sit in front of her laptop, eyes glued to the clock as the seconds count down.