

Unjust Laws Revision Guide 2017-18

Big Picture

The reason we do so much writing in this class is to develop and grow as writers. That means taking the skills we discuss from one essay to the next and not just repeating the same mistakes over and over. Whether it's the correct placement of quotation marks and punctuation or the use of transitions in topic sentences, the point of what we're doing is to erase those mistakes and develop going forward.

Take the assignment seriously. Hit the word count. Use the strategies we've talked about in class to make your writing better. That's the only way this will have value.

This is your last warning about revisions. If you turn in work that is substandard, not proofread, or doesn't meet the minimum requirements of the assignment, I absolutely will not give you the opportunity to revise. You're in AP classes because you want to become better writers and better prepared for college, and it's time for you to give the writing the attention it deserves in this class to achieve that aim. Trying and coming short is absolutely fine. We all do it. Not caring enough to put in real effort, though, simply isn't acceptable in this or any course.

Biggest Issues

- **Transitions.** We've gone over this on every essay, every draft. If you don't have transitions in your topic sentences, you won't get to revise them.
- It's really important to read and use the actual prompt. I'd guess at least half of you didn't read it again, leading to the papers missing their focus and not using the resources available to make the essay more sophisticated. Read the prompt!
- Use Lincoln and Thoreau for evidence, analysis, and naysayers. You certainly don't want to make 25% of your essay their words and ideas, but you certainly could include them since they address the specifics of the prompt question quite clearly.
- Make sure to focus on breaking **unjust laws**. Outside of a few anti-government types, there are very few people who think that breaking traffic laws is a strike for justice and liberty.



- Use diverse historical and contemporary examples to support your claims: civil rights movement, suffragists, abolitionists, war protesters, Standing Rock, etc.
- The heart of your paper needs to be analysis about how we can decide when it's permissible to break the law. What laws rise to that level? What makes them so objectionable that we must break them? Do deep analysis explaining these questions?
- OATMEAL: You need to include naysayers, details, and metaphorical language in your essay.
- Use examples to illustrate your claims, not make them. You really can't have one example dominate a paragraph or substitute for analysis of the claims you're making. One example proves very little and three examples prove just a bit less.

Important Links

- [Topic Sentence Cheat Sheet](#) (with sample thesis and topic sentence structure)
- [Using quotations](#)
- [The Comma](#)
- [Introductions](#)
- [The Prompt!!!!](#)

Checklist

- _____ I have actually read the entire prompt and incorporated quotes and ideas from it.
- _____ I have met the minimum word count for the assignment.
- _____ I have made sure that I am using effective and clear transitions in my topic sentences.
- _____ I have used the elements of OATMEAL in my body paragraphs.
 - _____ I've included naysayers,
 - _____ concrete, interesting detail,
 - _____ and metaphorical language chosen for effect.
- _____ I have eliminated the use of the word "you" in the body of my essay.
- _____ I have reviewed the entire essay to make sure there are no comma splices.
- _____ I have capitalized everything correctly in my paper.
- _____ I have bolded all the changes in my paper.