

Argument Analysis #1

Topic Choices

Choose one of the following two topics:

- (a) **Socrates:** Reconstruct and briefly evaluate the argument presented at *Laches* 198a–199e for why courage is not knowledge of the fearful and the hopeful.
- (b) **Plato:** Reconstruct and briefly evaluate the argument presented at *Phaedo* 66b–67e for why a philosopher should not resent their own death.

Requirements & Structure

Your analysis should accomplish the following three things:

- (1) **Reconstruct the stated argument:** Your argument should be presented as a series of steps, all of which “add up” to the specified conclusion. Each step should be phrased as precisely as possible, and together be such as to plausibly entail the conclusion. Present your argument as a numbered “equation”, labelling each step with a number and, for any step that follows from other steps, noting which steps it follows from in brackets at the end of the step, as in “[1+2]”.
- (2) **Establish the argument’s textual basis:** You must also demonstrate how each step of your reconstructed argument derives from remarks in the primary source text. For each step, provide a direct quotation from the text and an explanation of any differences between the quoted text and your formulation of the step in your reconstructed argument. In cases where a step is not explicitly stated in the text but is clearly being assumed, make that clear and explain why you included the step anyway. Your textual evidence should come from the sections noted above, but you may draw on other parts of the text as needed.
- (3) **Present an objection:** Lastly, target a specific point in your reconstructed argument as questionable – either a premise that you believe is false or a inference between steps that you believe is unjustified. Explain briefly but clearly which point you think is questionable and why you think it is questionable.

Divide your analysis into three corresponding sections: Reconstruction, Textual Basis, Objection. Your analysis need not be written in paragraph form; indeed, the Reconstruction section should be written as a list of numbered steps, and the Textual Basis section should be written as a list of quotations with accompanying explanations. You should, however, use full sentences for all your explanations. An example analysis will be provided to you as a template.

Blind Grading

Include no identifying information whatsoever on your paper: not your name, not your UTORid, not even your student number. (Quercus will keep track of whose paper is whose.)

Word Count

There is no minimum or maximum word count for this assignment; all that is required is that your analysis includes all the necessary elements.

Assessment

Your paper will be assessed along the following dimensions:

- Reconstruction (5 points): formatting, precision, structure, validity, & focus
- Textual Basis (4 points): quotations, explanations, plausibility, & citations
- Objection (1 point)

See the rubric included on the Argument Analysis assignment on Quercus for further details on these criteria.

Citations & Bibliography

Direct quotations must be accompanied by a citation indicating the line number of the text – not the page number of your translation! Line numbers in Plato include both a number and a letter, as in “198a”. After every direct quotation you provide, indicate the line number in parentheses, like so:

- “Then we have not discovered, Nicias, what courage is” (199e)

You do not need to include a bibliography.