Final Essay: Reading Analysis Essay

Assignment Overview
This assignment asks students to write a Reading Analysis essay that responds to one of the selections from 50 Essays read in class, using details from the essay itself as well as outside research from at least one credible and/or scholarly source.

A successful Reading Analysis essay will also:
• have a clear thesis statement and/or argumentative claim that focuses the essay.
• support and develop the thesis with evidence and details from the 50 Essays selection, as well as outside research.
• differentiate the students’ ideas from those of the author of the essay or the author(s) of any other supporting research.
• be well organized, with a distinct introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion. Each paragraph should also have strong topic sentences and transitions.
• demonstrate awareness of audience, purpose, and tone.
• consist of writing that is clear and grammatically precise.
• meet the length, formatting, and research requirements for the assignment.

Length and Formatting Requirements
This paper will be at least 4-6 pages, typed in 12-point Times New Roman font and double-spaced. The margins should be set to 1-inch on all sides, and the heading should be on the left-hand side and consist of the following: Your Name, Instructor’s Name, Course Title, and Date.

Research Requirement
Unlike a purely expository essay, this assignment will ask students to engage with one of the essays read in class, as well as at least one credible and/or scholarly source found through the library database.

Prompts
1) Memory is a much-studied and yet still mysterious phenomenon. Read up on theories of memory from neuroscience, psychology, trauma studies, and anywhere else you turn up interesting work. Summarize these ideas and discuss which you find more convincing. Which seem less congenial? Why? (pg. 21, 50 Essays).

2) Is there, as Ericsson writes, “a world of difference between telling functional lies and living a lie”? Regardless of your opinion of Ericsson’s claim, write a counterargument to that claim. What is the strongest argument you can come up with against untruth? How can you use it to counter her argument? Where does your counterargument come from—that is, on what moral or ethical system does it depend? (pg. 168, 50 Essays).
3) Read up on the cultural meaning of food and rituals surrounding eating. Anthropology is a good place to start. What are the most important things about food across cultures? What are the important differences between cultures? (pg. 184, 50 Essays).

4) Kincaid argues that it is a recognition of the “banality and boredom” of their lives that leads people to visit other parts of the world. Imagine a counterargument to Kincaid’s. Are there other reasons to want to visit the rest of the world? How would you compare them to the one Kincaid assumes? (pg. 209, 50 Essays).

5) Research the recent emphasis on standardized testing in public education through initiatives such as No Child Left Behind. What are the arguments for and against the increased use of testing? Do you find one set of arguments more compelling? If so, for what reasons? If not, are there further studies that can be done on the issue? Describe them. (pg. 327, 50 Essays).

6) Zirin alludes to the controversy over the name of the Washington, DC National Football League team. Research this issue, summarizing the arguments on both sides and listing the positions taken for and against. Based on your research, where do you stand? Why? (pg. 432, 50 Essays.)