

FIRST ANALYTICAL PAPER

Instructions: Write an original essay analyzing and discussing the traits or characteristics you can surmise of Madison's original audience for Federalist No. 10 (in Heffner) based on Aristotle's observation that "people receive favorably speeches spoken in their own character and by persons like themselves" (p. 152 of the selection in our coursepack).

Length: AT LEAST 4-6 full pages of text, double spaced, following MLA format precisely, plus an accurate Works Cited page. A template is available at <http://citizen.obenauf.net>. I will not grade any paper that fails to meet these basic expectations, nor will you be permitted to rewrite or resubmit your essay. See the syllabus for more information.

Due: Monday, February 16, 2026, in hard copy at the start of class.

Notes: You should consult your MLA Handbook, The Elements of Style, my MLA template, and my Guide to Writing in your coursepack for clarification on how to meet the basic expectations of formatting and scholarly writing.

You may use NO outside sources for this assignment other than a good dictionary, such as the Oxford English Dictionary (OED). The use of AI, including ChatGPT and Grammarly, is strictly prohibited at any stage of the planning, drafting, writing, and revision process.

I am not interested in any particular argument; I am interested in whether your conclusions arise honestly from the evidence you analyze. By giving everyone the same text and the same question, the goal is not to reward originality as performance, but to make it possible for you to focus on the method of following the evidence to see where it leads you. In this assignment, clarity is achieved sentence by sentence, paragraph by paragraph, as you explain what each piece of evidence suggests, signals, implies, points to, etc. about your topic. Uncertainty is part of this process, but you only need to manage it at the scale of a paragraph at any given moment, not at the scale of the entire paper. By the time you get to the end, you'll know what you found through your analysis and so you can circle back and write your thesis after you write your conclusion.

What may look like "polish" or technical apparatus—careful quotation, slow reading, disciplined paragraphs—is not decorative. It is the process by which complex thinking occurs. These tools are not compensations for weak ideas; they are how strong ideas are formed. For this reason, papers that merely summarize the text or that rely on outside research cannot receive a passing grade because you are expected to use only internal evidence from Federalist No. 10 that you selected yourself.

Here are some suggestions for how to organize your essay effectively:

A. The best introductions avoid broad openings and instead provide your reader with relevant background information. I offer here a sample **introduction**, which you are free to adapt or expand for the first paragraph of your own essay:

In his treatise on Rhetoric, the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle observed that “all people receive favorably speech spoken in their own character and by persons like themselves” (152). One of the most famous essays in American history, Federalist No. 10 (1787), remains relevant to current political debates, and yet James Madison did not write it for us. Rather, he was writing for a specific audience which he sought to persuade to ratify the U.S. Constitution. Originally published anonymously under the pseudonym “Publius,” Federalist No. 10 comments on the danger of “factions,” or groups of citizens who share a common interest contrary to the rights of other citizens or to the larger community. Madison explains that there are two methods of avoiding factions: either by removing their causes or by controlling their effects. In his view, removing the causes of factions would destroy the liberty necessary for the new republic; he argues, instead, for a strong representative republic which he believed would help keep factions in check so as to ensure individual liberty. By finessing his presentation so as to mimic his audience’s tastes and sensibilities, Madison provides a number of clues about his intended audience for Federalist No. 10. Specifically, I wish to argue that Madison was writing for... [your thesis]

B. The main point of this project is the **body** of your essay. Working closely with internal evidence from Madison’s essay, you should build an argument about the original audience of Federalist No. 10 by explaining what Madison’s rhetorical choices suggest about the people he sought to persuade. What traits or characteristics can you surmise from the language he uses? What can you infer about this audience based on his assumptions, tone, and style? Cite specific quotations from the text to drive your analysis. Follow the evidence to see where it takes you.

C. Your **conclusion** should go beyond recapping the discussion you have already laid out. What does your analysis suggest about Madison’s target audience and their views of their new republic? **I invite you to reflect on how your understanding of this audience developed as you worked through the text, including any remaining tensions, uncertainties, or limits.** It is also possible at this point to draw some connections to the present, but you should still ground your discussion in the analysis you have already done. This is how you figure out the “so what?” that leads to your thesis statement.

Sample Works Cited

Aristotle. On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse, translated with introduction, notes, and appendices by George A. Kennedy, Second Edition, Oxford UP, 2007.

Madison, James. “The Federalist Number Ten.” 1787. A Documentary History of the United States, edited by Richard D. Heffner and Alexander Heffner, Updated and Expanded 11th Edition, Signet Classics, 2022, pp. 39-45.