



**Prof. Jon McKenzie**

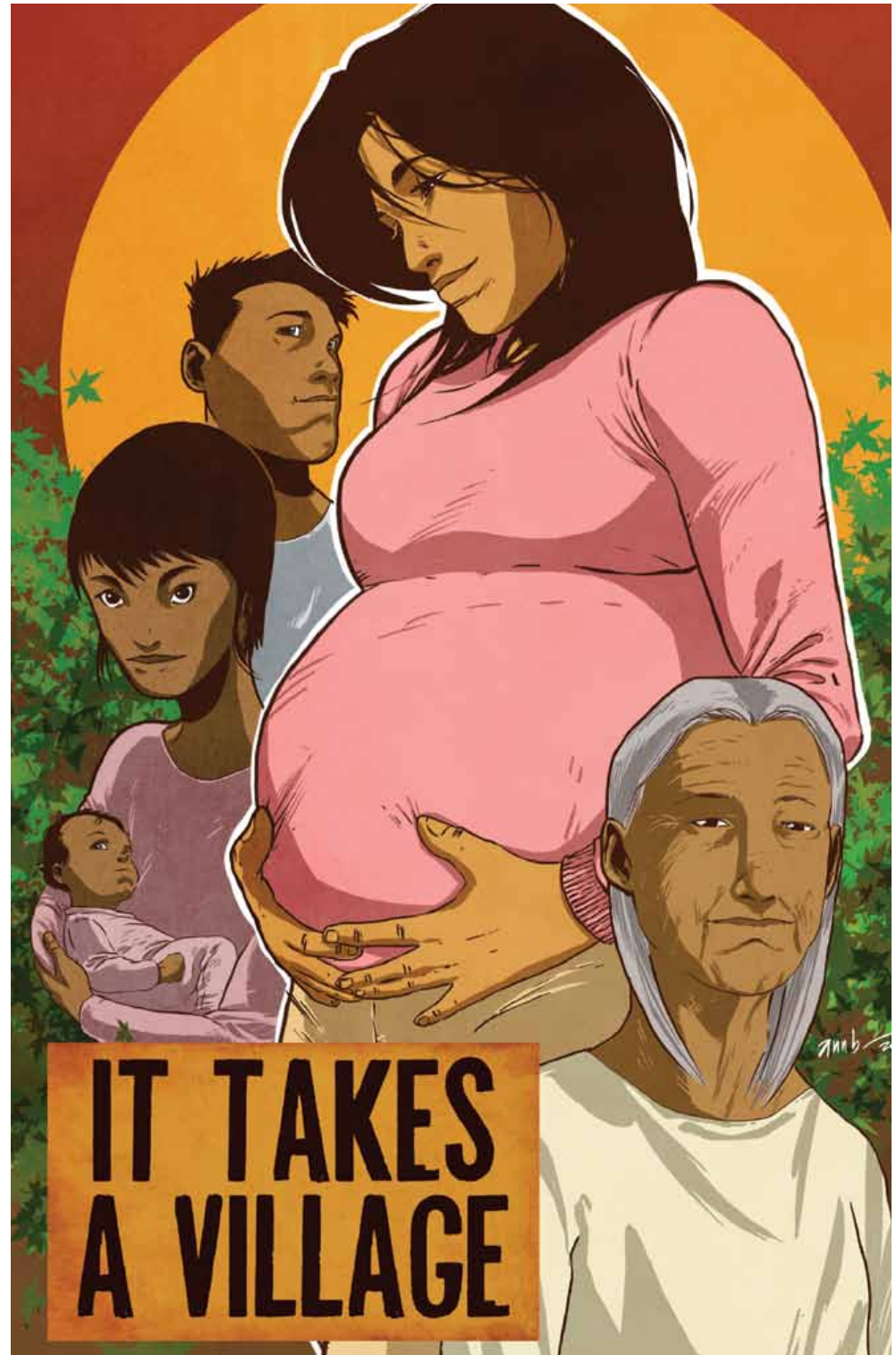
**ENGL 1168 First-Year Seminar Spring 2025**

**Section 110 • TuTh 1:25-2:40 • 110 Google folders**

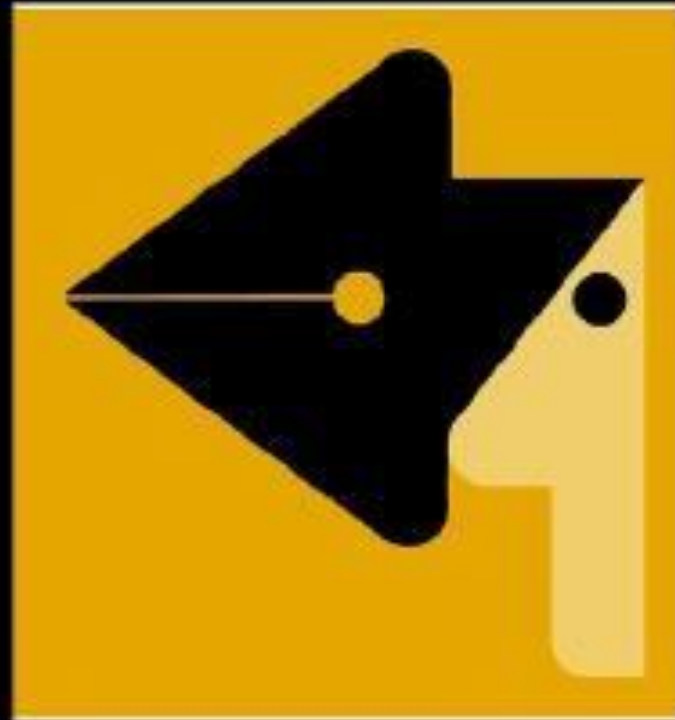
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# Thinking Through Writing



Susan R. Horton

## Engl 1168 Project 1

### Descriptive essay

Imagine you have been asked to help write a new edition of *Thinking Through Writing* that includes information comics and other forms of transmedia knowledge. Write a 500-word (2-page) descriptive analysis of *It Takes a Village* modeled on Horton's description of sample texts found in Chapter 2 of *Thinking Through Writing*. This means you'll need to reread both texts, using each to "read the other" in order to compose your text.

Broadly speaking, the content of your text will be *It Takes a Village*, while the form comes from *Thinking Through Writing*. Thus your essay should have an *opening paragraph, numbered paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph*, all of which describe the info comic and evaluate it in terms of the essay. Focus on Horton's paragraph structure, sentences, and writing style and try to emulate them.

Note the *thinking* that Horton does, as you must do something similar: she argues that each text is a different genre of writing and proceeds to break her analysis up by describing different features or attributes. What else does she do?

While you will be focusing on the "what" of *It Takes a Village*, also consider its "why" or "so what" and, more generally, the function and importance of the info comics genre. Why should anyone care about the genre and this particular example? Decide how this discussion will inform and structure your text.

Title all texts: we will focus on this important writing function.

Provide MLA citational reference format for *It Takes a Village* and any other text you cite or reference.

TITLE ALL PDF FILES: <First Last Name>-<Project #>.pdf eg: Jan Gris-Project 1.pdf

Draft due in Google folder Thurs, 2/1 in class

Final due in Google folder Tues, 2/5 in class

# What is an essay? ONE LIST OF TRAITS

1. Addresses reader in matter of fact, **straight-forward tone and style**
2. Carefully **builds an analysis**, pt by pt.: using propositions, qualifiers, assertions re: relationship, exemplifications, and demonstrations of truth
3. **Fierce commitment to being clear and simple** and avoid ambiguous language (unlike creative writing's rich ambiguity)
4. Essayist is **creative: uses imagination** to find just right word, metaphor, order, etc. to convey ideas/thinking clearly
5. Mead **assumes audience doesn't know** or share specialized lang and leads them with transitions, summaries, clarifications, etc
6. Essays **create problems and solutions where none were before: shuttles between facts and speculations, and old and new ways of seeing:** dis-course is the way the mind struggles with what's around it: midway btw desire to know and full comprehension
7. Skill of moving back and forth **earns you right to be heard:** writing as ticket to world

# What is an essay? ANOTHER LIST OF TRAITS



1. **Makes new connection and identifies source, nature, and function of** Donald Duck's appeal
2. **Makes us see old in new way: reevaluates:** DD not just another cartoon figure,  
Bruner: essay like **"thought experiment"** or **"possible world"**:  
rearrange familiar-->novelty
3. Bruner: good essay produces **"effective surprise"** : once recognized, seem obvious!
4. Focus on small thing to **go deep and discover new way of seeing it**
5. **Diff kinds of surprise and value: predicative value** (devise formula), **formal value** (order facts to reveal relationship), **metaphoric value** (connect diff experiences thru image or symbol)
6. Koestler: artists treat facts as stimuli for imagination; sci uses imagination to coordinate facts : **Essayist combines both fact and imagination:** uses facts, uses imagination to both coordinate facts and venture metaphors clarifying rel of facts



## Maternal Child Health

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<http://thehealthyaboriginal.net> - This is the Healthy Aboriginal Network's (HAN) first draft of their comic that deals with maternal child health. HAN is using YouTube to test the story outline and concept with online focus groups and to collect their feedback. The feedback will be used to develop a final draft of the comic which will be published in full colour. Please provide your feedback by email to Sean Muir at: [sean@thehealthyaboriginal.net](mailto:sean@thehealthyaboriginal.net).

# Workshop

- **Generate a list of possible topics (what comics teach about essay writing)**
- **Horton's traits of good essay**
- **ITAV's mix of story and argument**
- **Look for a ha! moments, paradoxes, patterns within ITAV and between it and Holton**
- **Can some topics be combined?**
- **Can you imagine some NEW TRAITS of essay?**
- **What order to present topics to best make your argument? How to use one image?**



# Homework

- **Use collective topics to compose your essay**
- **Be concise : enter into flow of Horton's text: cut to chase**