

Essays - Birds

This essay uses *Birds* to write about Athens.

The assignment: Write a 3- to 4-page essay that uses three moments from *Birds* to take a position on the culture, beliefs, and social expectations of classical Athens.

What you need to do

● Get ready.

Review the requirements. Review the Requirements for All Papers. This page has important guidance and videos on formatting your document, structuring your essay, and using evidence.

Watch the video. The overview video linked above explains what I want you to cover in the essay and what I'm expecting in terms of arguments, evidence, and structure.

Another resource you may find helpful is the Elephant Pamphlet, which gives step-by-step guidance on preparing for and writing a position paper.

● Choose your topic from one of the three prompts below.

Option A

[Title.] [Text]

Option B

Aristophanes's agenda. The surviving plays of Aristophanes range over a long and turbulent period of Athenian history. Do Aristophanes's opinions and technique change over time?

Discuss the consistency of Aristophanes's approach to writing, and the evolution of his overall philosophy across this most troubled period. What themes and ideas are present in both plays? Is his approach, methodology, or agenda consistent? If not, how does it change?

Option C

[Title.] [Text]

● **Choose a second work to compare with *Birds*.**

Option A

[Text]

Option B

For the “Aristophanes’s agenda” option, choose another play by Aristophanes to compare with *Birds*.

Popular options include:

- *Frogs*, mounted in 405 BCE;
- *Clouds*, mounted in 423; and
- *Wealth*, mounted in 388.
- Any of the 11 surviving plays is fair game. Full texts in English are also available [here](#) or [here](#).

Option C

[Text]

● **Find three moments from *Birds* that are strong examples of your topic.**

Option A

[Text]

Option B

For the “Aristophanes’s agenda” option, find three incidents from *Birds* that reflect either Aristophanes’s opinions or how he makes the play reflect them.

Compare each of these moments with a similar (or contrasting) moment in the other comedy.

Option C

[Text]

● **Write a 3- to 4-page essay in which you take a position on Athenian culture.**

You’ll need an Introduction State what you believe *Birds* shows us about the culture, beliefs, and social expectations of fifth-century Athens in a way that answers the question in the prompt you chose. (This is your thesis statement.)

... a Body Describe and discuss, one by one, each of the three moments you found from *Birds* and compare with a similar moment from your second work. For each section, discuss what the evidence tells us about classical Athens.

... and a Conclusion. Tie your examples and assertions together and show how they support your overall thesis.

● Finalize your essay.

Citations are important. Make sure your evidence is cited and that you include a bibliography. For how to do citations and bibliographies, see the Research and Citation Center. You will be marked down drastically if your paper is not properly cited.

Optional draft. You may email me an optional draft two weeks before the final due date. It should include most of your paper (at least two-thirds of the final content, with sections to be written described in square brackets). I'll give feedback, but not a grade, to help you refine your final paper.

Double-check the requirements. Make sure your essay meets the Requirements for All Papers for formatting, structure, and evidence, as well as the specifications given above for what's expected for this assignment.

Once you're sure your essay meets the requirements, upload it as DOCX or PDF to Brightspace.