BALANCED ARGUMENT ESSAY ASSIGNMENT

INTRODUCTION: Recently the city council of Anaheim, California, declared a state of emergency over the number of homeless (estimated at over 400) living in the Santa Ana riverbed, “clearing the way for the removal of hundreds of people living in a landscape dotted with trash and used hypodermic needles and lacking toilet facilities,” according to the Los Angeles Times. At the all-night public meeting, some residents complained of “needles” and “feces” in their yards; others encouraged compassion, stating, “their only crime is not being able to afford a place to live.”

PROMPT: Tom Blunt argues in his essay “John Steinbeck Knew the Homeless Are Human: Do We?” that not much has changed for the dispossessed in the nearly 80 years since The Grapes of Wrath was published. But the problem of homelessness is one that city managers have found difficult to solve. Los Angeles, for example, supports the “housing first” approach, but is it the best method to fight homelessness? You will write a BALANCED ARGUMENT, i.e., arguing BOTH SIDES (the pros and cons) of “housing first” and criminalizing behavior like panhandling or sleeping on the streets. You must come to your own conclusion on the issue of homelessness. You do not need to “solve” the problem, but you need to decide which approach is more beneficial.

DUE DATES:

• Two HARD copies of your rough draft are due in class on Monday, October 9 (BLUE) or Tuesday, October 10 (GOLD).
• You must type the rough drafts according to MLA guidelines and bring them with you to class on that day (1 copy for my records; 1 copy for peer response).
• I will not read your rough draft. If you want/need additional help, you may ask individual questions about it during X period time. I cannot read and correct your entire essay.
• Final draft due (ALL CLASSES) uploaded to Blackboard by 11:59 p.m. on WEDNESDAY NIGHT, OCTOBER 18, 11:59 p.m., (or it is LATE and you will lose 10 points), AND you must bring a hard copy to me on THURSDAY, OCT. 19 (7-period day). I will NOT accept an emailed copy of your essay; you or a representative must turn in a hard copy of your essay when requested in class or it is LATE and you will lose 10 points.

REQUIREMENTS:

• You are writing an essay that presents a balanced argument; i.e., you must give equal weight to both sides of the controversy.
• The text of your essay must be approximately 750 words, or two and a half typed pages. I DO NOT COUNT WORDS; I WILL LOOK FOR A MINIMUM OF TWO AND A HALF TYPED PAGES.
• I will read nothing longer than THREE full typed pages.
• You must adhere to MLA guidelines for formatting, quoting, etc.
• For support/evidence, you may use only the following:
1. Editorials, articles, etc., posted in the Lib Guide on the Library's homepage (a link to which is posted in the Balanced Argument Essay folder on Blackboard);
2. The essay and documentary we read/watched in class;
3. ONE (1) example of evidence of your choice.
   - You must include a Works Cited page (not included in the three pages).
   - Your essay must have an appropriate title.
   - The essay will be scored using a 100-point scale.

**MECHANICS AND USAGE:**

- Good writing follows the conventions of English grammar, usage, and mechanics.
- You must adhere to the “Elementary Rules of Usage” as delineated in Strunk’s *Elements of Style* (Part I).
- You will lose one point for each error.

**“BE” VERBS:**

- To strengthen your ideas, you need to choose active verbs.
- Therefore, you will be allowed only five (5) uses of any form of “be” (not including quotes).
- You will lose five points for each use of any form of “be” over five.

BE verbs: is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been