

Get an A in TOK Essay Guide

Thanks for downloading this guide – I hope it helps you get an A. Or a B. But really an A.

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I highly recommend using one of my organizers available from my website. [Click here to get my free download packet](#) and get started drafting!

If you need extra help, and I know you do, you can access my fully online, on-demand TOK course with a discount! [Go to TOKMasterclass.com](#) and use code YOUTUBESUBSCRIBER to save 25%! This also includes a database of all of my research an examples.

Remember that my other guides & breakdowns are all available on my [YouTube channel](#) and [website!](#)

Don't have any money? Well guess what? This next stuff is free. Let's go!



GET AN A IN

Title 1:

Is subjectivity overly celebrated in the arts but unfairly condemned in history? Discuss with reference to the arts and history.

TOK

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HISTORY.COM

imgflip.com

Thoughts on the Title

Focus on the key words:

Overly celebrated and unfairly condemned.

Re-thinking the prompt & organization. Don't be basic!

Basic:

Arts

Is overly celebrated

Is not overly celebrated

History

Is unfairly condemned

Is not unfairly condemned

Just talking about these points won't score highly. The goal of your analysis & conclusion is to come up with a lesson, statement, position, or insight about subjectivity.

Good:

Arts

Is overly celebrated

Is not overly celebrated

Insight about subjectivity:

It's the most important thing in art

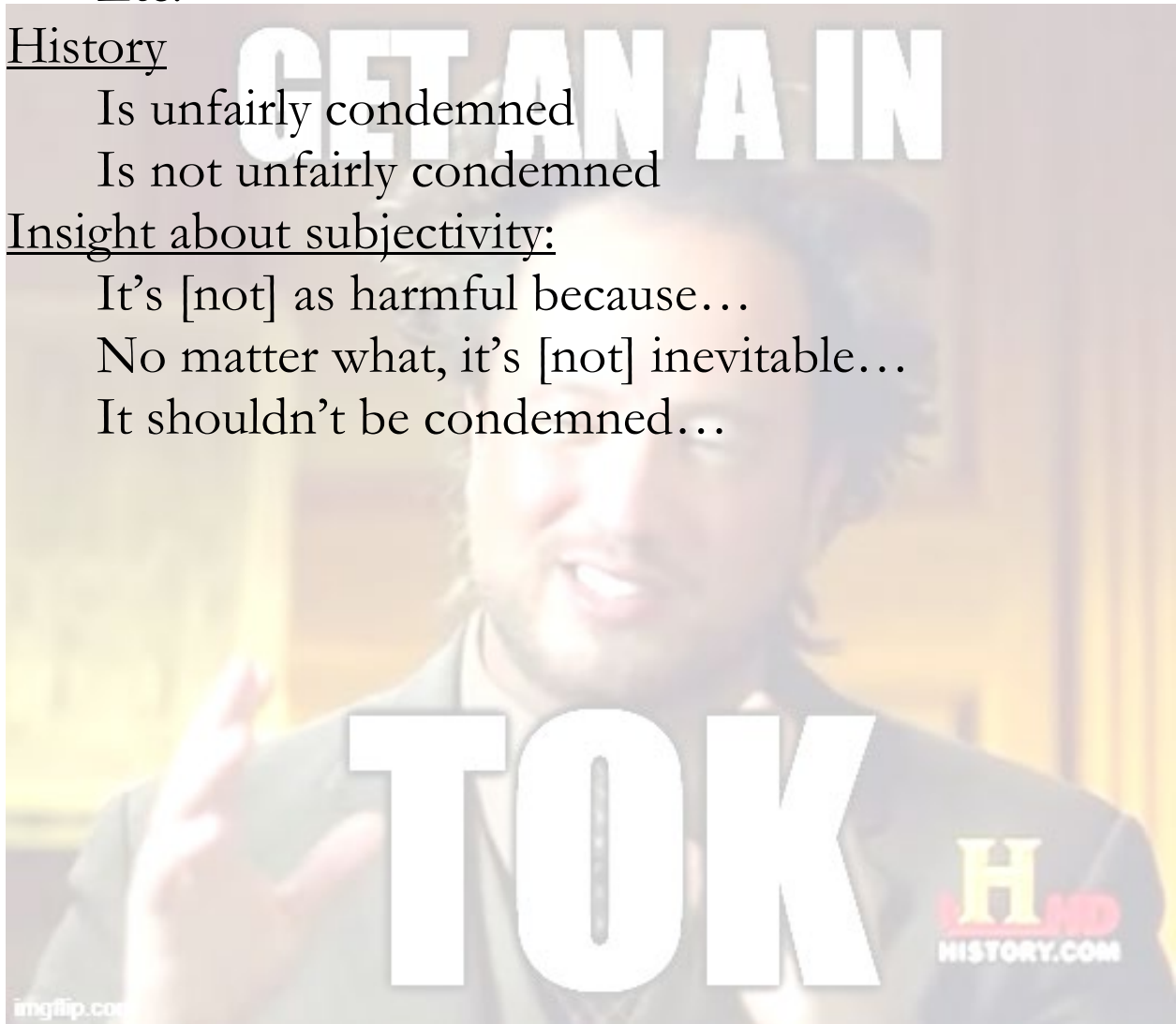
It's overrated
It's gone too far in today's world
Experts help us understand it
It should [not] be celebrated...
Etc.

History

Is unfairly condemned
Is not unfairly condemned

Insight about subjectivity:

It's [not] as harmful because...
No matter what, it's [not] inevitable...
It shouldn't be condemned...



The Arts

Basic Examples to Avoid

Jackson Pollock, Salvador Dali, John Cage,

These are not bad examples, but they will be overused, as they are some mainstream artists that are most known for subjectivity.

Remember that talking about subjective art is only the beginning. We're talking about whether or not subjectivity is overly celebrated. So we need to look at the people who are celebrating subjectivity, or not.

Some Good Examples & Approaches

My Bed – Tracey Emin

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/My_Bed

Looking at the reception section in Wikipedia allowed me to see the act of celebrating the subjectivity. Now I need to think about if it's overly celebrated or not.

The Green Knight

<https://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2021/07/green-knight-ending-explained-does-he-die-gawain-dev-patel>

<https://www.cbr.com/green-knight-movie-meaning/>

<https://nofilmschool.com/Sir-gawain-the-green-knight-explained>

This movie was impossible to understand, but was celebrated by these critics & most critics online. Is subjectivity overly celebrated if it led me and others to confusion?

Bob Dylan

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/jonathanjonesblog/2009/oct/29/art-meaning-bob-dylan>

In this article he says that he doesn't want to be understood, what?!

The Last Shot Photo

<https://www.nba.com/magic/michael-jordan-last-shot-nba-orlando-magic-photographer-fernando-medina-20200517>

This piece of art is beautiful and totally celebrated, yet it requires virtually no interpretation. Subjectivity has no place in this, yet the artwork is absolutely successful. If some art is successful without being subjective, is subjectivity actually that important?



History

Important Notes:

Avoid anything dealing with Nazis. Some interesting things with WWII can work, but avoid anything in history that comes to your mind without doing research.

Remember: The AOK of History is not events that happened. The AOK of History deals with how experts use tools to learn about the past. We are focusing on their subjectivity and whether or not it is unfairly condemned when using these tools.

To do this you must find historians that were and weren't subjective.

Some Good Examples & Approaches

Remember – we need to find people condemning the subjectivity and interpretation. There's the historic event, the subjectivity that was applied, then the condemning. Then you analyze by saying whether or not this subjectivity was unfairly condemned.

Interpretations about using the atomic bomb against Japan. Was it an unjust use of power? Or did it save lives by preventing a land invasion? How does subjectivity come into play as a historian interprets something that cannot be known?

History Books: The New Deal & Great Depression

when events will never occur again, we have to be subjective and interpret. Is this good or bad? Can it even be bad? What other events can never be replicated? Is subjectivity required to interpret past events?

American Politics – 1619 Project vs 1776 Commission
<https://www.politico.com/news/2020/09/17/devos-black-history-1776-unites-417186>

Both of these offered subjective interpretations of history. One was condemned (articles), one won a Pulitzer (praised). What was the difference?

You can write about the subjectivity of the historian that is learning about the past, but also the subjectivity of the sources!

Herodotus

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herodotus>

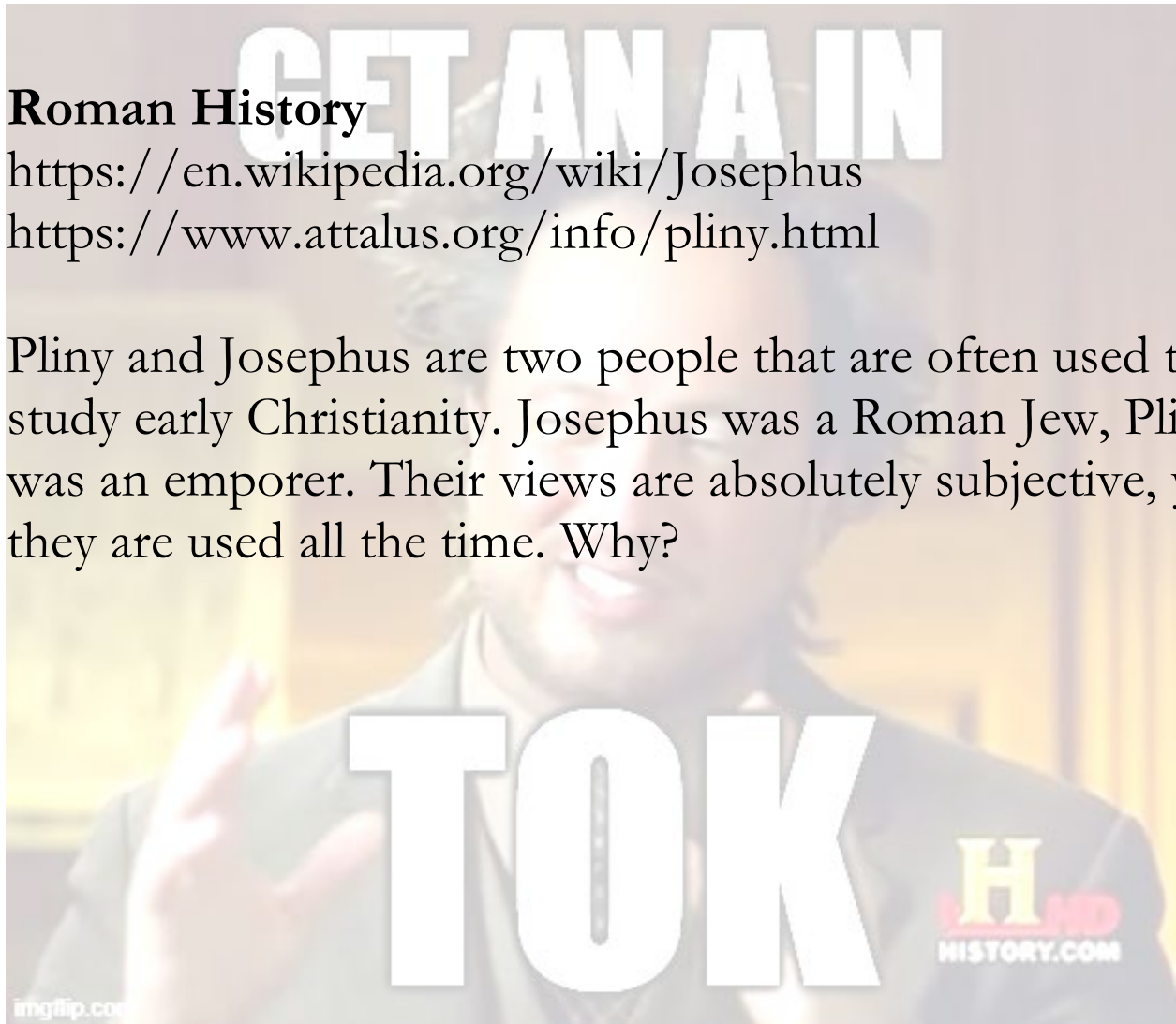
No one doubts his subjectivity, but we still learn from him. How does this interact with subjectivity in history? Many other ancient historians can work here.

Roman History

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josephus>

<https://www.attalus.org/info/pliny.html>

Pliny and Josephus are two people that are often used to study early Christianity. Josephus was a Roman Jew, Pliny was an emperor. Their views are absolutely subjective, yet they are used all the time. Why?



Conclusion

Comment on the nature of subjectivity and why it is/isn't good.

Is subjectivity avoidable? Should we try to avoid it, if not?

Should we embrace it? Or just acknowledge it?

Is subjectivity actually bad?

What are the differences between subjectivity in both AOKs? Or can they both give the same lesson?

