

Summarizing and commenting on a presentation

This exercise, to be completed by May 6th, consists of five steps. Although you can organize your time as you like, it is advisable that you do the first three steps in a single sitting, which may take more than an hour. Step four (the interaction stage) on a separate day. The final step involves producing a video presentation and submitting it to your teacher for evaluation. To complete the exercise you will need a Smartphone to record your video.

Step one

Find the talk

Go to the TED.com homepage and search for the video, [Why it's worth listening to people you disagree with](#) Zachary Wood.

When the video screen appears, click on the pause button so that the video does not start up immediately. Then read below.

Before you watch

Consider the following questions: What is meant by uncomfortable learning? Why could this be useful?

Watch the talk

You are going to watch an eleven-minute talk on listening to opposing viewpoints. Before you begin, read over the questions you will be asked to answer when you finish. If you don't feel certain about the answers, come back to them at a later time in the exercise. Note also that subtitles are available in several languages, but you should avoid reading the text until you have listened to the speaker several times.

What is the main thesis or idea of the talk?

What anecdotes does he share and how are they related to the main idea?

Give a brief description of the opening and of the closing.

Now click on full view mode in upper right corner of the video screen and sit back and enjoy.

Step two

Getting closer to the content of the talk

Read through the questions below before listening to the video again. If you can answer any of them immediately, do so. If not, write the answers as you listen. Remember that you can stop the video whenever you like and go back and listen to portions again if you need to.

What book does the speaker mention and how is it controversial?

What does he mean by the “talk black parents have to give their children?”

Why did he invite Derbyshire and Murray to speak at his school?

How did his mother influence him and what was special about his schooling?

What is “affirmative action” and does this concept exist in Italy? How does it work? Is it a good idea? Why?

Why doesn’t he believe it is productive to tune out opposing viewpoints?

What happened when he invited John Derbyshire to speak on campus?

What does he hope for the leaders of the world?

Look back at the questions in Step 1. Do you have anything to add, now that you have watched the video more closely?

Step three

Analyze the talk

Write an outline or draw a mind map of the main sections of the presentation.

List the visual supports (real objects, blackboard, Powerpoint, video) that the speaker uses to accompany the talk. Is there a reason for this? Do you agree?

Comment briefly on the speaker’s appearance, body language and pace.

On several occasions the speaker refers to a book, an article and social media backlash. Look at the footnote and references tab and read the source articles. Many refer to the fact that the social media generation is guilty of being “coddled” and that they are “snowflakes” wanting to shirk responsibility and afraid of hard work. Comment on these stereotypes and give examples of how your generation is portrayed.

Step four

Task: Information, Feedback, and Interaction

You are going to give a summary of the talk and your commentary to a fellow student.

Before you meet you may want to prepare some background notes on Zachary Wood. Click on his profile picture to open a new page with more information. Do a Google search as well.

1. First open your discussion by introducing the speaker to your fellow student.
2. Then summarize the talk objectively, trying to avoid personal commentary at this stage.
3. Finally, give your personal opinion about the presentation, both *what* was said and *how* it was said. At this stage, your partner may interrupt you at any time to ask for clarification or express an opinion. You and your partner will probably have a short discussion about the clash of civilizations, integration, etc.

The interaction between you and your partner will take place outside of the classroom. This may be done in various ways:

- You do the activity over phone.
- You use Skype, MEET, or chat, with or without video.

Step five

Your 4 minute video

Prepare a video of your summary and commentary as a file and upload it to the L+S Sem 2 Google Docs folder.

Your spoken text should include the following:

- Brief introduction of Zachary Wood
- The topic of the talk
- A summary the talk
- A brief conclusion
- Your commentary
- A brief account of the interaction with your partner