

# Health, Development & Human Rights

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## Analytic Summary #2

**Due:** Sunday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> by 12:00PM (noon) via TurnItIn.

Late analytic summaries will *not* be accepted unless you have requested and I have granted a *prior* reasonable accommodation.

**Instructions:** Your paper should be 700–800 words in length and conform to the course’s “General Technical Requirements for Written Assignments”.

Your assignment is to concisely summarize an argument from the reading. This is not a book report. You will need to ascertain the essential elements of the author’s argument and not be distracted by any inessential parts. You must make clear to your reader—in *your own words* but *neutrally*—the following three items:

1. The author’s main thesis or conclusion,
2. The principle premises or reasons the author offers in support of this main thesis or conclusion, and
3. The inferences the author uses to show how the premises are supposed to entail the main thesis or conclusion.

In doing all this, assume that your readers are not familiar with the argument and so you are trying to explain it to them as clearly as possible.

For this paper, you should not write an extensive introduction. Your introduction should only give a brief sketch—in one short paragraph with no more than three or four sentences—of the issue the author is addressing and the position the author takes on it. Do not summarize the argument here. The purpose of this introduction is to give readers unfamiliar with the issue or the author’s argument some relevant background information so that they may easily understand the issue and the author’s position on it. Any further background information is typically best included as needed in the paper’s body.

The body of your paper should only explain the argument the author makes in justifying his or her position on the issue. Do *not* include any of your own thoughts, observations, or criticisms. The point of this exercise is to give you practice explaining someone else’s philosophical argument, clearly and carefully, in your own words. As a result, directly quoting the principal text or using outside sources is *discouraged*.

This paper should have *no conclusion*. That is, there should be no concluding paragraph summarizing your paper or explaining any of the consequences that result from accepting the argument that has been summarized; your paper is already short enough so such a summary is not needed.

**Topic:** Amartya Sen concludes his chapter on “Population, Food and Freedom” by claiming that “the solution of the population problem calls for *more* freedom, not less” (p. 226). Describe, in your own words, the main argument that Sen makes in order to defend this claim.

In order to do this, you must identify the three items mentioned in the instructions within “Population, Food and Freedom”. (Hint: I have already given you item 1 in the topic above.) You should read this chapter at least once before you begin writing anything, as Sen’s overarching strategy for defending his thesis may not be completely clear until you have read the chapter one time through. (You may also want to peruse Sen’s previous chapter, “Women’s Agency and Social Change” as well.) After you understand how Sen is defending his thesis, you should then reread the chapter to identify the reasons he offers in support of this thesis. Once you have done all that, you can finally assemble all this into your analytic summary.

Keep in mind, this is not a summary of this entire chapter. You are only summarizing Sen’s main argument for justifying his claims about the population problem and freedom. So do not waste valuable time and space trying to summarize every single sentence or paragraph Sen has written. In fact, you may be surprised at how much of this chapter is not essential for the main argument. That is, you will notice that this chapter has a lot of build up, explanation, side-commentary, and extensive use of examples that are not strictly necessary to support the main argument Sen is trying to make. Consequently, these are elements of the chapter you need not address in your summary.

Along these lines, it is worth emphasizing that I am asking you to put this argument into *your* own words. This is why I discourage directly quoting the principle text and using outside sources. In addition, if you are using terminology that a normal person would not understand, then be sure to explain what those terms mean to your readers. For instance, your reader may not be familiar with the “population problem” mentioned by Sen. So be sure to clearly explain what this, and any other terms, mean.

Indeed, I encourage you to imagine that your readers are lazy, stupid, and mean. They are *lazy* in that they do not want to figure out what your convoluted sentences are supposed to mean, and they do not want to figure out what the argument is, if you have not already made it obvious. They are *stupid*, so you have to explain everything you say to them in simple, bite-sized pieces. And they are *mean*, so they are not going to read your paper charitably. For example, if something you say admits of more than one interpretation, they will assume you mean the less plausible thing.