

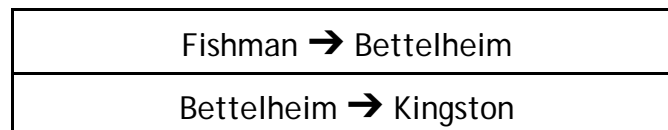
Working with Three Authors

Your last assignment will ask you to work with three authors at once, and many of you have already attempted this in Papers 3 and/or 4. This is, of course, difficult work, but this is also part of the process of preparing you for 101, where you can expect to work with three authors on one or two of the later paper.

While working with three authors is more difficult, it's certainly not impossible. The trick is to keep in mind that your connections need to connect: that's how you make any argument. If you remember that, you should do just fine. To help you figure out what I mean, here are some examples of arguments that do and do not work:

TWO ARGUMENTS—DON'T DO THIS

The most common mistake in working with three essays is writing a paper that essentially has two arguments. These arguments split the paper in half. For example, say you wanted to make the argument "Bettelheim is a mainstream reader and Kingston's aunt is like the Franks." Let's see how that would map out:



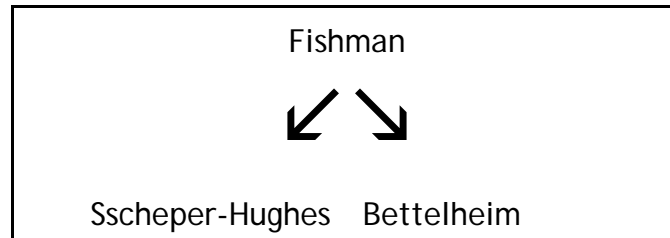
These are essentially two different arguments, two different papers because *there is no connection between these connections*. Often this sort of paper will literally break in the middle: once the first argument is proven, there will be a sudden jump in the next paragraph to the second argument. If you're having trouble making strong transitions, then, that can be a clue. You should also ask yourself how all of your connections connect; that's another good test.

OK, so that's what NOT to do. So how DO you do a three author argument? Well, there are a couple of good patterns to think about for starters.

ONE IDEA, TWO EXAMPLES

One simple way to work with three authors is to take an idea or concept from one essay and then apply it to two others. For example, you could have an argument like

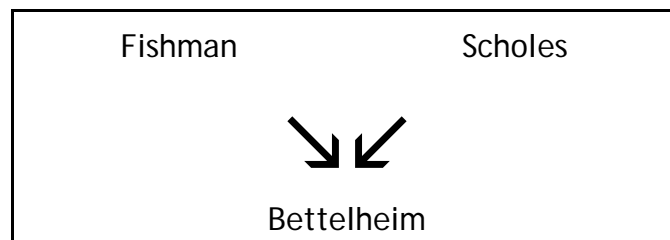
"Both Scheper-Hughes and Bettelheim show the necessity of mainstream literate skills as described by Fishman." That maps out like this:



These connections ARE connected, since they both illustrate concepts from Fishman. Now, of course, this is just a start. An even stronger argument of this type would draw a conclusion from these connections: "Both Scheper-Hughes and Bettelheim use the kinds of mainstream skills Fishman talks about, which suggests that though valuable these skills are also dangerous." The connections connect, and the argument answers "and so?" since we learn something new NOT ONLY about Scheper-Hughes and Bettelheim as readers, but ALSO about Fishman and her ideas.

TWO IDEAS, ONE EXAMPLE

Another way to work with three authors is to use ideas from two different essays to explain the ideas or content of the third essay. An example would be: "In analyzing the Frank family, Bettelheim uses both mainstream literacy and ideological criticism." That would map out like this:

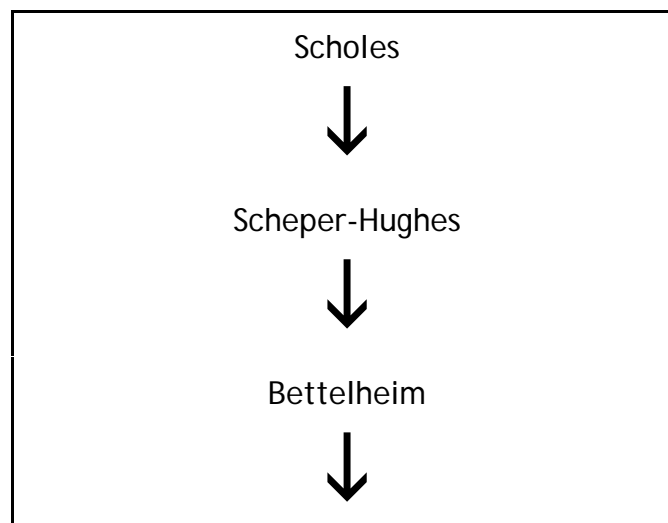


Again, the connections are connected: this time through Bettelheim's essay and, more specifically, through Bettelheim as a reader. But again this argument is just a start, and can be made stronger by considering what we can learn from this connection: "In analyzing the Frank family, Bettelheim uses both mainstream literacy and ideological criticism, which shows that both are necessary to be a strong reader." Again, we learn not only about Bettelheim as a reader but also about the two other essays, seeing how

each concept is only partially correct without the other.

THE ADDITIVE ARGUMENT

The strongest way of working with three authors is also (of course) the most complex. This involves rethinking one argument in terms of another and then bringing that revised concept over to the third essay. For example, you could argue "Scholes' concept of ideological criticism can resolve the ethical dilemma Scheper-Hughes faces, to create a new standard of reading which Bettelheim exemplifies." Phew. Quite a mouthful, I know. But let's map it:



This is clearly connected, and automatically answers "and so?" because a lot of critical thinking is going on here. You might think of this sort of argument this way: in order to explain Essay 3, you want to use a concept from Essay 2. But the concept isn't just right—there's something slightly wrong with it. So, you use Essay 1 to explain, complete, or modify the concept from Essay 2. In other words, Essay 1 helps explain the concept in Essay 2. With this explanation, we can learn something about Essay 3.

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

OK, so how do you *find* one of these arguments? Well, there are many approaches you could take. Here are some that might help:

- As always, start by making a list of all the ideas and concepts from each essay you want to work with. Then see what connections you can make between all three essays.
- Choose a concept from one essay that seems particularly clear or useful. See if you can apply it to two other essays, and then see what you can learn from that application.
- Choose an essay that you think has a problem, idea, or issue that really needs to be explained, and then see if you can do that using two other essays.
- Think back to your previous papers. If you had a particularly strong argument before, think about what would happen if you added in Bettelheim. How would this extend, change, or modify your argument?