

## Smarthinking Tutor Response Form

Your tutor has written overview comments about your essay in the form below. Your tutor has also embedded comments **[in bold and in brackets]** within your essay. Thank you for choosing Smarthinking to help you improve your writing!

Hi, Adalira. Thanks for submitting your writing to us. My name is Caroline A., and today I will be offering you some feedback on your critical summary. As you requested, I'll do my best to offer you advice on your thesis, organization, sentence structure, grammar, and word choice in the form below or in my embedded comments. I hope you find my suggestions helpful. Let's get started!

**\*Writing Strength:** This sentence is clear and grammatically correct, Adalira: "They believe that their children will be more affected with their separation, but staying together for the kids is not always the best." Here, you've properly joined the two independent clauses (basically complete sentences) with a comma plus a coordinating conjunction ("but"), correctly creating what's called a compound sentence. This is an effective way to join related ideas in a clear way. Good work!

**Main Idea/Thesis:** Adalira, your essay does not yet meet the requirements of your assignment: "In an essay, summarize that piece and provide a critical review of that article." In your paper, you haven't mentioned the article you're summarizing or reviewing until your works-cited section. This means that it's unclear to the reader which part of your essay is summarizing points from the resource and which part is your critical review.

I'll discuss how to make the body of your paper fit the assignment in the next section, but in terms of developing your thesis, consider ending your introduction with a clear statement that tells us 1) the article's main argument and 2) your own critical response to it. This thesis might be one or two sentences. Here's an example of such a thesis, which comes from my summary and review of a book titled *The Gutenberg Elegies*:

While Birkerts states reasonable concerns about technology decreasing the value and experience of reading books [summary of the book's main point], his argument is somewhat outdated and often inconsistent throughout [my critical review of the text].

So what is Broadbent's main argument, Adalira, and what is your evaluation of it? Stating both in your thesis at the end of your introduction will give your assignment the setup it needs.

**\*Adalira has requested that you respond to the Content Development:** Once you've stated your thesis, Adalira, you'll need to clarify in your body paragraphs—using signal phrases and topic sentences—what parts of the paper are *summary* of Broadbent's article and which parts are your *review*. For example, in the summary sections, make sure you're crediting the author's ideas to her by using phrases like "Broadbent says" and "the author argues that." You don't need to begin every sentence with such phrases, but just adding them occasionally in your summary will remind the reader that you are, in fact, still summarizing.

Then, you'll need to clarify where you are reviewing Broadbent's ideas. You can add your review in each body paragraph (e.g., each paragraph could be half a summary of a specific point from the article and then half your opinion about that idea), or else you could do the summary in the first half of your essay and then devote the second half of your paper to your opinion. Just make sure that you're clearly reviewing the source: What ideas make sense to you and are well supported? Which ideas of Broadbent's are *not* clear or need more evidence to be convincing? How might parents reading the article react? Clarifying which part is summary and which part is your opinion will show that you're engaging with the source, as your assignment asks. 😊

**\*Adalira has requested that you respond to the Grammar & Mechanics:** You'll need to edit your paper for vague pronoun references, too. A pronoun like *he, him, his, she, her, hers, it, its, they, them, and their* should refer clearly to a specific word (or words) elsewhere in the sentence or in a previous sentence. When your reader cannot tell for sure to whom or what the pronoun refers, the reference is said to be vague or ambiguous.

For instance, look at this sentence from your essay:

Sometimes is not possible for marriages to resolve their differences, so they cannot follow that model. Their relationship could not work, so for some of them divorce is the best option.

You have three pronouns here: "their," "they," and "them." But it's not clear who you're referring to: Does the "their" refer to "marriages" or the couples in those marriages? Do "they" and "them" refer to the parents or the children? Since your referents are not easily understood, then you'll usually need to replace the pronouns with more concrete terms (nouns) (e.g., "the parents" or "the couple" instead of "they"). Sometimes, changing the pronouns to clearer terms might require other changes in the sentence to make it smoother, such as in this example:

When *Mary* arrived at *Jane's* house, she was crying.

Who was crying: Mary or Jane? In this case, I've moved words around to make it clearer, too:

*Mary* was crying when she arrived at *Jane's* house.

Clarifying your referents like this is necessary for your reader to follow your ideas more readily, Adalira, so be sure to check for these as you revise!

### Summary of Next Steps:

- Develop a clear thesis stating a short version of your overall summary and opinion.
- Devote half of each paragraph or the essay to summary and the other half to review.
- Edit any vague pronoun references.

I hope my suggestions have been helpful, Adalira. Good luck with your revisions, and thanks for sharing your thoughts on how children might not be so harmed by separated or divorced parents; you give the reader some interesting points to consider. Have a great rest of the day! ~Caroline A.

You can find more information about writing, grammar, and usage in the [Smarthinking Writer's Handbook](#).

Please look for comments **[in bold and in brackets]** in your essay below.

Thank you for submitting your work to Smarthinking! We hope to see you again soon.

Adalira Gutierrez

Mr. Greco  
 ENC 1101  
 February 12, 2014

### Conventional and Single Family

The conventional model of a family in society is that father and mother should raise their children together. **[What article and author are you summarizing and reviewing, Adalira? Make sure to state that information in your first sentence so that your reader knows what text you're responding to.]** Sometimes is not possible for marriages to resolve their differences, so they cannot follow that model. Their relationship could not work, so for some of them divorce is the best option. Other couples stay together because they see divorce as something bad. They believe that their children will be more affected with their separation, but staying together for the kids is not always the best.

Children will always want to see their parents together. A separation between their parents will be hard at the beginning, but if love does not exist between their parents kids will feel it and see it. Maybe living with a single parent is not as bad as some people think. **[This paragraph seems like it might still be part of your introduction because you're still discussing general ideas rather than a first point from Broadbent's article that you will then give your opinion about. To give it a more specific focus, what is Broadbent's first reason supporting her argument, and how true do you feel her reason is?]**

Growing up in a single parent home could be beneficial for the children. Single parents can give more attention and love. Kids might be able to have a better communication, and be closer to each one of their parents. Many children that live with single parents are very proud of them. They are not only their parents but their friends as well. Parents are available to help them with homework . Many people think that the bad behavior of kids or teenagers, when parents are not together, can be related to the divorce, but that could just be the consequences of poor parenting. **[This is a valid point, Adalira: that sometimes a child's bad behavior is the result of "poor parenting" rather than a parent being single. This helps to support your overall argument that single parents are not always the worse option.]**

The pain can be worse if parents wait until their kids are old enough to leave and form their own family. If they have postponed their lives to raise their kids they could end up without achieving their goals and alone. **[The use of pronouns like "they" and "their" in the previous two sentences gets confusing because it's not clear whether you're referring to the parents or to the children. You might use concrete nouns, like "the parents" or "the children," in place of the pronouns so that**

**your meaning is clear to the reader.]** Being a single parent can be hard, but with the years things have become easier for single parents. There have been many advances and not only are the mothers seen on the street pushing the strollers, but the fathers too.

The most important thing is not if the children live in a conventional, or single parent home while parents give them love and attention. Divorce can be tough for kids, but after a while they will adapt to the new environment. They might even like their new life because they will not have to face fights and confrontations between their parents. They one day will understand that although mommy and daddy does not live together it do not mean that the family has been destroyed; that just means that they will have two homes and two families. **[“Mommy and daddy” would be considered plural because it’s two people, but the verb “does not live” is singular, so the subject and verb do not agree in number. Change “does not live” to its plural form for a grammatical sentence (e.g., “Henry and Jane does not care” is incorrect, but “Henry and Jane do not care” is correct).]**

#### Work Cited

Broadbent, Sabrina. "Single Parenting Can Be Beneficial." *Parenting*. Ed. Roman Espejo.

Detroit: Greenhaven Press, 2013. *Opposing Viewpoints*. Rpt. from "When One Parent Is Better than Two." *Mail on Sunday* 19 July 2009. *Opposing Viewpoints In Context*.

Web. 30 Sept. 2013. **[When summarizing parts of this article in your text, Adalira, don’t forget to use MLA in-text citations, which usually include the author’s last name and page number in parentheses, like this: (Barringer 36). Where in your paper have you summarized Broadbent’s ideas and therefore need to add an MLA reference?]**