

Blink: the power of thinking without thinking
College Book spring 2008

Administration of Justice

pp. 189-194 Using the Historical New York Times, find articles from 1999 about the Amadou Diallo case.

p. 234 “. . . An officer with a partner is no safer than an officer on his own.” Do you agree or disagree? Find two articles to illustrate your point of view.

p. 226-227 Gladwell gives a surprising explanation of why high-speed chases have been banned by police departments. Find an article which tells why a police department (any city) has banned such chases. Does the article agree with Gladwell?

pp. 275-276 Should we put screens in courtrooms so the jury cannot see the person on the witness stand?

Anthropology

Do further research on the taxonomy of facial expressions, and report your findings in a two-page report.

p.200 Research the South Fore and Kukukuku tribes of Papua New Guinea. Where have you found articles about them?

p. 200 Find an article in a scholarly journal about Silvan Tomkins and Paul Ekman’s study.

Art

Find information on any art hoax.

Biology

p. 59 Research ventromedial prefrontal cortex and its role as the decision-making part of the brain.

Business

p. 87 “. . . being short is probably as much of a handicap to corporate success as being a woman or an African American.” Do you agree or disagree? Why?

p. 87 “. . . In the U.S. population, about 14.5 percent of all men are six feet or taller. Among CEOs of Fortune 500 companies, that number is 58 percent.” Do you agree or disagree with Gladwell’s explanation for this?

p. 160 “. . .most of us don’t make a distinction – on an unconscious level – between the package and the product. The product is the package and the

product combined.” Pick two similar products and compare their packaging and how you react to them.

Communication

Assume that an insurance company has asked you to present a five minute presentation on how health professionals should treat patients in order to reduce the chances of a malpractice suit.

p. 13 Why is a book cover so important? Bring some examples to illustrate your point.

p. 33 Gladwell says that stress causes colds. Make a short presentation about how one can reduce stress during the cold and flu season.

Education

Think back to the teachers you have had over the years. Did your first impressions of them last or did you ever change your mind? Write a two-page paper about one of your teachers, what you first thought of him/her and then what you thought at the end of the course or school year.

p. 264 Gladwell says that the most important lesson of Blink is that we confuse information with understanding, that we can't see the forest for the trees. Can you think of a course you have had for which this is true?

EMT

p. 141 “. . . there are a lot of social and psychological aspects to medicine that physicians don't pay enough attention to.” Do you agree or disagree?

English

p. 13 Why is a book cover so important? Bring some examples to class to illustrate your point.

p. 35 Take the Big Five Inventory as given on page 35. Then have three friends rate you using the same criteria. How do the results compare?

p. 76 “. . . utter mediocrities sometimes end up in positions of enormous responsibility.” Choose someone (from business or politics or sports, etc.) who seems to fit this description and find articles that illustrate it. Present your findings in a two-page paper.

Think back to the teachers you have had over the years. Did your first impressions of them last or did you ever change your mind? Write a two-page paper about one of your teachers, how you first thought of him/her and then what you thought at the end of the course or school year.

pp. 262-263 “ . . . This is the second lesson of *Blink*: understanding the true nature of instinctive decision-making requires us to be forgiving of those people trapped in circumstances where good judgment is imperiled.” Have a class discussion on this topic. What about circumstances chosen by those people, such as taking drugs, driving drunk, etc. ? Must we be forgiving? Why or why not?

p. 264 Gladwell says that the most important lesson of Blink is that we confuse information with understanding, that we can't see the forest for the trees. Can you think of a course you have had for which this is true?

Exercise Science

pp. 270-271 Read The Wages of Wins and find the Win Score. Then, choose a basketball player other than Michael Jordan or Allen Iverson and apply the formula to that person.

Health

p. 33 Gladwell says that stress causes colds. Make a short presentation about how one can reduce stress during the cold and flu season.

Math

p. 274 Find statistics (Statistical Abstract of the United States would be good for this) on the numbers of blacks and whites on Death Row in five states and make a bar graph to illustrate what you find.

Find statistics on SAT scores for whites and blacks and make a visual presentation, for example a bar graph.

p. 88 “We see a tall person and we swoon.” Research leading stage, film, and TV stars and find their heights. Make a bar graph to show your findings.

p. 271 Research sports statistics by comparing two “greats” in a sport (do not use Gladwell’s examples of Ty Cobb and Tony Gwynn). How much difference is there between the two people?

Music

Ask if anyone on the faculty of the SWC Music Department has auditioned or been a judge where a screen has obscured the identity of the person auditioning. Interview that person and ask what they thought about the process. Present your findings in a two-page report.

Chapter 5, pp. 147-188 Research the rock musician Kenna and write a two-page report on your findings.

p. 251 Is it true that an audition begins the first second the person is in view? Imagine that you are a music teacher and coaching one of your students for a competition. How would you suggest that he/she dress and act in order to make the best impression?

Nursing

p. 40 Gladwell says that how patients are treated influences malpractice suits and that people do not sue doctors they like. Prepare a short skit in which you and a partner first illustrate how not to treat a patient. Then switch roles and show how to treat a patient well.

Assume that an insurance company has asked you to present a five minute presentation on how health professionals should treat patients in order to reduce the chances of a malpractice suit.

p. 141 “. . . there are a lot of social and psychological aspects to medicine that physicians don’t pay enough attention to.” Do you agree or disagree?

p. 133-136 Using CINAHL and EBSCOhost Health Source: Nursing/Academic Journals, research Goldman’s algorithm.

Philosophy

p. 58 Is free will an illusion? Write a two-page essay about this.

Political Science

p. 75 President Warren Harding is described as “not a particularly intelligent man.” Using the Historical New York Times, find primary sources (articles written at the time Harding was running for president or was President) that illustrate this assessment.

Evaluate two or more of the political candidates for President in 2008. What do you think Gladwell would say about these people?

p. 77 Go to www.implicit.harvard.edu and take the Implicit Association Test, choosing either Republican or Democratic candidates. What have you learned about yourself after taking the test?

Psychology

p. 33 Gladwell says that stress causes colds. Make a short presentation about how one can reduce stress during the cold and flu season.

p. 35 Take the Big Five Inventory as given on page 35. Then have three friends rate you using the same criteria. How do the results compare?

p. 11 Write a short paper (3 pages) on “adaptive unconscious”. Gladwell says that the study of this kind of decision making is one of the most important new fields of psychology.

p. 77 Go to www.implicit.harvard.edu and take the Implicit Association Test, choosing either Republican or Democratic candidates. What have you learned about yourself after taking the test?

pp. 214-221 Compare Peter, the autistic patient, with Christopher in The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time.

pp. 185-186 Do the triangle test using two different colas.

Sociology

What other methods of predicting divorce, other than thin slicing as described by Gladwell in Chapter 1, can you find?

Spanish (or any foreign language)

Assume that an insurance company has asked you to present a five minute oral presentation on how health professionals should treat patients in order to reduce the chances of a malpractice suit. You may, instead, write a short essay on this topic.

p. 13 Why is a book cover so important? Bring some examples to illustrate your point and give an oral presentation to the class.

p. 33 Gladwell says that stress causes colds. Make a short oral presentation about how one can reduce stress during the cold and flu season.

Think back to the teachers you have had over the years. Did your first impressions of them last or did you ever change your mind? Write a two-page paper about one of your teachers, what you first thought of him/her and then what you thought at the end of the course or school year.

Telemedia

Using the Historical New York Times and Los Angeles Times, find reviews from the times that *All in the Family* and *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* premiered. Do the articles foreshadow the hits these shows became?

Theatre Arts

pp. 111-112 Recreate the Mother example; ask your audience for words to make a play.

p. 88 “We see a tall person and we swoon.” Research leading stage, film, and TV stars and find their heights. Is Gladwell’s statement justifiable?