Activity 11: Noticing Language

In order to discuss the varying degrees of happiness, rank the following words on a scale of 1 to 6, with 6 being the state of greatest happiness. Then share those responses with your group and come to an agreement on a ranking of the words. Complete this activity in your module notes.

pleasure

euphoria

joy

happiness

bliss

satisfaction
Activity 12: Understanding Connotations

Understanding Connotations
What feelings does each of the following words or phrases from “In Pursuit of Unhappiness” create in you? What images or situations do you associate with each word or phrase? The first has been done for you.

1. yearn – craving that cannot be satisfied
2. unadulterated –
3. bliss –
4. stagnancy –
5. steeped –
6. relentless –
7. preoccupation –
Activity 13: Annotating and Questioning the Text

First Highlighting: Use one color to mark Thomas Carlyle’s quotes.

In the RIGHT-HAND margin, explain how these quotes support McMahon’s argument.

Second Highlighting: Use another color to mark John Stuart Mills’ quotes.

In the RIGHT-HAND margin, explain how these quotes support McMahon’s argument.
Activity 14: Quickwrite

Answer the following quickwrite ON A SEPARATE SHEET OF PAPER:

In what ways are Thomas Carlyle and John Stuart Mill similar in their thinking about happiness?

In what ways are they different?

What facet (part) of the argument does Carlyle serve (help)?

What does the Mills quote provide to McMahon’s argument?
Activity 16: Summarizing

Five-Word Summary

Follow this process for writing a summary paragraph for “In Pursuit of Unhappiness,” using key words from the article.

STEP ONE: INDIVIDUALLY, using actual words from the “In Pursuit of Unhappiness,” create a list of the five most important words. These should all be words that you think are essential to the article’s main idea.

STEP TWO: AS A GROUP, combine your lists and come up with a new list of 5 words.

STEP THREE: On your own, use the final list of five key words your group of four agreed on to write a summary paragraph for “In Pursuit of Unhappiness.” Use all five words from your final list in your paragraph. Be sure to identify the main idea of the article in your summary.
Activity 17: Formative Assessment

Write a rhetorical précis of the article.

A précis is a **concise summary** of what you’ve read including both **what the text says and what the text does** rhetorically. In other words, a précis presents the **what, how, why, and who of a writer’s argument**.

Complete the precis template using the module article.
**Sentence 1:** Name of the author, genre, and title of the work; date in parentheses; a rhetorically accurate verb (such as “claims,” “argues,” “asserts,” or “suggests”); and a THAT clause containing the major assertion or thesis statement in the work.

**Sentence 2:** An explanation of how the author develops and supports the thesis, usually in chronological order.

**Sentence 3:** A statement of the author’s apparent purpose, followed by an “in order to” phrase.

**Sentence 4:** A description of the intended audience and/or the relationship the author establishes with the audience.
Rhetoric: The art of speaking effectively

**Ethos:** (ethics) Arguments that use the audience's sense of morality (right and wrong); the author's credibility

**Pathos:** (emotion/passion) Arguments that use emotions to persuade the audience

**Logos:** (logic) Arguments that use logic to persuade the audience

Think of a time when you attempted to persuade someone of something. What type of arguments did you use?

Give an example of each type of argument
Activity 18: Thinking Critically

Questions about Logic (Logos)

1. Why does McMahon use the example of the holiday season?

2. In the third paragraph, what assumption about happiness does the quotation from Thomas Carlyle challenge?

3. According to McMahon’s paraphrase of Thomas Carlyle in the fourth paragraph, what caused the change in the concept of happiness? Why is this historical discussion important to McMahon’s argument?

4. What assumptions does McMahon make about the cause and effect relationships between self-help books and the percentage of happy people? Are there any factors McMahon doesn’t mention that might also explain the demand for self-help books?
Questions about the Writer (Ethos)

1. What is McMahon’s profession? Does that make him more or less believable?

2. What do McMahon’s references to Thomas Carlyle and John Stuart Mill do for his own image and credibility?

3. Why does McMahon make Thomas Carlyle’s views and personality such a prominent focus in his article? To what extent does McMahon seem to agree with Carlyle?

4. Why does McMahon say that “Carlyle’s arithmetic was essentially sound”? How does his verification of Carlyle’s claim that in 1843 the new preoccupation with happiness was “not yet two centuries old” contribute to McMahon’s authority as a historian?
Questions about Emotions (Pathos)

1. What feelings do the opening paragraphs create in the reader? Is there a genuine sense of “glad tidings and good cheer” in the first two paragraphs, or is something else going on?

2. In paragraph nine, McMahon describes the “mysterious [holiday] blues that are apt to set in while the streamers stream and the corks pop.” How does this paragraph affect the reader? What kind of sadness does McMahon describe in this paragraph?

3. In the final paragraph, McMahon lists several activities that he suggests are better ways of spending our time than trying to make ourselves happy, including having dinner with family, volunteering, or spending time with your child. What emotions do these examples create in the reader?
Activity 19: Reflecting on Your Reading Process

On a piece of paper, answer the following using complete sentences

1. What reading strategies did you use or learn in this module? Which strategies will you use in reading other texts? How will these strategies apply in other classes?

2. In what ways has your ability to read and discuss texts like “In Pursuit of Unhappiness” improved?
Activity 20: Considering the Writing Task

Reading-based writing assignments often require you to do three tasks:

1. You must explain the writer’s argument.

2. You must take a position on the writer’s conclusion to the argument.

3. You must construct an argument in response

By producing a thorough response to this prompt, you are demonstrating the ability to answer the module questions:

What are the different meanings and sources of “happiness“?

Which sources are most worthwhile?

Can people find happiness by looking for it?
Analyzing the Prompt

1. Annotate the passage as I read it aloud

2. In your groups, reread, discuss, and annotate the passage so you understand the argument that John Mills is making.

3. Answer the following questions:
   1. What is John Stuart Mill's argument?
   2. Discuss the ways in which you agree or disagree with his argument.
      Support your position by providing reasons and examples.
Activity 21: Taking a Stance

As you prepare to write, think carefully about your reactions to the various viewpoints you’ve read on the issue of creating happiness. Begin to formulate a thesis by answering the following questions:

1. What specific question will your essay answer? What is your tentative response to this question? (This is your thesis.)

2. What support have you found for your thesis?

3. What evidence do you have for that support?

4. How much background information do your readers need in order to understand the topic of creating happiness?

5. If readers were to disagree with your thesis, what would they say? How would you address those concerns? Counter arguments

Now draft a possible thesis for your essay. As you write, be open to the idea of possibly changing your thesis as your argument develops.
Activity 22: Gathering Evidence to Support Your Claims

Look back at the evidence you’ve gathered so far over the course of this module. This includes your quickwrites, annotations, and summaries. For each piece of evidence, consider the following questions:

Choose a piece of evidence:

1. How closely does this piece of evidence relate to the claim it is supposed to support?

2. Is this piece of evidence a fact or an opinion? Is it an example?

3. If this evidence is a fact, what kind of fact is it (statistic, experimental result, quotation)?

4. If it is an opinion, what makes the opinion credible?

5. What makes this evidence persuasive?
Activity 24: Composing a Draft

- Take out the essay prompt
- Take out your module notes
- Take out the article
- Take out a sheet of paper

You have all period to compose a rough draft.
Activity 25: Considering Structure  

Wednesday 10/30

Introduction

- Background information
- Introduction of subject
- Statement of your opinion

Body Paragraphs

- Common ground
- Evidence (both logical and emotional)
- Opposing point of view
- Response to opposing point of view

Conclusion

- Restatement of your position
- Call for action or agreement
Activity 26: Revising

You now need to work with the organization and development of your draft to make sure that your essay is as effective as possible.

**Peer Group Work**

1. Read one paper and EDIT it.
2. Rotate papers.
3. Read paper and EDIT it.

Repeat until all the papers in the group are read and edited.

**Revising Rhetorically**

Write answers to the following questions to help you think about your audience, your purpose, your image as a writer, your argument, and the evidence that supports it.
Activity 26: Revising

Thursday 10/31

1. What do readers probably think or believe about your topic? How much background information will they need?

2. What is your purpose in writing? What are you trying to accomplish?

3. What sort of image, or ethos, do you want to project to your reader? How will you achieve it? What words or type of language might you want to use to help construct your ethos?

4. What is your main argument? What support do you have? What is your strongest evidence?

5. Are there any emotional appeals you want to use?

6. If readers disagree with your thesis or the validity of your support, what would they say? How would you answer them?
Individual Work

Revise the draft on the basis of the feedback you received from your group members and to clarify and strengthen each of the areas you identified in your answers to the questions from yesterday.

You are writing a final draft today

And reflecting on the writing process
Reflecting on Your Writing Process

When you have completed your essay, answer these six questions, and submit your thoughts with your final draft.
1. What was most difficult about this assignment?

2. What was easiest?

3. What did you learn about arguing by completing this assignment?

4. What do you think are the strengths of your argument? Place a wavy line by the parts of your essay that you feel are very good.

5. What are the weaknesses, if any, of your paper? Place an X by the parts of your essay you would like help with. Write any questions you have in the margins.

6. What did you learn from this assignment about your own writing process—about preparing to write, writing the first draft, revising, and editing?