

## Sample Discussion Plan

The following discussion plan and questions are based on an essay about urban sprawl by Steven Hayward. It is designed to produce a focused discussion that meets various goals (a combination of the instructor's goals and the course goals).

### Goal One

To get students thinking about their views on urban sprawl (10 minutes)

#### Questions

1. What comes to mind when you think of urban sprawl?
2. Where do you see it happening? How has it affected our life?
3. Do you think it is an important issue now? Why or why not?
4. From what you've read or experienced, what are the pros and cons of sprawl?

### Goal Two

To shift the focus from personal reactions to a more critical reading of Hayward's text. To get students thinking about the rhetorical situation that informs the text and our reading of it. (Note: keep running notes of this discussion on the board) (20 minutes)

### The Transition: Shifting from Goal One to Goal Two

So all of us have our own views on this issue based on what we've learned or experienced, but there are many perspectives. Steven Hayward offers a view that is somewhat complicated since he doesn't clearly take a position on the issue. Let's take a look at his article to see if we can figure out what he's trying to say and who he's interested in influencing.

#### Questions

1. So how would you characterize this text (article, story, personal essay, etc.)?
2. Where and when was it published?
3. What do we know about the Heritage Foundation? Will somebody please read from the Web site's mission statement that I asked you to comment on for today?
4. Based on this statement, what assumptions can we make about Hayward's audience? That is, members of the Heritage Foundation?
5. With this in mind, how do you suppose his readers view the issue of urban sprawl?
6. Now look back at the article. What clues can you find to support that Hayward was writing with this audience in mind?
7. What do you think Hayward's purpose was for writing? In what way was he trying to influence this particular audience?
8. What rhetorical strategies does he use to meet this purpose (evidence, tone, language, references, etc.)?
9. How effective do you think his text was in meeting this purpose?

### Goal Three

To connect this analysis to students' own writing (5 minutes)

#### Questions

1. Now look back over this information. Which of these responses might prove useful when writing your academic summaries for next class?
2. What information might you leave out of an academic summary?