

Argument analysis

Family



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Argument Analysis Essay In “ On Racist Speech”, Charles R. Lawrence III presents the claim that racist speech, especially on college and university campuses, should be regulated and fought against. He argues that while Americans have the right to speak freely and without censoring themselves, as outlined in the First Amendment, racist speech should not be included since it is used with the intent to injure the person who is receiving the insult. However, the First Amendment protects racist speech, forcing minority groups to “ bear the burden for the good of all (Lawrence)” as the purpose of protecting racist speech is to exercise the freedom of thought and expression. This is the foundation of the First Amendment. Lawrence presents a strong and compelling argument because he begins his essay with a powerful, believable thesis and includes many supportive examples. The thesis of his essay can be found in the second paragraph, which clearly states his position against the First Amendment protecting the use of verbal racial insults. The author opens with what is essentially the counterargument, pointing out the importance of the First Amendment protecting racist speech. The claim is that the amendment allows it because verbal assault is supposedly not as destructive as physical assault. Lawrence then leads into why the amendment should not protect racial slurs, using minority college students as prime examples to show how damaging allowing verbal racism can be. The thesis of the essay is strongly supported as Lawrence refers to the case of Brown vs. Board of Education throughout the essay. Lawrence acknowledges that Brown has little to do with the argument of racist speech, but was able to make connections that truly benefited and supported what Lawrence was arguing for. “ The landmark case of Brown vs. Board of Education is not a case that we normally think of

<https://assignbuster.com/argument-analysis/>

as a case about speech [...] but held that segregated schools were inherently unequal because of the message that segregation conveyed (Lawrence).”

Brown vs. Board of Education was the case that went against the inequality that segregated schools brought about; Lawrence’s argument states that by allowing the First Amendment to protect racist remarks, the Brown case will have been in vain because these minority students are still being expected to take the brunt of racial intolerance. Lawrence also draws from some of his own personal experiences when he was in high school to show how degrading racist speech is to minority groups. However, there are no sources used in the essay, which also means that there are no cited sources. While Brown vs. Board of Education is a well-known case, Lawrence refers to other situations, such as how students are treated on college campuses, without having support to back up his information. Without these sources, there is nothing to suggest that the information Lawrence used was not made up or is accurate. The information is strong and helpful to his argument, but they are not entirely credible. As previously stated, Lawrence did include a counterargument, though the way it was presented was somewhat vague. Lawrence acknowledged that there was another side to what he was personally arguing for, but he did not entirely expand on this counterargument. He also failed to supply enough support for the counterargument and merely stated how it went against the concept that freedom of speech should not cover derogatory statements against minorities due to the harm that it can cause. The tone that Lawrence used is appropriate for the subject of the essay. The tone is strong, persuasive, and very passionate. Though there is no evidence of anger or animosity, it still is made clear through the tone that Lawrence is very much against the

protection that racial speech has within the First Amendment. The appropriate type and level of emotion is revealed through Lawrence's writing. The author was able to accomplish revealing his emotions without being overly emotional and letting his opinions be known without appearing biased. The conclusion of Lawrence's essay was strong and left a lasting impression. As a conclusion, Lawrence ended with a consequence if the actions he laid out in the essay are not adhered to: "If we fail in this, the victims of hate speech must rightly assume that we are on the oppressors' side (Lawrence)." This leaves the reader with something to think about, which allows them to fully take in and process what was mentioned previously throughout the essay. As such, I am persuaded by what Lawrence had to say and I am convinced by his argument against how much freedom of speech should defend without crossing any lines. This issue is a serious one and Lawrence did a successful job in conveying just how serious the problem is and why something needs to be done about it.

Works Cited
Lawrence, Charles R. "On Racist Speech." 25 October 1989. Barnet, Sylvan & Bedau, Hugo (2010). *Current Issues and Enduring Questions*. Ninth Ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's