

#### Essay #4: You Can't Say That: Exploring Censorship Debates

**Due:** First Draft: Due in individual conferences

Second Draft:

Final Draft:

**Length:** 4-5 pages (please also include previous drafts attached to the back of the final)

**Format:** Double spaced, Times New Roman 12-pt. font

**Sources:** Refer to at least THREE sources, one of which should be a reading from Unit #4

**Grade:** Worth \*\*% of your final grade

In "Pornography, Obscenity, and the Case for Censorship," Irving Kristol poses a question to which his essay was intended to provide an answer: "What reason is there to think that anyone was ever corrupted by a book?" The question is at the heart of a debate that has been with us as long as art and entertainment—plays, books, television, movies, video games, and Internet web sites, to name just a few kinds—have been with us.

For this essay, you will do some research on a recent debate on the corrupting influence of a particular work of art or entertainment. Some possible topics for debate are below (along with websites you can consult to get you started):

- A violent video game
  - <http://videogames.procon.org/>
  - <http://www.apa.org/science/about/psa/2003/10/anderson.aspx>
- A provocative television program or music video
  - <http://www.mtv.com/onair/controversialvideos/controvids.jhtml>
- A book in elementary or high school classrooms or libraries
  - <http://news.change.org/school-censorship>
  - <http://www.edweek.org> [search for censorship]
- A work of art in a gallery, museum, or public space
  - <http://www.ncac.org/>
- ANY OTHER ISSUE THAT HAS TO DO WITH CENSORSHIP
  - <http://www.aclu.org/key-issues>

After you find out about the debate surrounding the work of art or entertainment you have chosen, consider how this overall debate influences your view on censorship or the ability of a work of art or entertainment to corrupt a society. Do you believe that books—or video games or television shows—can and do corrupt? Should individuals be able to decide for themselves whether a work is corrupting, or do you think it is the responsibility of our government or other authority figures to police and/or control the public's access to such work? Consider drawing on the arguments and evidence cited by the authors whose essays we have read in this unit, and cite evidence from your research to support your position.

Assignment taken from *Language Awareness: Readings for College Writers*, pg. 522.