**Essay Assignment – The Crisis and Declaration of Independence (100pts.)**

**AP Language and Composition - MacLeod**

You are the Senior Intelligence Officer on a starship from the planet Voldar. Your ship has been sent to a solar system in which the third planet from the sun, called “Earth” by its inhabitants, is in the year 2018 (5243 by Voldar’s calendar). Your mission is to evaluate this planet and help determine whether Voldar should contact the inhabitants. For now, you and the crew of your ship are undetected by the earthlings.

You have determined that the country known as the United States of America appears to be the dominant power on this planet. Its inhabitants claim that it is “the greatest country,” not only in the present time, but of all earth time. Your sensors have searched archives on the planet and have found two documents that were written at the time of the founding of this country: “The Crisis” by Thomas Paine, and “The Declaration of Independence” written primarily by a man named Thomas Jefferson but edited by others including a group of people called the “Founding Fathers.” Your sensors have also identified and scanned an ancient document by a man named Aristotle, which outlines three ways to persuade: ethos, logos, and pathos. Your sensors have also scanned a document entitled “SOAPS.”

Importantly, the Voldarians are an advanced civilization, valuing the art of civilized rhetoric and eloquent language with principles surprisingly similar to those in the SOAPS and Aristotle documents. Voldarians value logic, much like the Vulcans, but they also value genuine emotion. Voldarians value individual freedom, equality among all races and genders (Voldarians have more than two genders), and building consensus among all people, very similar to the earth idea of democracy.

*You will submit a report to your commanding officer on Voldar recommending whether the United States should be contacted at this time. You will support your recommendation with an evaluation of one of the following:*

1. *What values does the “Declaration of Independence” document represent and are these values compatible with Voldar’s? You may wish to point out shortcomings in the actual life of the earthlings from the United States and/or contradictions in the document.*
2. *For either “The Declaration of Independence” or “The Crisis”, how well does the author use rhetorical strategies? Describe how these strategies are used and evaluate their effectiveness.*

Your commanding officer back on Voldar (who is your audience) requires the following for your report (he has high standards but believes you are capable of achieving them):

* 3-4 pages typed, double spaced
* Formal academic essay format (see reverse side for details)
* No use of the word “I”. You may refer to “our ship”, “our scanners”, etc.
* Standard academic language, proper spelling and punctuation. Your commander is fair but has been known to exile those who have not proofread their reports to the dilithium crystal mines of Rigel 12.
* You have received detailed comments from your commanding officer on previous intelligence reports. Show that you have learned from them.

Format for Voldarian Intelligence Report

1. Introduction
   1. Provide a brief background regarding the earth document you are analyzing (show an understanding of your audience).
   2. State a clear thesis with general ideas of why it is true (prongs). Be sure that you have answered the question/prompt.
2. Support
   1. At least three paragraphs of specific evidence from the text using quotes.
   2. Elaboration regarding how the evidence supports your thesis.
3. Conclusion
   1. Restate your thesis in a fresh way.
   2. Provide a “next step” action: should we contact the inhabitants (of the United States) immediately, return in the future, leave intelligence officers on the planet to continue monitoring, etc.?

**Due Dates:**

* **Typed draft due Thursday 9/27.**
* **Final report due one week later, Thursday 10/4.**

**Final thoughts:**

* Have some fun with this; be creative.
* Show me you understand rhetoric, argumentation, and complex audience/purpose issues.