

Guidelines for Aristotle Paper

The Topic: Do all of the characteristics we regard as virtues fit Aristotle's pattern of being a balance between having too much or too little of something? For instance, what of honesty, compassion, patience, trustworthiness, or loyalty? For each of these decide whether it fits Aristotle's pattern, and defend your answer.

Answer this question for **PATIENCE AND LOYALTY ONLY**. The first half (roughly) of your paper will discuss whether patience fits Aristotle's pattern for virtue, and the second half will do the same for loyalty.

You might decide that both of these fit Aristotle's pattern, that neither does, or that one does and the other doesn't. What is important in this assignment is not which position you take, but how well you defend it.

Begin your essay with a brief summary of Aristotle's understanding of virtues. See the textbook (or the study notes) for details.

If you decide that patience or loyalty (or both) fit Aristotle's pattern of balance between two extremes, explain this. Describe what characteristic must be balanced, and what goes wrong if one has too much or too little of it. *Note: What must be balanced is NOT the virtue itself, but some other characteristic.* Be sure to label the vices of excess and deficiency involved.

If you decide that patience or loyalty (or both) do NOT fit Aristotle's pattern, explain why not. Show that the characteristic in question is not one that needs to be balanced. In other words, show that one cannot have too much of that characteristic.

Your essay should not merely *assume* that your position is correct. Be sure to anticipate the objections of someone who does not agree with your view, and address them. In other words, be sure to provide convincing *evidence* that your position is correct.