

Note: this lesson plan has not been approved for use by the Ohio State Board of Education.

**Critical Analysis Lesson Plan for Ohio Students:
Subject: Rhetoric, Law, and Politics**

Critical Analysis of Martha K. Wise's Editorial

Assignment:

The student is to read the following editorial written by Ohio State Board of Education Member Martha K. Wise, published in the *Cincinnati Enquirer* on Wednesday, February 22, 2006. Board Member Wise proposed the amendment which led to the repealing of Ohio's Critical Analysis of Evolution Lesson Plan and indicator on February 14, 2006. In this editorial she explains her reasons for advocating for a repeal of Ohio's critical analysis of evolution policy. After reading the editorial, the student should read the Critical Analysis of Evolution Lesson Plan, formally approved for use by the Ohio State Board of Education. Finally, the student will answer ten questions aiding in critical analysis of Ms. Wise's arguments.

Part I. Read the Editorial: "Conservative Ohio values led to change in evolution policy"

By Martha Wise
Cincinnati Enquirer
Wednesday, February 22, 2006

Read the full editorial at:

<http://news.enquirer.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060222/EDIT02/602220305/-1/all>

Part II. Read the Critical Analysis of Evolution Lesson Plan formerly approved for use by the Ohio State Board of Education.

Read the Critical Analysis of Evolution Lesson Plan at:

http://www.ode.state.oh.us/academic_content_standards/sciencesboe/pdf_setA/L10-H23_Critical_Analysis_of_Evolution_Mar_SBOE_changes.pdf

Part III. Questions for Critical Analysis:

1. Ms. Wise states that "Creationism is religion" and that critical analysis of evolution is "creationism." Looking at the Critical Analysis of Evolution Lesson Plan, what religious content is found in the Critical Analysis of Evolution Lesson Plan?

2. Ms. Wise states that “Until last week, Ohio had its own relabeling program for creationism, using the term ‘critical analysis’ instead of ID.” Read the Critical Analysis of Evolution Lesson Plan.

(a) How do design proponents define intelligent design?

(b) What aspects of the Critical Analysis of Evolution Lesson Plan are used to prove intelligent design? Use as much space as necessary to answer this question.

3. Look at the references for student research on pages 9-12 of the Critical Analysis of Evolution Lesson Plan.

(a) How many references are there total?

(b) How many of those references are to religious sources?

(c) How many of those references focus on intelligent design?

(d) How many references are to scholarly sources?

(e) How many are to scientific sources?

(f) How many of those scientific sources are peer reviewed journal articles?

4. The U.S. Supreme Court stated: "In determining the scope of a statute, we look first to its language. If the statutory language is unambiguous, in the absence of a clearly expressed legislative intent to the contrary, that language must ordinarily be regarded as conclusive." (*Russello v. U.S.*, 464 U.S. 16 (1983) internal citations and quotations omitted)

In the “critical analysis” section repealed by the motion proposed by Ms. Wise, the Ohio Science Standards stated that students will: “Describe how scientists continue to investigate and critically analyze aspects of evolutionary theory. (The intent of this benchmark does not mandate the teaching or testing of intelligent design.)”

(a) In light of the U.S. Supreme Court’s statements about statutory interpretation, how might a federal court interpret that section in Ohio Science Standards with regards to teaching critical analysis of evolution? Would a court find that teaching critical analysis of evolution is required by the standards?

(b) In light of the U.S. Supreme Court’s statements about statutory interpretation, how might a federal court interpret that section in Ohio Science Standards with regards to teaching intelligent design? Would a court find that teaching intelligent design is required by the standards?

5. In her editorial, Ms. Wise stated that she wanted “to remove "critical analysis" / "intelligent design" creationism from the standards.” At the February 14, 2006 meeting of the Ohio State Board of Education, Ms. Wise also proposed a motion to repeal the section of the standards which stated “The intent of this benchmark does not mandate the teaching or testing of intelligent design.”

Are these two actions consistent? Why or why not?

6. Ms. Wise states in her editorial, “I believe in God the creator. I believe in freedom. I believe in America, and the state of Ohio, and the Republican Party, fiscal conservatism, fairness and honesty. These values guided me last week to lead the Ohio Board of Education to remove creationism from our state's Science Standards and Model Curriculum.”

(a) Does Ms. Wise express religious motivations for her political actions? Why or why not?

(b) Ms. Wise writes that the critical analysis of evolution standard was problematic because “At least one backer of ‘critical analysis’ on the board expressed religious motivation.” If Ms. Wise’s arguments against religious motivations were applied to her own actions, would they become unconstitutional? Why or why not?

7. Ms. Wise states in her editorial that she is a “creationist.” She also states that the Critical Analysis of Evolution Lesson Plan was unconstitutional because “The science lesson writing committee was packed with creationists.” If Ms. Wise’s arguments against creationist involvement in science writing were applied to her own actions, would they become unconstitutional? Why or why not?

8. According to Ms. Wise's arguments, would creationists have the same political liberties as non-creationists?
9. Ms. Wise wrote, "The founding fathers came to the conclusion that the only way to protect religion was for the government to keep its nose out of it."

Dr. Kenneth Miller, the lead expert evolutionist biologist witness in what Ms. Wise called the "Pennsylvania Panda Trial" wrote in two of his biology textbooks:

"Darwin knew that accepting his theory required believing in *philosophical materialism*, the conviction that matter is the stuff of all existence and that all mental and spiritual phenomena are its by-products. Darwinian evolution was not only purposeless but also heartless--a process in which the rigors of nature ruthlessly eliminate the unfit. ... Suddenly, humanity was reduced to just one more species in a world that cared nothing for us. The great human mind was no more than a mass of evolving neurons. Worst of all, there was no divine plan to guide us."

(Joseph S. Levine and Kenneth R. Miller, *Biology: Discovering Life* (D.C. Heath and Co.; 1st ed. 1992, pg. 152; 2nd ed. 1994, pg. 161), emphasis in original)

- (a) Is this quote constitutional for use in a public school biology textbook under Ms. Wise's understanding of the constitution?
- (b) Is this quote consistent or inconsistent with Ms. Wise's claim that "Atheists who say science disproves God are misrepresenting science"?

10. Ms. Wise states the following:

“Creationists do not all believe exactly the same thing. This may be the best-kept secret in the whole creationist movement. So if we were going to teach creationism or other religious concepts in school, how would we decide whose view to teach?”

(a) What does Ms. Wise imply we should teach when there are multiple views on a subject?

(b) What would happen to the teaching of evolution if we were to apply Ms. Wise’s logic to the teaching of evolution, in light of the following quote?

"There is absolutely no disagreement among professional biologist on the fact that evolution has occurred But the theory of how evolution occurs is quite another matter, and is the subject of intense dispute."

(Douglas Futuyma, *Evolution as Fact and Theory*, 56 Bios 3, (August, 1985))

(c) In 2001, U.S. Congress approved language which stated:

“Where topics are taught that may generate controversy (such as biological evolution), the curriculum should help students to understand the full range of scientific views that exist...”

(Conference Report to No Child Left Behind Act)

Would this language recommend teaching critical analysis of evolution in schools? Why or why not?