Essay #1: Analysis of Appalachian Images in the Mass Media

After completing the library workshop, the small group assignment on some form of media and readings in both *Entering Academic Conversations* and *Discovering Argument*, you are ready to begin thinking about and researching a topic for essay #1.

This essay will analyze the treatment by the media of some aspect of Appalachian life or expression which lends itself to stereotyping. For example, you may look at how the media (including the music industry itself) views country songs (bluegrass, folk, rockabilly, etc.). To complete such an assignment, you need to know something about the topic as well as the public (media) reaction to it. Therefore, it is necessary to read song lyrics, research the performers/song writers, learn the venue for the songs and then discover how the media is reacting (either through reviews or articles/essays written about these songs). This approach can work for cartoons, sports articles, television shows, movies or newspaper articles in general. Of course, internet sites are also an excellent choice.

A simple method for developing this essay might include:

- **Introduction**: a general presentation of the Appalachian image
  - Hook to interest the reader in your topic (a quote, question or otherwise attractive point)
  - A thesis statement which establishes your position on the media’s treatment of your topic (avoid use of “I” here).

- **Body**: supporting paragraphs with strong topic sentences that provide empirical evidence to support your thesis. You will need three strong points of support, with evidence from five sources. This evidence may be summarized, paraphrased or quoted directly from the original source. Be sure to adhere to the guidelines for documentation:
  - Give credit for all information that is not your own (use parenthetical citations, including author name and page, without punctuation). We will work on this in class during workshop.
  - Avoid quotes which stand alone as sentences. Instead, incorporate phrases or even clauses into your own words, with proper citations.
  - Develop a works cited page to list your five (or more) sources alphabetically. This page will not count as one of your 4-5 pages of text.

- **Conclusion**: Choose to summarize the most important points of your paper, present the thesis in fresh language or present some conclusions/assumptions about affecting change in the media’s treatment of Appalachia.
To complete this assignment, you may use any of the sources your small group identified for the first assignment, as well as other sources you have located on your own. If you choose to analyze television shows, for example, you will need to view those first hand. If you want to analyze movies, you will need to rent or borrow several videos or watch films currently being shown in local theaters. Good luck!!