

## 📖 How to Complete the Mbongi Assignments

### 💡 What is a Mbongi?

A *Mbongi* (pronounced: m-BOHN-gee) is a safe, intellectual, and cultural space for discussion, reflection, and critical thought. In this class, your Mbongi assignments are **short reflections** that connect our course materials with your **personal insights**, **community concerns**, and **broader social issues**.

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**Nea onnim no sua a, ohu**

**One who does not know  
can know from learning**

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## ✔ What Makes a Strong Mbongi?

Element	Description
✔ Thoughtful	Goes beyond surface-level opinion
✔ Cited	Quotes or references something from class
✔ Personal	Shares your real perspective or struggle. Must be specific in mentioning details, locations, and names.
✔ Analytical	Asks big questions or challenges the norm
✔ Respectful	Even critical views are shared with care

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## 🛑 Don't:

- Just summarize without giving your own opinion
  - Turn in something last-minute with no reflection
  - Use AI-generated responses without revision or thought
  - Copy from peers (Mbongis must reflect *your* voice!)
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## 🧠 Tips for Success:

- Keep a notes journal during class or readings
- Start writing your Mbongi while your ideas are fresh
- Ask yourself: *Why does this matter? To whom?*
- If you're stuck, talk to your classmates or send me a message for guidance



## Step-by-Step Instructions:

### 1. Understand the Prompt

Each Mbongi will have a guiding question or theme based on:

- Course readings (books, articles, or assigned websites)
- Discussions or lectures
- Videos

 *Example themes:*

*Technology Rhetorics, Health Rhetorics, Business Rhetorics, etc.*

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### 2. Connect Personally and Academically

A successful Mbongi includes:

- **Personal reflection** (How does this topic relate to your experiences, beliefs, or background?)
  - **Textual connection** (Quote or paraphrase something specific from a reading or video)
  - **Critical insight** (What new questions or challenges does this raise for society or your community?)
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**\*\*\*\*\*Only do step 3 if instructed\*\*\*\*\*:**

### 3. Use the 3-Paragraph Format

- **Paragraph 1 – Summary:** Briefly summarize the main idea of the reading or video. What is the author or speaker arguing?
  - **Paragraph 2 – Connection:** Connect the material to your life, community, or a real-world issue.
  - **Paragraph 3 – Reflection & Questioning:** Reflect on how your thinking has changed. Ask a meaningful question or state a lingering thought.
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## Common Issues

### 1. 🧠 Originality: No Generic Thoughts or Recycled Takes

- Your Mbongi must express a **perspective that is distinctly your own**. This includes your lived experiences, cultural background, specific community observations, and personal transformations.
  - **Avoid overused phrases like “this really opened my eyes” or “it made me think.”** Instead, **show me** what it made you think by explaining a shift in your worldview or by referencing a unique conflict, conversation, or memory.
  - ✨ **Example:** Instead of saying, “*It made me think about racism,*” write:  
“As someone whose grandmother grew up in Mississippi and was denied pain medication for childbirth, the reading forced me to confront how deeply medical neglect is embedded in Black family memory.”
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### 2. 📖 Citation-Driven Insight: Quote, Don’t Just Summarize

- A strong Mbongi includes **at least one direct quote** (with page number, timestamp, or source link) from the assigned text, video, or resource.
  - The quote should be used to **build an argument**, not to fill space. You must explain **why you chose it**, how it **connects to your experience**, and how it raises **new or unresolved questions**.
  - ❌ **Not Enough:** “Daniel Black says love hurts.”  
✅ **Instead:**  
“When Daniel Black writes, ‘We are dying because we are so desperate to be seen,’ (p. 47), I thought about how my cousin posts trauma online for attention. It’s not clout-chasing; it’s survival.”
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### 3. 🔍 Critical Specificity: Address a Real Conflict or Tension

- Your reflection must **grapple with a specific contradiction, pain point, or challenge**—not just state agreement.
  - You should explore **emotional complexity, moral ambiguity, or community tension** (e.g., “I agree with the author, but I also feel uncomfortable because...” or “This idea clashes with what I was taught in church/home/school...”)
  - ❌ Ask yourself: *What am I unsure about? What feels risky to say? What contradiction do I live with daily?*
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#### 4. ✖ Personal Context: Situate Yourself Honestly

- Frame your response by **telling us who you are in relation to the issue**. This includes:
    - Cultural or family context
    - Geographic/community background
    - Educational/social beliefs you were taught
    - Positionality (e.g., race, gender, disability, class, religion, body size, etc.)
  - Your Mbongi must read as though **only you** could have written it.
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#### 5. ? Intellectual Risk & Unanswered Questions

- A strong Mbongi ends not with a conclusion, but with a **genuine, difficult question** you're still sitting with.
  - Avoid cliché rhetorical questions. Your question should push beyond the material into a **larger dilemma, fear, or possibility**.
  -  *Strong Example:*  
"If care is only given to those who behave acceptably, then what happens to the healing of those we consider 'problematic'? Can there be justice without grace?"
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#### If Your Mbongi Does the Following, It Will Be Rejected or Heavily Penalized:

- Repeats the instructor or classmate's ideas without adding your own
- Sounds like AI or ChatGPT without personal edits, emotion, or reflection
- Offers vague commentary (e.g., "I agree," "This was deep," "We need change")
- Lacks direct references to the source or skips the personal connection
- Avoids discomfort or only says what sounds "correct" or "safe"