

Desu Nōto (デスノート)

International Politics
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The primary purpose of the Death Note paper is to give you the opportunity to reflect on the issues of ‘right vs. wrong’ and ‘the purpose of government’. This assignment also gives you practice in formatting properly. The first step is to watch a specified anime episode. The second step is to answer the question on the back in full essay form. The length of the paper should be two pages, maximum.

The episode you need to watch is from the anime series, *Death Note (Desu Nōto)*. It is, in fact, from the first episode of the series, entitled “Rebirth” (“Shinsei”; 新生). You can access the episode in a couple places. The most straight-forward is to watch it from Hulu:

- ◆ <http://www.hulu.com/death-note>

This first episode focuses on the transfer of the Death Note to the human realm and the introduction of Light and Ryuk, the two primary characters in this episode. Here is some background on these two characters.

Light Yagami (夜神 月) is a normal high school student preparing to enter the prestigious Too University in Japan. He consistently scores extremely high on standardized tests and performs quite well in the classroom. After university, he plans to join the Tokyo police department as a detective, thus following his father’s example.

Ryuk (リユーク) is a Shinigami (死神), a god of death in the traditional Japanese pantheon. He can kill any human by writing his or her name in his death note (デスノート). To be sure, humans die naturally without the aid of the Shinigami, but the Shinigami can kill if they so desire. Ryuk notes that the Shinigami have lost their drive to succeed. The result is boredom.

The Question

The quote of interest is from Ryuk:

“But if you did that, it would make you the only bad person left.”

Take a side and successfully argue (for *or* against) his point. Is Ryuk correct? In the essay, make sure you discuss Light’s personality, the concept of power corrupting, justice, and the purpose of government.

Grading

Your grade will depend on the following three items: how closely you follow directions, how well you write, and how deep you are able to write in the two pages (which is the maximum length for this paper).