

## Desu Nōto (デスノート)

International Politics  
*Loyola College in Maryland*

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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. First, you can find it on YouTube divided into three parts:

- ◆ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=edMY-uQKjEc>
- ◆ [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qkL0Yddkq\\_Y](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qkL0Yddkq_Y)
- ◆ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jiY-L-kpJ9M>

Second, you can find it in one file at iMeem:

- ◆ [http://www.imeem.com/people/Bs2Wcbc/video/D42dBbsc/whoever\\_created\\_deathnote\\_i\\_guess\\_deathnote\\_ep1\\_eng\\_dub/](http://www.imeem.com/people/Bs2Wcbc/video/D42dBbsc/whoever_created_deathnote_i_guess_deathnote_ep1_eng_dub/)
- ◆ [http://www.imeem.com/catatonicloki/video/jyUt\\_WK/catatonicloki\\_death\\_note\\_episode\\_01\\_rebirth\\_animation\\_v](http://www.imeem.com/catatonicloki/video/jyUt_WK/catatonicloki_death_note_episode_01_rebirth_animation_v)

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 Toho 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** (リューク) 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).

Make sure your first line is the following statement. Make sure you sign this statement: “I understand and will uphold the ideals of academic honesty as stated in the Honor Code.”