This is an example which need to follow:

“**Rewards should be based on merit and not ethnicity**.” Discuss.

**[context]** Ever since its inception in 1776, the U.S. has prided itself on being a meritocracy. Unfettered by the constraints of class and degree that marred the European experience, the founding fathers set out to establish a state in which John Locke’s concept of the *tabula rasa* ruled supreme: no one should be judged based on family or creed; one’s place in the social hierarchy was determined by one’s actions in the present. **[transition]** This mantra continues to flourish – especially in conservative, neo-liberal political circles. Critics such as Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas call social welfare “a drug” and argue against what they call the undue preference of minorities – affirmative action. **[thesis]** While their critique would indeed be justified were the U.S. truly a meritocracy, discrimination and evaluative judgment based on skin colour, sex and class still effectively limit American citizens’ range of choice and opportunity, proving that the founding meritocratic principle – equality of opportunity – has not been implemented. Affirmative action strategies are therefore necessary tools that guarantee a semblance of social justice and should not be revoked.

The assignment is to write an introduction for an essay about the movie “Top Gun 1986” using the discussion points given in the class which are the following:

* Films can help interpret the social and political status quo of an era
* Films incorporate dominant beliefs about key social and political issues, opposing positions are allegorically depicted in cinematic narratives
* Films enpower an audience (secondary cinematic identification)
* Cinema provides ways of seeing and experiencing the world , expanding the experience of the viewer (living other lives)
* Critical interpretations of film can help provide understanding of contemporary culture and society

Reagan’s optimistic vision

Dominant beliefs in Reagan era

* Neoliberal ideals: privatisation, get the government out of business, the market will regulate itself = deregulation, social Darwinism
* Belief in individualism (the American Dream, the individual matters, heroes dominate
* Neoliberal economic currents paired with aggressive foreign policy (Nicaragua, Libya)
* Binary worldview: the US vs. the USSR
* Belief in a revitalised military (healing the trauma of Vietnam?)

“**[context]** Military organizations in different parts of the world use different strategies to influence and engage audiences, specifically to persuade young men to enlist. In smaller countries, where the context is more traditional and closer to local social values, the manipulation trigger would be to feel drawn to serving their country. A sense of duty can arise from patriotic family values or the desire to do something meaningful. Military groups can also use religious beliefs as triggers to manipulate people, especially young men to believe that the right thing to do is to enlist and take on the agenda of the army. **[transition]** The media has since its inception been used by the U.S. as a strategic tool to entertain, inform, misinform and send out propaganda messages to manipulate targeted groups. As the influence of the mass media spread, the cooperation between the military and entertainment industries grew stronger, creating what is referred to as the military-entertainment complex. These two parties have worked on different types of entertainment projects, developed virtual reality projects, and produced movies and video games, *Call of Duty* (2003), for instance, is one of the most popular games. These forms of entertainment seek to attract people to join the army and to change perceptions about war and the act of killing. Rather than reveal the ugly realities and consequences of war, these forms of media serve the military complex by justifying war and appealing to the feelings of power associated with military service. The ugly truth becomes evident only after recruitment and later on in life as a veteran. **[thesis]** Hollywood and the U.S. defense force have worked together on movies, such as *Transformers* (date), *Captain America* (date) and *Air Force One* (date). A movie like *Top Gun* (1986) is a good example of this strategic collaboration as this film is not easily recognizable as a form of propaganda. While Hollywood provides the storylines, locations, actors and make these movies visually fantastic and “true to life”, the military supervises the script by controlling the message to shape perceptions of combat. This is accomplished by creating a connection with the audience specifically around what is deemed important in the culture. In *Top Gun*, aspects such as the popular soundtrack, the attractive actors in the movie, the handsome young Tom Cruise, the “hot” female lead Kelly McGillis, the amazing 80s fashion, the bikes, sports cars, jets, jackets, and sunglasses, are specifically presented to sell a certain idea. The visual elements in the film are presented to associate military life with “feel-good vibes” visible in scenes with the “mates” on the beach playing volleyball, and in the bar singing for the girls while wearing navy uniforms. The ideas put forth in these scenes make it seem exciting to join the military. At the time, this movie reflected all that American men desired, but without ever showing the reality of war.