Your 1000-word essay should have the following characteristics:

* First paragraph: identify the central theme or major points raised in your reading(s) and indicate the order of your treatment. For example: "In Parts II-IV of his *Principles of Philosophy*, Descartes describes how bodies in the physical world are conceived and related to the operations of the mind. He does this by highlighting . . . " Your first paragraph should not include empty platitudes such as "For centuries philosophers have ..." or generalities about your thinker ("Rene Descartes is considered the father of modern philosophy"). Because your essay is only 1000 words, you have to jump immediately into the text.
* Refer to your topics and quotes by internal references, not page numbers in our textbook. For example, in discussing Descartes' equation of space and corporeal substance, don't cite p. 100 of our book; rather refer to PP (*Principles of Philosophy*) II.11 (part 2, para. 11), but in your first citation, footnote the source (e.g., our textbook) from which you are drawing your quote.
* Your essay should be organized in a way that spells out the important topics of your selected reading. To determine which topics are important, you have to do some research using books and articles in the library. In the course of your essay, you should refer to that research in footnotes. For example, you can explain how Descartes relates his treatments of space and motion by referring in a footnote--such as: 4. Daniel Garber, *Descartes' Metaphysical Physics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 120-24. For purposes of this assignment, you must refer to at least three (preferably five) secondary (commentary) sources.
* Average essays will simply summarize the main points of the reading. Better essays will relate those points to one another, showing how they are tied together. The best essays will show how commentators explain those related points.
* This is an expository exercise aimed at explaining how the points raised by your philosopher are justified and related. It does not provide an occasion for you to respond with your own feelings of agreement or disagreement. You should definitely not end your essay with an endorsement ("Descartes nicely handles the problem ...") or some lame attempt to sound profound ("Descartes' scientific work continued to have a significant impact on thinkers for centuries"). Simply end (briefly) by indicating how the points you discuss are tied to your thinker's overall philosophic project.