In response to the phenomenon of mass shootings and a general concern about gun violence, President Obama recently signed Presidential Executive Orders to make background checks on gun purchases more efficient and to restrict sales of firearms by unlicensed individuals online and at gun shows. In her opinion article in the New Yorker magazine, Margaret Talbot basically agrees with President Obama’s actions, but she uses the President’s actions as a springboard to advocate for more research into the relationship between gun ownership and violence—research that the US Congress has refused to fund for twenty years.

Here is the URL for the article:

http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/01/18/obamas-guns-gambit

Your diagnostic essay will take the form of responses to prompts about this article. Do the following to prepare:

1. Do some background reading on the issue of gun violence and mass shootings, especially the Sandy Hook massacre to which Talbot refers, and the recent San Bernardino, California, attack. What was your opinion on this subject before reading, and how do you respond to Talbot’s argument in favor of increased research on the relationship between gun access and violence?

2. Be sure that you understand logos, ethos, and pathos. (See Chapter 6 in your book.) How well-reasoned is the argument (logos)? How trustworthy is the author (ethos)? How well does the author appeal to the values of the audience (pathos)?

3. Consider the author’s use of evidence, her tone (the implied attitude of the writer towards the audience), and her word choice. (Be sure to look up any words that you don’t know.) How does each of these elements help or hurt her argument?