Reading Guide #8
Aristotle Book I: Sections1-5, 7-13.
Homework deals especially with Sections 1-5 and sections 7.

Section 1: (p. 3)
1. Consider the following argument:

a) Everybody is loved by somebody.
b) Therefore, there is somebody whom everybody loves.

What is wrong with this argument? Can you draw a picture of why it is invalid? (Below is a picture where both a) is false and b) is true: viz. it is not true that everyone is loved by somebody but it is true that there is somebody whom everyone loves. Try to draw a picture in which a) is true and b) is false.)

A

B   C
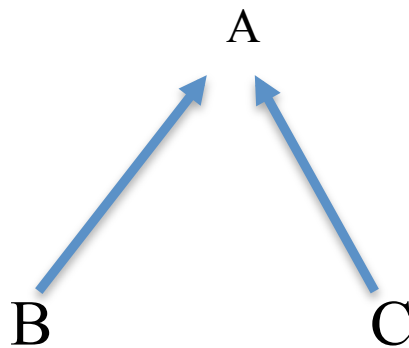
2. Now read the first sentence of Aristotle. (p. 3) "Every art and every inquiry, and similarly every action and choice, is thought to aim at some good; and for this reason the good has rightly been declared to be that t which all things aim." Aristotle here announces his task, to discover and describe THE good. Unfortunately, Aristotle has often been accused of using invalid reasoning in this sentence. In other words, people have said that the first part of the sentence could be true "Every art..some good" without it following that "the good is that at which all things aim." What is the fallacy? [Hint think about your answer to #1]

3**. "But where such arts fall under a single capacity—as bridle-making and the other arts concerned with the equipment of horses fall under the art of riding, and this and every military action under strategy, in the same way other arts fall under yet others—in all of these the ends of the master arts are to be preferred to all the subordinate ends; for it is for the sake of the former that the latter are pursued." Explain using your own example what Aristotle means by this sentence. Explain how this might fit into Aristotle's project of discovering and describing THE good. What, then, is Aristotle's method for discovering THE good?**

Section 4 (page 5-6)

4. "Let us resume our inquiry and state, in view of the fact that …" Aristotle resumes the argument here and notices that there is actually widespread (verbal) agreement on what the good is. What is it that most people think that the good is? Why is Aristotle not therefore done?

5. Aristotle claims that everybody all agrees happiness = "the good life" or "doing well". But now suppose that happiness = feeling happy. Now (by substitution) we have 'feeling happy' = 'the good life' = 'doing well'. Is this identification right? Can you think of an example where someone has a bad life (i.e. has an undesirable life that no one should want) but *feels* happy? [Note: try to make your example uncontroversial. If you say that it is possible to be financially poor but feel happy, for example, then many people would respond by saying that being poor is not necessarily a bad life. You need an example where almost everyone would agree that someone has a bad life but the person themselves feels happy.]

NOTE: Aristotle is not wrong here. It just means that happiness for Aristotle ≠ *happy*. Happiness should be identified as the thing at which we all aim and has more to a do with a great and admirable life than a feeling of contentment or well-being.

Chapter 5: p. 6-7

6. There are, Aristotle, argues only 3 real candidates for what the good could be. What are they? Why do you think we can't we have a mixed life that involves elements of all 3?.

Chapter 7: p. 10-12

Note: get ready, there are not that many times that someone will propose a definition of a good life, and argue that we should all lead such a life. This is one of those times.

7. Fill in the blanks: the human good is the A)_____ of B)_____ exhibiting C)_____.

8. Consider your answer to A) in **7**. What sort of life does this rule out? What would a non-A) life look like?

9. Consider your answer to C) in 7. If someone failed to meet criteria C) what would their life look like?