

## How to Write a Critical Analysis

The steps below are only in a suggested order. Please adapt these directions to fit your individual writing style as well as your assignment guidelines.

1. Prepare by reading all material thoroughly. Understanding what you have to analyze is crucial. As you read, make notes of the following:
  - Identify the author's thesis. What is she arguing for/against?
    - Identify the context of the argument. Why is he arguing this?
    - Do they offer a solution to the problem(s) they raise? Does it seem plausible?
  - Note any supporting evidence and all of the main ideas. How does the author support her argument?
  - What kind of appeals does the author make in order to persuade the reader? For example, does he use: pathos (appeal to emotion), logos (appeal to reason/logic), &/or ethos (appeal to credibility)?
  - Note your responses to the reading. Do any questions arise? How effective does the article appear?
  
2. Writing the Analysis:
  - Introduce what you are analyzing with all pertinent information about the work (don't forget the title!) and the author. You may want to begin with a brief summary.
  - It can be helpful to insert somewhere early on in your analysis (probably 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph) a clear and explicit statement of the author's argument. For example, "The author argues..."
  - In the following sentences of your introduction hit all the main points. Then, in subsequent paragraphs, describe each of the author's main supporting points/evidence as topic sentences and evaluate them.
  - Support your evaluation with detailed evidence from the text. Do not forget to use proper citation for quotes and paraphrases.
  - Keep in mind: A critical analysis is different from a summary. It may include a summary, but should go beyond this. You are providing an informed critique of the material.
  - Remember that the purpose of a critical analysis is to **evaluate**. What about this text is worthwhile, useful, important, significant, valid, or truthful?
  
3. Other questions you may want to consider:
  - Does the subject matter have contemporary relevance?
  - Is there a controversy surrounding the text?
  - What are the strengths and weaknesses of the choice of topic, the methodology, the evidence, and the author's conclusions?