

How to Write An Analysis

In analytical writing you move beyond reacting to or using the content of the text; you look at how the text was put together or how the ideas and information were developed. You take the reading apart, piece by piece, according to a set of critical ideas that helps you see different aspects of the text.

In analytical writing you view a text or object critically, examining it through an analytical framework. The framework used most often in academic writing is rhetorical: that is, considering the features of a text in relation to the intended effect on its audience. Not only texts may be analyzed from a rhetorical perspective, but anything from chemicals and rocks to musical compositions.

1. Identify what specifically you are analyzing and the method or set of concepts (the analytical framework) you are using for the analysis. Identify what the framework asks you to look for: particular categories, features, or parts of the object or text you are analyzing.
2. Examine the text or object carefully in relation to the categories, features, or parts specified by the analytical framework. Take notes on all relevant details.
3. Find patterns in how the various details and categories fit together. Do all the various parts seem to support the same overall rhetorical purpose?
4. Draw overall conclusions about the patterns you have found through analysis. This overall conclusion will become the thesis statement of your analytical paper.
5. Write the opening paragraph of the analysis. This paragraph should announce what you are analyzing and why, the analytical framework you are using, and the overall conclusions you have made.
6. Write the body of the analysis. Each paragraph or section should examine a single category or group of features exposed through the analysis. The topic sentence of each paragraph should relate the details of the paragraph to the overall pattern described in your conclusions. The largest part of each paragraph should be devoted to examining details of the text or object in relation to the analytical categories. Give specific examples. In analyzing a text you should quote specific passages, but make sure you do not simply summarize or repeat the content or ideas of the text; maintain an analytical focus.
7. Write the closing section of the analysis to draw together the pattern found in all the detailed analysis of the body section of the paper.
8. In revising, pay special attention to make sure that the overall pattern of the analysis comes out strongly, that sufficient details are offered in support of the analysis, and that clear connections are always made between the details and the overall pattern.