

# Analyzing an Essay

## Structuring a Critical Analysis of an Essay

Analyzing an essay requires a writer to evaluate another person's work in order to better understand it. An essay analysis is subjective because it expresses an opinion or evaluation of the examined text.

### Getting Started

1. **Identify the author:** Who is the author of the essay and what are his or her qualifications? How are the author's experiences relevant to the essay?
2. **Determine the main idea of the essay:** Read the essay carefully. Is the essay controversial? Is it of current interest? Is the author's purpose to inform, persuade, or entertain the reader?
3. **Evaluate the essay:** If the purpose of the essay is to inform, is the material presented accurately and coherently? If the purpose is to persuade, is the argument presented logically with supporting evidence? If the purpose is to entertain, what feelings does the essay produce (laughter, anger)?
4. **Draw a conclusion:** Did the author accomplish his/her purpose? Was the essay insightful, accurate, persuasive, or significant?

### Writing the Analysis

1. **The introduction:** Your assignment is to evaluate the essay. Start by identifying the author and title of the work. Provide a brief summary of the work, including the author's purpose.
2. **The thesis statement:** Your thesis statement will not be the same as the original author's thesis statement. However, your thesis statement should identify the author's thesis as well as your evaluation of the text. Do you agree with the author's ideas? Do you believe that the author supported his/her ideas?
3. **Supporting paragraphs:** Provide support for your thesis. For example, did the essay's author overlook evidence or differing opinions? Were the author's conclusions valid? Support your opinion with examples from the essay. You also might need to introduce examples or ideas from outside sources, including your own experiences.
4. **Draw a conclusion:** Did the author accomplish his/her purpose? Why or why not?