A textual analysis usually is **not** an expression of a writer’s opinion about an author’s topic (the work being analyzed) or whether the writer agrees with a point presented in the selected text. A textual analysis may even involve a topic that the writer knows little about or disputes. **Always follow instructor’s exact guidelines.**

The writer of a textual analysis should **tell readers whether or not the selected text’s author effectively presents an argument** by examining the techniques the author uses, explaining which ones work (or not) and why. An analysis will be an explanation of how the author reaches an audience and achieves his purpose (or not).

**In short, analysis involves thinking critically about how a text works (or does not work) and why, and then communicating that observation.**

**A Basic Guide to Textual Analysis**

**Analyze the Context**

1. Who is the author?
2. What is her or his role or position?
3. Who is the intended audience?
4. What prompted the author to write?
5. How does this text interpret reality or culture?

**Analyze the Content**

1. What issue is being addressed?
2. What is the author's main claim or thesis?
3. What evidence or support does the author supply?
4. Are these supports relevant, effective, and trustworthy?
5. Does the author offer any alternative opinions? If so, are they effective?