

English 101

Morales

CRITICAL ANALYSIS

The purpose for writing a critique is to evaluate somebody's work (a book, an essay, a movie, a painting...) in order to increase the reader's understanding of it. A critical analysis is subjective writing because it expresses the writer's opinion or evaluation of a text. Analysis means to break down and study the parts. Writing a critical paper requires two steps: critical reading and critical writing.

Critical reading to prepare for writing the critical analysis essay:

Identify the author's thesis (might be implicit) and purpose

Analyze the structure of the passage by identifying all main ideas

Consult a dictionary or encyclopedia to understand material that is unfamiliar to you

Make an outline of the work or write a description of it

Write a summary of the work

Determine the purpose which could be (To inform with factual material, To persuade with appeal to reason or emotions, To entertain (to affect people's emotions))

Evaluate the means by which the author has accomplished his purpose

If the purpose is to inform, has the material been presented clearly, accurately, with order and coherence?

If the purpose is to persuade, look for evidence, logical reasoning, contrary evidence

If the purpose was to entertain, determine how emotions are affected: does it make you laugh, cry, feel angry? Why did it affect you?

Consider the following questions: How is the essay organized? Who is the intended audience? What kind of language and imagery does the author use?

SAMPLE OUTLINE FOR CRITICAL ESSAY

After you have carefully studied the essay, your critique can be drafted using this sample outline.

I. Background information to help your readers understand the nature of the work

A. Information about the work

1. Title
2. Author
3. Publication information
4. Statement of topic and purpose

B. Brief summary of the work

C. THESIS STATEMENT (Your overall evaluation/interpretation of the work)

II. Interpretation and/or evaluation (Approximately 3 paragraphs)

A. Discussion of the work's organization

B. Discussion of the work's style

C. Effectiveness and/or discussion of the topic's/subject matter's treatment

III. Conclusion

A. The author's contribution

B. Final thoughts