

# Consider the lobster analytical summary essay sample



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## W131 Summer Work

David Foster Wallace begins his article, *Consider the Lobster*, by describing the annual Maine Lobster Festival. He goes in to detail of the drive there, the events held there, what kind of people attend, and so on and so forth. While a good portion of this piece of text is about this event, his intentions were to focus on the treatment of the lobsters. He makes you think about what these creatures have to go through in order for this seemingly faultless festival to go on; how they are caught, how they are killed and prepared, and how they are served.

The article wasn't written to inform readers of what goes on in the kitchen, but rather to persuade them to consider his point of view. He says that he doesn't want to turn everyone into PETA members, but to be aware of what's really going on. He sticks to one side throughout the whole article and doesn't touch or coincide with both arguments. Wallace uses fairly simple, yet descriptive diction to describe his thoughts. The simplicity of the writing isn't just to appeal to all audiences. It also conveys how lighthearted this situation is to the general public. By keeping that tone, even throughout his argument, it almost forces the readers' mind to consider the lobster as well. He starts out with intense descriptions of the scene to grab the readers' attention. Then as the piece goes on, he keeps many of the details very broad, going in to specifics only to make the event seem more real to his audience.

On the third page of the article Wallace writes " A detail so obvious that recipes don't even bother to mention it is that the lobster is supposed to be alive when you put it in the kettle". Recipes don't mention this either

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because its so obvious or people just don't want to think about what they're actually doing, more than they have to. With this sentence, whether you want to or not, he's made you think about it. Even Wallace mentioned the uncomfortable and uneasy feeling he gets as he begins to think about the "animal-cruelty-and-eating issue" and how his own way of dealing with eating foods of similar origin, is to avoid thinking about it.

On the fifth page at the near bottom, he writes " If you're tilting it from a container into steaming kettle, the lobster will sometimes try to cling to the containers sides or even to hook its claws over the kettles rim like a person trying to keep form going over the edge of a roof". With this quote, he compares the lobsters to humans to appeal to the audiences' emotions. Wallace's visual image of the boiling of the lobster made me (and I am certain I'm not the only one) feel as if it were me in the pot, which was quite disturbing and made me disagree with the cooking of lobsters.

As most persuasive writings do, Wallace mentions the opposing arguments. He shares what the 2003 MLF program had to say. The quote he used supported the idea of cooking lobster as morally all right. It stated that animals do not have the part in their brain that humans do to experience pain. But Wallace overruled that statement with research of the nervous system. " Pain reception is known to be part of a much older and more primitive system of nociceptors and prostaglandins that are managed by the brain stem and the thalamus." This quote basically reveals the truth that the MLF program failed to mention, a truth that would change the overall purpose of their section in the program.

Another technique he used frequently was leaving the audience without answers. He opens his argument with a series of questions to get the audience to veer their mind into his big idea. The questions Wallace asks in his writing never technically get answered, though. The questions are simply just discussed to give the reader new insights. On the last page, when Wallace wrote “ Do they ever think about their reluctance to think about it? After all, isn't being extra aware and attentive and thoughtful about one's food and it's overall context part of what distinguishes a real gourmet? Or is all the gourmet's extra attention and sensibility supposed to be aesthetic, gustatory”, he wanted to make sure to leave his readers with a lasting wonder to these ideas.