

How to analyze and argue assignment



**ASSIGN
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Critique of an Argument (Also called Analysis, Rhetorical Analysis, or Close Reading) What it is: A critique is an essay in which you evaluate (comment on the positive and negative aspects of) an essay or article. A critique can be positive (reasons the argument worked), negative (reasons the argument did not work), or shaded (reasons parts of it worked and parts of it didn't). When you write a critique, it is important to keep in mind that you are not making suggestions for the author-? odds are the author isn't interested in what you think she could have done differently-? you are writing for another reader.

A critique is often born Out Of reaction (you liked or disliked the argument), but is based on and supported by close reading and evaluation, not just how you feel. Writing a critique requires that you have a clear understanding of the essay. You should know the argument, the purpose, and the ways that the author supports the argument. If you can't clearly articulate those things, you'll have a hard time critiquing them. For tips on that process, see the summary page. Sometimes a critique is called an analysis or a close reading.

In all cases you're offering your own reasoned response to the Ideas that the writer resents and the way the writer presents them. What to do: Begin by summarizing the piece. You'll likely need a brief overview in your introduction anyway, and it never hurts to have a firm sense of the argument in your head before you begin a critique. In many cases your instructor will require you to begin a critique with a summary. Decide whether your critique will be positive or negative. Are you interested in the positives of the piece or the negatives? Did the author convince you or not?

Do you want to highlight a combination of positive and negative? Pick several specific points from the essay that you wish to use as your purporting claims. You might take issue with an authors organization or tone, or with her use of supporting arguments. The more specific you are in your points, the better your critique will be. See below for a list of possible critique points. The thesis of a critique is relatively straightforward. You simply need to present your evaluation of the article you're critiquing. You then support that thesis using the several points you've chosen.

In each paragraph of a critique, develop one of your points. Use specific examples from the text. If you want to say that the author's tone was inappropriate for the subject matter, find a quote and then explain how the tone is inappropriate and why. Usually each paragraph explains only one example. You might have two paragraphs that discuss different examples of the same general point-? for instance, two different examples of inappropriate tone. The number of body paragraphs depends on the length of the assignment. A two-page critique might not have more than two or three body paragraphs.

A four-page critique might require five or six body paragraphs. Choose enough examples so that you can discuss each one in its own body paragraph. A mineral rule of thumb is that body paragraphs should be about a half a page long, double-spaced. In your conclusion, you want to remind readers of your thesis and pull all of your examples together. You don't want your conclusion to simply restate your introduction, nor do you want to provide entirely new information. You want to naturally draw readers to an

end. *Elements to Critique Here is a list of various elements you can look for in an article you want to critique.

Keep in mind that not every item will be appropriate to every article. Logic: Has the writer picked examples that logically support her claim? Is her reasoning (the way she works out her ideas) in line with the claim and what you know to be true? Logic: Does the writer have reasonable support but is the overall claim itself flawed? (one might claim that global warming doesn't exist, and then use sources that describe the recent temperature shifts as normal geological cycles. The supporting claims are logical, but the overall claim that global warming doesn't exist is not logical because the temperatures are, in fact, rising. Evidence: Does the writer use enough evidence to support his claims? Is the evidence the writer uses appropriate? For example, using outdated statistics is not effective, nor is using evidence that is not actually relevant to the topic. Tone: Is the writer's tone appropriate to the subject matter? Is the tone at an appropriate level to the audience? If the writer is overly sarcastic, for example, that tone might not be appropriate to a subject like drunk driving. Tone: Does the author seem overly critical of a single person or movement in ways that do not support his or her thesis? For example, an article about environmental concerns that spends several paragraphs in a row blaming and demeaning Stephen Harper might not be effective. Language/word choice/diction: Is the word choice appropriate for the audience? (If the article is from a popular magazine such as Manacle's, but the language is highly technical and specialized, that might be less appropriate.) Organization: Is the article organized in a way that makes sense? Does the organization make the article easier to read or

more difficult? Expertise: Does the author establish herself as an authority on the subject? If so, how?

Does she describe her credentials? Use technical terms? Refer to sources?

These are just some of the different aspects of an article that are open to critique. Pick a few, look for very specific examples in the text, and build your body paragraphs around them. What it looks like: Below you will find two different samples. Each one contains the introduction and one body paragraph of a critique. One is a mostly positive critique, and one is a negative critique. Positive Critique: In “ Game Theories” Clive Thompson uses the story of a man, Edward Castration, to discuss online gaming worlds and their economy.

He begins with a long introduction about Mr.. Castration, and then proceeds to outline several points about online gaming while still using Castration’s story wrought the essay. His intent is to bring to light several opinions, facts, and debates regarding virtual reality games. In writing this piece, Thompson is effective in reaching this goal. He does so by using Edward Castration as a credible example and reference, by his language and word choices, by quoting people highly involved in the virtual world, and by using recognizable and interesting examples of specific online gaming worlds.

Thompson begins his essay by introducing readers to Edward Castration, an economist who investigated the economy of online gaming worlds, and he submitted his findings on an academic website. Right off the bat Thompson draws the attention of readers by presenting Edward Castration in a simple, story-like way. Readers find stories easy to read and to relate to, and for the

first several paragraphs Thompson is in fact telling a brief story. Once Clive Thompson has successfully given readers Castration's background, he brings himself into the piece in a brief paragraph telling how he met Castration.

This is very effective because it associates him with the person whom readers are now interested in, and gives them more reason to mind his writing credible and worth interest. Being able to associate with a real-life person allows readers to be more connected to the piece and to the author. It brings the entire piece closer to home, so to speak, which makes the entire essay more readable. Readers are more likely to enjoy an essay if they feel they can relate to its topic and to the author. Thompson accomplishes this reader comfort by introducing Edward Castration and by connecting himself to this man.

Negative Critique: In "Image World," Michael Poster analyzes society dependence on visual domination using daily events as examples. Poster demonstrates society's inability to distinguish reality from fantasy through numerous examples such as theme parks, rock concerts and political campaigns. Poster emphasizes on society attachment to imagery because he believes it is the only way to capture our attention, he also believes that it is the only way for people to understand the significance of a piece of writing or event. Poser's primary audience include readers Of Queen's Quarterly and his secondary audience include students.