

Writing and Tutorial Center

Formal Analysis: Sample Outline

A descriptive, formal, or visual analysis interprets how the elements of a work of art affect the representation of the subject matter. Analyzing the formal elements, and how these elements construct expressive content, leads to a deeper understanding of a work of art. The analysis should support a thesis—which is the main argument of the essay.

Title (think up something unique!)

I. Introduction

- A. Introduce the general topic
- B. Introduce the specific topic
 - About the Artist (keep this brief—unless artist's life is your topic)
 - Title, Mediums, Dimensions, Date of work
 - Snapshot (what you see, as in the whole “picture”)
- C. Thesis Statement (argument)

II. First Body Paragraph (1st supporting reason)

- A. Topic sentence
- B. Expand and give specific details
- C. Evidence: Quote from text or give example in the work
- D. Analysis (analyze/connect evidence to supporting reason and argument)

III. Second Body Paragraph (2nd supporting reason)

- A. Topic sentence
- B. Expand and give specific details
- C. Evidence: Quote from text or give example in the work
- D. Analysis (analyze/connect evidence to supporting reason and argument)

IV. Third Body Paragraph (3rd supporting reason)

- A. Topic sentence
- B. Expand and give specific details
- C. Evidence: Quote from text or give example in the work
- D. Analysis (analyze/connect evidence to supporting reason and argument)

V. Conclusion

- A. Restate thesis
- B. Summarize supporting reasons
- C. Concluding thoughts: Point to broader implications, add a provocative insight, synthesize your argument (pull it all together), make new connections....