

How to Write a Critical Analysis

"Take a position, state it clearly, and develop it forcefully."

The steps below are only in a suggested order. Please adapt these directions to fit your individual writing style and needs.

1. Prepare by reading all material thoroughly and thinking about some of the different issues raised in your reading.
2. Select one of the ideas, which has lingered in your mind because you disagree or are uncomfortable with it, or because you agree with it but believe it needs much more thought.
3. Consider a question about this lingering idea that you might want to investigate in your paper. Ask yourself what your feelings are about this issue, and what reasons you might use to support your feelings. If you like what you have come up with then you are ready to form a preliminary thesis. If you do not like it then go back and consider another question from your reading.
What are some of the responsibilities of media journalists? (idea)
I feel like these journalists have been really irresponsible. (feelings)
trivial topics -- coverage of all the negative stuff -- exploitation of peoples' lives (reasons)
4. Jot down a preliminary thesis statement that names your topic, asserts your ideas about this topic, and suggests the arrangement of your paper's argument.

Subject (idea) **Assertion** (feelings) **Arrangement**(reasons)_

Media journalism has sunken to the lowest depths possible by assuming a public lack of interest in serious news, sensationalizing the evil of our society while ignoring the good, and creating media events out of what should be small private tragedies.

5. Go back to the reading and pull out details that support your arguments. Assume your reader is familiar with the reading material. Any quotations or references to the text should be used only to support your viewpoint.
6. Write your first draft.
7. Think of further refinements to your argument as you let your rough draft sit for a couple of days.
8. Create your masterpiece -- a well designed and organized critical analysis.