

Summarizing v. Analyzing a Text

Lesson Objective

During this lesson, students will learn how to distinguish and prepare for summary and analysis of a text.

Handouts

- I. "Summary v. Analysis"
- II. "Understanding the Assignment"
- III. "Engaging the Text: Image 'She brings home the bacon, but can he fry it up?'" *Bazaar* 2009
- IV. "Example of Analytical Statements"

Length of lesson

25-30 minutes

Source

Brooklyn College Writing Fellows, The Writing Center at UNC-Chapel Hill
Bazaar Magazine, July, 2009.

Approved

File Name

Summary versus Analysis of a Text

Lesson Description

1. Pass out Hand-out I: **SUMMARY/DESCRIPTION v. ANALYSIS**

Introduce distinction between summary and analysis. Write on the board 10% SUMMARY/DESCRIPTION v. 90% ANALYSIS. Explain that for assignments that require students' analysis of a text, students should focus largely on analysis rather than summary and description. Ask students to brainstorm the differences between summary and analysis and write students' responses on board under each heading. (10 mins)

2. Pass out Hand-out II: **ANALYZE THE ASSIGNMENT.**

Review how active verbs in an assignment reveal whether the primary task is to summarize or analyze. Ask students to read example assignment and circle key words and phrases: "the image," "evaluate," "depiction," "gender norms," "analysis," "evidence". (5 mins). Suggest that the first step for this assignment requires a careful reading of the text (in this case an image). Explain that summarizing and describing a text or image helps to identify and organize the substance for analysis.

3. Pass out Hand-out III: **IMAGE.**

Summary Activity. Ask students to closely examine the image. Ask them to say aloud 3-5 sentences that accurately reflect what is happening in the photo. Then ask students to provide a statement of relevant context for the image, such as the name and genre of the magazine in which it appears (5 mins).

Then ask all students to accomplish the same task in only one sentence in order to practice the skill of writing concisely. Ask a student volunteer to share back her/his one sentence and discuss whether the sentence is accurate, brief and concise.

Analysis Activity. Ask students to examine the image again, and re-read the assignment. Ask students to write 3-5 sentences that relate aspects of the image to gender roles. Suggest students refer to definition of analysis from board and key questions for analysis in Handout I-II. Ask for 1-2 student volunteers to share back their analysis of the image. Ask students whether the responses meet the assignment criteria: 1) Does the analysis relate to gender roles? 2) Does the analysis use evidence from the image?

4. Pass out Handout IV: **SAMPLE STATEMENTS**

Instructor Script "All of these sample analysis statements are strong. But what would make them better? Please see Handout I that states that 'analytical writing identifies the text's component parts to evaluate its *purpose, underlying assumptions, and its strengths and weaknesses.*'"

1. “The image demonstrates the difficulty for the father figure to maintain order in the kitchen. The children receives little attention, while the mother figure reads the paper and maintains a meticulous appearance.” (All description, little/no analysis; improve with more analysis.)
2. “The image mocks the idea that a man can effectively provide care of a home and children. The children clearly suffer.” (Improve with more evidence from the text/image; improve with extended analysis.)
3. “If a woman were shown as having trouble with children it would be seen more as ‘female incompetence’ than as a sign of general difficulty.” (Indicates an underlying assumption, this is strong; however, needs evidence from text.)
4. “The purpose of the ad is to sell clothes to women. The ad assumes a woman consumer would like to identify herself in the status of breadwinner. Yet by demonstrating the chaos that ensues for her family when a man takes charge of the domestic sphere, the woman consumer can be confident that she remains needed in the home. Therefore, the depiction of reverse gender roles catches the consumer’s attention and fantasy but simultaneously reinforces traditional (essentialist) gender norms.” (Best example; improve with an evaluation of whether this is a strong or weak ad for its purpose of selling clothes to women.)

Refer back to Summary v. Analysis Handouts I and IV and emphasize the importance of using summary only to strengthen analysis.

Analytical assignments usually entail

10%

Summary & Description

Summary (*what the actual text says*) and background/context (*relevant information about the text i.e. genre, sequence, intended audience*) statements convey non-judgmental information about the actual text. The summary and description help to establish your comprehension of the text and the credibility of your analysis.

90%

Analysis

Analytical statements examine different component parts of a text to evaluate its *purpose*, *underlying assumptions*, and *its strengths and weaknesses*. Oftentimes, assignments that require analysis identify a specific theoretical or conceptual lens through which you are required to analyze the text (ie. “using a feminist perspective,” or “in relationship to the previous reading,” or, “using the concept XXXX”).

UNDERSTANDING THE ASSIGNMENT

HANDOUT II

Before you begin an assignment, first *analyze* the assignment. What is the professor asking you to do? What skills does the assignment assume you have? Your job is to follow the assignment consistently and thoroughly. If you have any questions related to what the professor would like you to do, ask!

Identify the **active verbs** in the assignment that provide important clues for the tasks ahead.

Informational verbs ask you to demonstrate what you know about the subject, such as who, what, when, where, how, and why: **define, illustrate, summarize, trace, research.**

Analytical verbs ask you to provide your own ideas that make connections across different aspects of the subject using direct evidence from the text or multiple texts: **Compare, contrast, apply, relate, assess, prove, justify, evaluate, respond, synthesize, analyze, argue.**

Assignment Example

Using the image, “She brings home the bacon, but can he fry it up?” from a *Bazaar* July 2009 fashion spread, evaluate the image’s depiction of gender roles. Be sure to support your analysis with specific evidence from the image itself.

What is this assignment asking you to do?

Bazaar July 2009; "She brings home the bacon, but can he fry it up?"



Sample analytical statements:

1. “The image mocks the idea that a man can effectively provide care of a home and children. The children clearly suffer.”
2. “If a woman were shown as having trouble with children it would be seen more as ‘female incompetence’ than as a sign of general difficulty.”
3. “The purpose of the ad is to sell clothes to women. The ad assumes a woman consumer would like to identify herself in the status of breadwinner. Yet by demonstrating the chaos that ensues for her family when a man takes charge of the domestic sphere, the woman consumer can be confident that she remains needed in the home. The depiction of reverse gender roles catches the consumer’s attention and fantasy but simultaneously reinforces traditional (essentialist) gender norms.”