

Analytical Essay

Definition of Analytical Essay

Analytical implies the breaking down of something into parts, or the discussion of something in a way that it becomes a dissection of the whole. An analytical type of [essay](#) differs from other types of essays in that its primary goal is to explain something bit by bit to enhance understanding. Most of the times, an analytical essay is written about the analysis of a text, or a process, or an idea. In literature, however, it is a critical analysis of some literary text which is done to enhance its understanding.

Difference Between an Analytical Essay and a Critical Essay

An analytical essay is just an analysis of a literary text. By [contrast](#), a [critical essay](#) involves, not only an analysis of the text in question, but also dissection of the literary terms and devices used by the author to make his meanings clear. The critical essay also explains the functions of the literary terms used, and evaluates their usage, and whether they have achieved the intended purposes or not.

Types of Analytical Essay

Cause and Effect: One way of analyzing something is to discuss the cause of something, and its effect on other things.

[Comparison](#) and Contrast: Another way of analyzing something is to compare and contrast things among themselves.

Classification: Classification is yet another method of analyzing things, to learn of their nature.

Process: Process is also a type of analysis writing.

Definition: Defining things is also a way of analyzing the nature of things.

Examples of Analytical Essay in Literature

Example #1: *Liposuction: The Key to Energy Independence* (by Barbara Ehrenreich)

“I say to my fellow humans: It’s time to stop feeding off the dead and grow up! I don’t know about food, but I have a plan for achieving fuel self-sufficiency in less time than it takes to say ‘Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.’ The idea came to me from reports of the growing crime of French fry oil theft: Certain desperate individuals are stealing restaurants’ discarded cooking oil, which can then be used to fuel cars. So the idea is: why not skip the French fry phase and harvest high-energy hydrocarbons right from ourselves?”

This is an excerpt from the essay of Barbara Ehrenreich, in which she has made comparison and contrast between human beings and animals, regarding food choices. This is a good analysis of the food we use.

Example #2: *Freedom* (by Joyce M. Jarett)

“On the first day of school, I was escorted by hordes of national guardsmen. Like a funeral procession, the steady stream of official-looking cars followed me to the campus. Some patrolmen were parked near campus gates, while others, with guns strapped to their sides, stood near building entrances. Though many of my escorts had given me smiles of support, still I was not prepared for what I encountered upon entering my new school.”

This is a paragraph from a process analysis. The author, Joyce M. Jaret, has beautifully described her experience of the security in this paragraph, and how it is deployed when an important figure faces security issues in his life. This is an analysis of the process of security deployment.

Example #3: *The Ways of Meeting Oppression* (by Martin Luther King, Jr.)

“The third way open to oppressed people in their quest for freedom is the way of nonviolent resistance. Like the synthesis in Hegelian philosophy, the principle of nonviolent resistance seeks to reconcile the truths of two opposites—the acquiescence and violence—while avoiding the extremes and immoralities of both. The nonviolent resister agrees with the person who acquiesces that one should not be physically aggressive toward his opponent; but he balances the equation by agreeing with the person of violence that evil must be resisted. He avoids the nonresistance of the former and the violent resistance of the latter. With nonviolent resistance, no individual or group need submit to any wrong, nor need anyone resort to violence in order to right a wrong.”

This is the analysis by classification that Marth Luther King, a famous human rights activist, has done regarding oppression against African Americans.

Function of Analytical Essay

An analytical essay dissects something such as a concept, an idea, a thing, or even a [character](#). Its major aim is to enhance the understanding of readers. An analysis could be done through a process, definition, classification and division, or comparison and contrast. The thing or idea is broken into several parts, through classification and division, and then analyzed. A process is broken into several steps for analysis. Not only do analytical essays enhance understanding, but they also make readers aware of minute details of things.