

# Writing to Analyze

# 12

## Chapter Learning Objectives

- 12.1** Explain why analysis is important to your work in college
- 12.2** Differentiate between content analysis and rhetorical analysis
- 12.3** Use effective strategies to conduct textual and process analyses
- 12.4** Use effective strategies to analyze visuals

### Before you read this chapter

What does it mean to analyze something? What kinds of things do you analyze in your personal life and your academic life? What role does analysis play in how you learn? In your blog or your journal, answer these questions and write about the kinds of analysis you perform regularly.



**In 2007**, a year before President Barack Obama was elected, it had become evident that the Internet would significantly influence the outcome of the election in ways that it couldn't possibly have in previous elections. In particular, YouTube's *Face the Candidates* page provided the sixteen presidential candidates the opportunity to maintain official campaign pages. Viewers could watch everything from debates to campaign stops to casual conversations, and they could do so just about anywhere using mobile technologies like mobile phones and other wireless network devices.

In December 2007, writer Mark Raby, writing for the online news source *TG Daily*, analyzed the "YouTube effect" and how it was, in fact, affecting the election. Raby's analysis revealed some intriguing information about the correlation between the numbers of views a candidate was amassing on his or her YouTube pages and the state of the candidate's popularity. Raby's article showed, among other interesting data, that according to the analysis of all six candidates' YouTube channels, "John Edwards, Barack Obama, and Hillary Clinton have all pulled out of the pack. Clinton is way out in front with more than 2.6 million views, followed by Obama and Edwards, right in line with where they fall on the primary poll." However, Obama had the greatest lead over all candidates with regard to the numbers of YouTube users actually subscribed to his pages. Obama had more than 13,000 subscribers, more than twice that of his closest competitor, Hillary Clinton.

Raby's analysis, published almost a year before the election, proved to be one of the most prophetic of the election. What is remarkable about Raby's analysis isn't just the data he gathered, but the scrutiny with which he analyzed the data and the clarity with which he presents his findings. Interestingly, Raby ends his analysis by concluding that the primary thing learned from the analysis wasn't a conclusive correlation between YouTube or Internet usage and the ability to win elections but that the impact of Internet resources like YouTube on elections remains uncertain. Where Raby succeeds in his scrutiny is providing us with a significant new understanding of digital media in our presidential election process.

**12.1** Explain why analysis is important to your work in college

## Analysis

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To analyze is to examine something carefully to determine how all of its parts work together as a whole. Analysis also suggests a degree of critical reflection or a sense of evaluation and judgment. Some might understand "being critical" as a tendency to point out flaws; however, being critical more accurately means careful evaluation or scrutiny. Critical analysis is a process of scrutinizing something to become aware of details and how they relate to one another. Analysis is a central part of critical thinking and problem solving.

In college, you will be asked to analyze many kinds of things in a variety of disciplinary situations such as the following:

- Engineering—Analyze a systems development process
- Psychology—Analyze a cognitive process
- History—Analyze the causes of a historical event
- Drama—Analyze the plot structure of a play

Analysis is a central facet of college education because it requires that you scrutinize for the purpose of deeply understanding the object of your analysis.

Critical analysis is by no means a strictly academic activity; in fact, adept critical analysis will serve you most in your personal, professional, and civic lives outside of college. Most of the choices you will face—especially the really difficult choices—will require that you carefully analyze in order to solve problems and make decisions. For instance, in a professional setting you may need to analyze sales information before determining whether or not to support your company's push to expand to a global market. In your personal life, you may need to analyze treatment options for a medical situation, or you may need to analyze insurance policy options or mortgage options. In your civic life, you may need to analyze political candidates' platforms or local referendums. Ultimately, the approaches you learn for critical analysis in college will inform the strategies you use for analysis in the rest of your life.

Although critical analysis can be applied to just about any aspect of your life and to just about any object in any discipline, this chapter focuses on analyzing texts, written and visual. Certainly, many analytical strategies can be applied to other kinds of settings and objects, but this chapter focuses on how we analyze and write about things that are written (including visuals). Textual analysis is not an account of how you feel about a text; it is not about whether or not you agree with the text. Textual analysis examines the text and how the text works. College writers are asked to analyze texts for three specific reasons:

- *To participate.* Writers analyze texts to figure out where they want to fit and to derive meaning.
- *To practice.* Texts can be taken apart over and over again in a variety of ways to practice and develop analytical approaches.
- *To model.* Writers can learn more about their own choices by analyzing and mimicking choices others have made in their writing.

In the United States, we regularly tout the claim that everyone is entitled to his or her own opinion. There are two things we should acknowledge about this maxim: first, while we believe in the value of this claim, we must not forget that the right to having an opinion does not mean that one automatically has the right to voice that opinion in any situation or that others must also value that opinion. Second, critical analysis, the kind addressed in this chapter, is the process by which one develops informed opinions. Critical analysis, both rhetorical and situational, refines the value of an opinion in a given situation, making it valuable.

## annotated example



Colonel Tim Collins delivered a speech in 2003 that has become known as one of the most powerful speeches of the Iraqi war. In 2005, Colonel Collins listened to Marie Fatayi-Williams deliver a speech which he regarded as genuinely emotional and unforgettable. *The Guardian*, a British daily newspaper, published the following commentary by Collins in which he analyzes her speech. Fatayi-Williams gave her speech in London, near the site where four days earlier a young terrorist had detonated a suicide bomb on a double-decker bus, killing himself and 13 others. Marie Fatayi-Williams's 26-year-old son Anthony was one of the 13 killed.

## Straight from the Heart

### Tim Collins

Caught in the spotlight of history, set on the stage of a very public event, Marie Fatayi-Williams, the mother of Anthony Fatayi-Williams, 26 and missing since Thursday, appeals for news of her son. Her words are a mixture of stirring rhetoric, heartfelt appeal and a stateswoman-like vision, and so speak on many levels to the nation and the world. Her appeal is a simple one—where is my son? If he has been killed, then why? Who has gained?

Marie has found herself, as I did on the eve of the invasion of Iraq, an unwitting voice, speaking amid momentous events. Her appeal, delivered on Monday not far from Tavistock Square, where she fears her son died in the bomb attack on the number 30 bus, gives a verbal form to the whirlpool of emotions that have engulfed society as the result of last week's bombings. I suspect Marie, like myself, had no idea that her words would find such wide recognition, have fed such an acute hunger for explanation, have slaked such a thirst for expression of the sheer horror of Thursday's events.

This kind of speech is normally the preserve of the great orators, statesmen and playwrights, of Shakespeare, Churchill or Lincoln. It is often a single speech, a soliloquy or address from the steps of the galleries, that explains, inspires, exhorts and challenges. But always such addresses are crafted for effect and consciously intended to sway and influence, and often, as in the case of Shakespeare's *Henry V*, they are set in the mouth of a long dead hero or delivered by wordsmiths who are masters of their craft. It is rare in history that such oratory is

Consider how much context the first sentence alone delivers. This paragraph introduces the frame of Collins's analysis, summarizes the text to be analyzed, and alerts us to Fatayi-Williams's use of pathos. Collins prepares his audience well for the coming analysis.

Collins links Fatayi-Williams's situation to his own; this maneuver allows Collins to declare his position in this situation, personalizing his analysis by emphasizing his own emotional appeal and that of Fatayi-Williams.

Through comparison, Collins identifies and classifies the kind of speech Fatayi-Williams delivers. He describes her speech as unique within his classification. Again, he identifies the power of Fatayi-Williams's use of pathos.

the genuine article, springing from the heart and bursting forth to an unwitting audience. In Marie's case, her speech gains its power as a vehicle of grief and loss, and of the angst of a mother who yearns for her beloved son. In my case it was the opposite emotion from which I drew inspiration—an appeal to understand, to empathise, to give courage and purpose. I was motivated by a need to warn and teach as well as to encourage. Marie's motivation is a reflection on loss and that most powerful of all emotions, a mother's love.

The form the address takes is as poignant as the language used. There is an initial explanation of the extraordinary circumstances of the loss, a *cri de coeur* for the innocent blood lost, a rejection of the act by its comparison to the great liberators, and the assertion that her loss is all our loss in the family of humanity. It ends with her personal grief for her flesh and blood, her hopes and pride. The language echoes verses of the Bible as well as from the Koran. It has raw passion as well as heart-rending pathos.

With only a photograph of her son and a sheet of paper as a prompt, Marie's words burst out with as much emotion as anger. Her speech stands in stark contrast to the pronouncements of politicians, prepared by aides and delivered from copious notes. It is indeed the raw originality and authentic angst that give the delivery such impact, the plea such effect. No knighted veteran of the Royal Shakespeare Company could deliver such an address without hours or even days of rehearsal. I know from my own experience that only momentous events can provoke such a moment, only raw emotion can inspire such a spontaneous plea. I am often asked how long it took me to write my speech, delivered to my regiment, the Royal Irish, on the eve of the invasion of Iraq on March 19, 2003, at Fort Blair Mayne camp in the Kuwaiti desert. My answer is simple—not one moment. There was no plan; I spoke without notes. For me there was only the looming spectre of actual warfare and the certainty of loss and killing, and I was speaking to myself as well as to my men. I suspect for Marie there was only the yawning black void of loss, the cavern left behind in her life caused by the loss of a son who can never be replaced.

What, then, can we take from this? Marie's appeal is important as it is momentous. Her words are as free from hatred as they are free from self-interest; it is clear that no man can give her her heart's desire—her son. I was also struck by the quiet dignity of her words, the clarity of her view and the weight of her convictions. She does not

This paragraph addresses Fatayi-Williams's use of language, organizational strategies, summary, allusion, and argumentation. This analysis helps Collins situate the speech historically, making a connection to the preceding paragraph and adding to good paragraph cohesion.

Collins establishes Fatayi-Williams's speech as historically unique and identifies the authenticity of her pathos. Collins uses this paragraph to relate the situation of Fatayi-Williams's speech to his own experiences, contributing to his own ethos by confirming his qualifications to conduct and report the analysis.

In the preceding paragraph, Collins shows how the use of pathos contributes to Fatayi-Williams's ethos. This paragraph takes up Fatayi-Williams's ethos. Collins identifies her sincerity, her lack of malice, and her lack of self-interest in achieving her purpose as a speaker-writer.

**annotated example**

condemn, she appeals; her words act as an indictment of all war and violence, not just acts of terror but also the unnecessary aggression of nation states. Her message is simple: here is a human who only wanted to give, to succeed and to make his mother proud. Where is the victory in his death? Where is the progress in his destruction? In her own words: “What inspiration can senseless slaughter provide?”

I am certain that Marie’s appeal will go down as one of the great speeches of our new century. It will give comfort to the families and friends of the dead and injured, both of this act and no doubt, regrettably, of events still to come. It should act as a caution to statesmen and leaders, a focus for public grief and, ultimately, as a challenge to, as well as a condemnation of, the perpetrators.

Marie is already an icon of the loss of Thursday July 7. Having travelled from Africa to find a better life, Anthony Fatayi-Williams carried the hopes and pride of his family. Now, as his mother has travelled to London, arguably one of the most cosmopolitan and integrated cities in the world, and standing nearby a wrecked icon of that city, a red double-decker bus, she has made an appeal which is as haunting as it is relevant, as poignant as it is appealing. It is a fact that such oratory as both Marie and I produced is born of momentous events, and inspired by hope and fears in equal measure.

But Marie’s appeal is also important on another level. I have long urged soldiers in conflict zones to keep communicating with the population in order to be seen as people—it is easier to kill uniforms than it is to kill people. On July 7 the suicide bombers attacked icons of a society that they hated more than they loved life, the red London bus and the tube. Marie’s speech has stressed the real victims’ identities. They are all of us.

**Fatayi-Williams’s Speech**

Marie Fatayi-Williams’s speech is presented here to provide you with more context for Collins’s analysis. It appeared in *The Guardian* immediately following Tim Collins’s analytical essay. Note that the speech is not analytical per se; it is a lament.

“This is Anthony, Anthony Fatayi-Williams, 26 years old, he’s missing and we fear that he was in the bus explosion . . . on Thursday. We don’t know. We do know from the witnesses that he left the Northern line in Euston. We know he made a call to his office at Amec at 9:41 from

Collins’s analysis leads to a prediction, tied to the longevity of the situation; he clearly states what it is about the speech that leads to his prediction. Collins uses his analytical reading of Fatayi-Williams’s speech as evidence for his position in the situation.

Collins establishes that Fatayi-Williams’s speech has already solidified a position in a historical context. Think about the role that institutions (like textbooks) play in the situation and how they connect with Collins’s analysis. Notice how Collins’s analysis is served by his alignment of Fatayi-Williams’s speech with his own.

Collins shifts to show how Fatayi-Williams’s speech is also a moment of connection. The final sentence reminds us that icons are symbols that generically stand for the group of things they represent. This concluding sentence is Collins’s ultimate analytical point: Marie Fatayi-Williams is talking about more than herself and her son.



Marie Fatayi-Williams speaks July 11, 2005, at Tavistock Square, London.

the NW1 area to say he could not make [it] by the tube but he would find alternative means to work.

Since then he has not made any contact with any single person. Now New York, now Madrid, now London. There has been widespread slaughter of innocent people. There have been streams of tears, innocent tears. There have been rivers of blood, innocent blood. Death in the morning, people going to find their livelihood, death in the noontime on the highways and streets.

They are not warriors. Which cause has been served? Certainly not the cause of God, not the cause of Allah because God Almighty only gives life and is full of mercy. Anyone who has been misled, or is being misled to believe that by killing innocent people he or she is serving God should think again because it's not true. Terrorism is not the way, terrorism is not the way. It doesn't beget peace. We can't deliver peace by terrorism, never can we deliver peace by killing people. Throughout history, those people who have changed the world have done so without violence, they have [won] people to their cause through peaceful protest. Nelson

**annotated example**

Mandela, Martin Luther King, Mahatma Gandhi, their discipline, their self-sacrifice, their conviction made people turn towards them, to follow them. What inspiration can senseless slaughter provide? Death and destruction of young people in their prime as well as old and helpless can never be the foundations for building society.

My son Anthony is my first son, my only son, the head of my family. In African society, we hold on to sons. He has dreams and hopes and I, his mother, must fight to protect them. This is now the fifth day, five days on, and we are waiting to know what happened to him and I, his mother, I need to know what happened to Anthony. His young sisters need to know what happened, his uncles and aunts need to know what happened to Anthony, his father needs to know what happened to Anthony. Millions of my friends back home in Nigeria need to know what happened to Anthony. His friends surrounding me here, who have put this together, need to know what has happened to Anthony. I need to know, I want to protect him. I'm his mother, I will fight till I die to protect him. To protect his values and to protect his memory.

Innocent blood will always cry to God Almighty for reparation. How much blood must be spilled? How many tears shall we cry? How many mothers' hearts must be maimed? My heart is maimed. I pray I will see my son, Anthony. Why? I need to know, Anthony needs to know, Anthony needs to know, so do many others unaccounted for innocent victims, they need to know.

It's time to stop and think. We cannot live in fear because we are surrounded by hatred. Look around us today. Anthony is a Nigerian, born in London, worked in London, he is a world citizen. Here today we have Christians, Muslims, Jews, Sikhs, Hindus, all of us united in love for Anthony. Hatred begets only hatred. It is time to stop this vicious cycle of killing. We must all stand together, for our common humanity. I need to know what happened to my Anthony. He's the love of my life. My first son, my first son, 26. He tells me one day, "Mummy, I don't want to die, I don't want to die. I want to live, I want to take care of you, I will do great things for you, I will look after you, you will see what I will achieve for you. I will make you happy." And he was making me happy. I am proud of him, I am still very proud of him but I need to know where he is, I need to know what happened to him. I grieve, I am sad, I am distraught, I am destroyed.

He didn't do anything to anybody, he loved everybody so much. If what I hear is true, even when he came out of the underground he was directing people to take buses, to be sure that they were OK. Then he called his office at the same time to tell them he was running late. He was a multi-purpose person, trying to save people, trying to call his office, trying to meet his appointments. What did he then do to deserve this. Where is he, someone tell me, where is he?"

**student example**

Emilia Maria “Nicky” Cadiz majors in both microbiology and cell science and East Asian languages and literatures as well as minors in business administration. Nicky’s fascination with East Asian culture and languages stems from living in five countries during her childhood. After graduation she hopes to attend medical school and eventually incorporate into her medical practice holistic methods of healthcare learned through science and East Asian culture.

Nicky’s essay analyzes a photograph featured on the cover of *Harper’s Bazaar* fashion magazine. Nicky uses her analysis to support an argument about how visuals might be misused or misunderstood given the importance of visuals in contemporary culture. As you read Nicky’s essay, think about how she conducts her analysis and how she also analyzes the situation of the photograph.

## *The Jersey Shore* and *Harper’s Bazaar*

### Emilia Maria “Nicky” Cadiz

Visuals inhabit and enrich our daily lives. We encounter visual rhetoric in all forms of media through photographs, charts, and symbols, and society expects us to understand and inherently know what these visuals mean. In a world teeming with imagery, photographers, and graphic designers, their respective audiences must have some sort of visual literacy; they must know how to produce and interpret images. The pervasiveness of visuals has created the current “visual culture.” Photojournalists and reporters use images to capture moments in time and to prove to their audience that events actually happened. Graphic designers construct computer generated visuals and mix them with photographs to make compelling arguments. They use photographs to support their arguments or even to help make their claims. Those who include visuals in their work expect their audiences to accept the image without question, and more often than not, audiences do. This phenomenon stems from our belief that “seeing is believing.” No one questions the image. But is the image the truth? Sometimes we fail to realize that photographers and graphic designers, through their work, are themselves rhetoricians. The visuals they employ can persuade; they can evoke emotion. Tables, charts, and graphs adorn newspapers and science journals and serve to accentuate information from surveys or data from research. Images make statements. Tailoring an image—using different Photoshop features, angles, and lens focus points—mirrors how an experienced writer would cut, paste, and structure an argument. Therefore, all visuals are arguments whether or not they are effective and/or ethical. This tailoring alters the way an image is perceived and received by the masses. How the audience interprets a visual depends on the visual literacy of both the viewer and the image creator. Our culture is so overly saturated with visuals that we have become accustomed to blindly believing them. Photographers and

## student example

designers take advantage of our naiveté and modify their visuals to cater to the three rhetorical appeals—ethos, pathos and logos—in order for us to believe them. For example, let us consider the April 2010 *Harper's Bazaar* cover image that featured the girls from *Jersey Shore*. How credible is it that both *Harper's Bazaar* and *Jersey Shore* were used in the same sentence?

For an audience to believe the *Harper's Bazaar* visual, the photographer must relate the image to the subject at hand. If the visual does not support the subject matter then there is no argument. *Harper's Bazaar* is one of the nation's high-class fashion magazines that targets upper class women who live in the city. In April 2010, *Harper's Bazaar* attempted to capitalize on *Jersey Shore*'s popularity by featuring the *Jersey Shore* girls—Jenni “JWoww” Farley, Nicole “Snooki” Polizzi, and Samantha “Sammi” Giancola—in their magazine. On the cover, JWoww, Snooki, and Sammi wore \$6820, \$7500, and \$2850 designer evening gowns, respectively. If *Harper's Bazaar* associates itself with glitzy socialites, expensive designer clothing, and high fashion designers, then why are the “classy” *Jersey Shore* girls on the cover? Society knows these three girls as scantily-clad, potty-mouthed “guidette” party animals with high-poofed hair, fresh extensions, and well-kept tans. How have these two opposites evidently joined forces? Many fashion gurus had this same logic and questioned the reason behind *Harper's Bazaar*'s decision to include the *Jersey Shore* girls.



Snooki, Sammi, and JWoww from *Jersey Shore*, before their *Harper's Bazaar* “extreme makeover.”

Consequently, no fashion critic took this April 2010 edition seriously, and *Women's Wear Daily*, the “bible” of the fashion world, simply stated that the *Jersey Shore* cast was “Basking in, and hyperactively milking, their 15 minutes [of fame]” (5). It was extremely out of character for both *Harper's Bazaar* and the *Jersey Shore* girls. According to JWoww's tweet on the day of the shoot, she “never purchased one mag/and now [she's] in a lot of em!” Clearly she had never read the magazine, since she spelled *Bazaar* “Bizaar.” How surprising. The entertainment world was buzzing in disbelief. Almost every tabloid and entertainment blog jokingly wrote something about JWoww, Snooki, and Sammi's appearance in the magazine.

What were the *Harper's Bazaar* editors thinking? They featured world-renown, trashy girls in their high class magazine. The *Jersey Shore* girls' feature article and pictures showed JWoww, Snooki, and Sammi attending charm and etiquette school with Lizzie Post, great-great-granddaughter of Etiquette School legend Emily Post. According to Emily Post's *Etiquette Daily Harper's Bazaar* asked The Emily Post Institute, an institute promoting etiquette in America since 1946, to participate in “an etiquette lesson photo shoot with the girls of *The Jersey Shore*” and to “teach the girls a little bit of etiquette and refinement.” In the *Harper's Bazaar* video, Snooki states that she's “been to etiquette school” and that she “knows a couple things already, but [she] hasn't been using them.” JWoww says that she “does know the lessons they're teaching very well,” and similarly Sammi “feels like she already knows how to be a lady.” Apparently all three girls have yet to watch a *Jersey Shore* episode. Spoiler Alert: There has not been a *Jersey Shore* episode to date that can validate any of those three statements.

Visuals create their own arguments. The audience sees the image from the perspective the photographer chooses. Altering images changes the way an image is viewed. A photographer constructs the image just as a writer would construct his or her argument. The image caters to its audience's liking. Images are structured to appeal to the audience's ethos, pathos, and logos. In visual arguments, photographers and graphic design artists edit the image to leave only what is important, only what is needed. They can crop out whatever is unnecessary and Photoshop the image to suit and support the argument. Visuals are everywhere—on billboards, posters, newspapers, advertisements—and well executed ones can stand alone as effective arguments. But do not in the least bit forget that every visual has a purpose and an angle from its creator. *Harper's Bazaar's* attempt to make the girls from *Jersey Shore* classy did not resonate well with their upper-class, high-fashion audience. The *Jersey Shore* girls were just out of their element. JWoww said that on the show “they're being themselves.” Clearly that is not seen in this refined photo shoot. After the shoot, the girls reverted back to their *Jersey Shore*-selves to record the second season of *The Jersey Shore* in South Beach, Miami. In the end, *Harper's Bazaar* failed to appeal to their posh, socialite audience, and thus, they failed to persuade their readers and make them believe.

**student example****Works Cited**

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**Thinking about Nicky's Essay**

1. Nicky Cadiz's analysis in this essay takes on a dual purpose: to scrutinize *Harper's Bazaar's* decision to use a photograph of the *Jersey Shore* girls on its cover and to examine how, why, and whether readers accept photographs as inherently true. In essence, then, Nicky's analysis serves a more encompassing argumentative purpose. What are her analytical claims, and how do they support her argumentative claims? That is, in what ways does Nicky "use" analysis in this essay?
2. On what does Nicky base her analysis?
3. In many ways, Nicky Cadiz's analysis is not an analysis of the technical aspects of or content of the *Harper's Bazaar* cover photograph, but is an analysis of a situation in which the photograph participates. What does her analysis reveal, though, about the photograph that we might not gather from just the photograph?

## student example

## THE ROAD TO A STRONG THESIS

**SECOND THOUGHTS:**

"I noticed that the recent cover of *Harper's Bazaar* features a photo of the *Jersey Shore* girls. That seems a bit unusual. Maybe I could analyze what *Harper's Bazaar* might be suggesting with that photo."

**SECOND THOUGHTS:**

"But asking that kind of question also suggests that I want to know why we find photographs interesting, or more to the point, why do we accept photographs as depicting something 'real'?"

**SECOND THOUGHTS:**

"Analyzing what we 'understand' seems a bit vague. Maybe I need to analyze what the photo means or what it suggests about the magazine."

**QUESTION**  
"What can I analyze? And why would I analyze something?"

**RESPONSE:**  
"I need to understand the point of that cover photo and what it might suggest about how we understand photographs."

**RESPONSE:**  
"Doing this would allow me to make an argument about how we interpret photographs. This way my analysis of the *Jersey Shore* girls cover could be an example of how readers tend to accept photographs representing reality."

**RESPONSE**  
"This makes sense. Now my analysis has a point other than practicing analysis. Now that analysis can support my argument."

**ASSIGNMENT**  
"To write an analytical essay."

**THESIS:**  
"Our culture is so saturated with visuals that we have become accustomed to blindly believing them."

Nicky Cadiz was assigned the task of writing an analytical essay. By looking at the cultural context in which the *Jersey Shore* girls' photograph circulated, Nicky was able to develop a thesis that she found to be more relevant and useful than just performing the analysis for the sake of analysis.

**FINAL THOUGHTS:**  
"Now I have a position I can support using my analysis. This gives me a reason to conduct the analysis and a context in which to discuss it."

## professional example



James Cameron's movie *Avatar* was the highest grossing film of all time. Self-described “biethnic” writer Annalee Newitz published a critical analysis of *Avatar* in *io9*, a popular futurism, science, and technology blog. Newitz, a former policy analyst for the Electronic Frontier Foundation, has contributed to *Wired*, *Popular Science*, *The Washington Post*, *New York Magazine*, and *New Scientist*, to name but a few. She has also published three books: *She's Such a Geek: Women Write about Science, Technology, and Other Nerdy Stuff*; *Pretend We're Dead: Capitalist Monsters in American Pop Culture*; and *White Trash: Race and Class in America*.

In “When Will White People Stop Making Movies Like ‘Avatar’?” Newitz analyzes *Avatar* as a familiar white narrative about colonization. As you read her essay, consider how Newitz synthesizes her analysis of *Avatar* with her analysis of other films and cultural characteristics. In what ways does this synthesis serve the analysis, and in what ways does the analysis serve the synthesis?

## When Will White People Stop Making Movies Like “Avatar”?

### Annalee Newitz

Critics have called alien epic *Avatar* a version of *Dances with Wolves* because it's about a white guy going native and becoming a great leader. But *Avatar* is just the latest scifi rehash of an old white guilt fantasy.

### Spoilers . . .

Whether *Avatar* is racist is a matter for debate. Regardless of where you come down on that question, it's undeniable that the film—like alien apartheid flick *District 9*, released earlier this year—is emphatically a fantasy about race. Specifically, it's a fantasy about race told from the point of view of white people. *Avatar* and scifi films like it give us the opportunity to answer the question: What do white people fantasize about when they fantasize about racial identity?

*Avatar* imaginatively revisits the crime scene of white America's foundational act of genocide, in which entire native tribes and civilizations were wiped out by European immigrants to the American continent. In the film, a group of soldiers and scientists have set up shop on the verdant moon Pandora, whose landscapes look like a cross between Northern California's redwood cathedrals and Brazil's tropical rainforest. The moon's inhabitants, the Na'vi, are blue, catlike versions of native people: They wear feathers in their hair, worship nature gods, paint their faces for war, use bows and arrows, and live in tribes. Watching the movie, there is

really no mistake that these are alien versions of stereotypical native peoples that we’ve seen in Hollywood movies for decades.

And Pandora is clearly supposed to be the rich, beautiful land America could still be if white people hadn’t paved it over with concrete and strip malls. In *Avatar*, our white hero Jake Sully (sully—get it?) explains that Earth is basically a war-torn wasteland with no greenery or natural resources left. The humans started to colonize Pandora in order to mine a mineral called unobtainium that can serve as a mega-energy source. But a few of these humans don’t want to crush the natives with tanks and bombs, so they wire their brains into the bodies of Na’vi avatars and try to win the natives’ trust. Jake is one of the team of avatar pilots, and he discovers to his surprise that he loves his life as a Na’vi warrior far more than he ever did his life as a human marine.

Jake is so enchanted that he gives up on carrying out his mission, which is to persuade the Na’vi to relocate from their “home tree,” where the humans want to mine the unobtainium. Instead, he focuses on becoming a great warrior who rides giant birds and falls in love with the chief’s daughter. When the inevitable happens and the marines arrive to burn down the Na’vi’s home tree, Jake switches sides. With the help of a few human renegades, he maintains a link with his avatar body in order to lead the Na’vi against the human invaders. Not only has he been assimilated into the native people’s culture, but he has become their leader.

This is a classic scenario you’ve seen in non-scifi epics from *Dances With Wolves* to *The Last Samurai*, where a white guy manages to get himself accepted into a closed society of people of color and eventually becomes its most awesome member. But it’s also, as I indicated earlier, very similar in some ways to *District 9*. In that film, our (anti)hero Wikus is trying to relocate a shantytown of aliens to a region far outside Johannesburg. When he’s accidentally squirted with fluid from an alien technology, he begins turning into one of the aliens against his will. Deformed and cast out of human society, Wikus reluctantly helps one of the aliens to launch their stalled ship and seek help from their home planet.

If we think of *Avatar* and its ilk as white fantasies about race, what kinds of patterns do we see emerging in these fantasies?

In both *Avatar* and *District 9*, humans are the cause of alien oppression and distress. Then, a white man who was one of the oppressors switches sides at the last minute, assimilating into the alien culture and becoming its savior. This is also the basic story of *Dune*, where a member of the white royalty flees his posh palace on the planet Dune to become leader of the worm-riding native Fremen (the worm-riding rite of passage has an analog in *Avatar*, where Jake proves his manhood by riding a giant bird). An interesting tweak on this story can be seen in 1980s flick *Enemy Mine*, where a white man (Dennis Quaid) and the alien he’s been battling (Louis Gossett Jr.) are stranded on a hostile planet together for years. Eventually they become best friends, and when the alien dies, the human raises the alien’s child as his own. When humans arrive on the planet and try to enslave the alien child, he lays down his life to rescue it. His loyalties to an alien have become stronger than to his own species.

**professional example**

These are movies about white guilt. Our main white characters realize that they are complicit in a system which is destroying aliens, AKA people of color—their cultures, their habitats, and their populations. The whites realize this when they begin to assimilate into the “alien” cultures and see things from a new perspective. To purge their overwhelming sense of guilt, they switch sides, become “race traitors,” and fight against their old comrades. But then they go beyond assimilation and become leaders of the people they once oppressed. This is the essence of the white guilt fantasy, laid bare. It’s not just a wish to be absolved of the crimes whites have committed against people of color; it’s not just a wish to join the side of moral justice in battle. It’s a wish to lead people of color from the inside rather than from the (oppressive, white) outside.

Think of it this way. *Avatar* is a fantasy about ceasing to be white, giving up the old human meatsack to join the blue people, but never losing white privilege. Jake never really knows what it’s like to be a Na’vi because he always has the option to switch back into human mode. Interestingly, Wikus in *District 9* learns a very different lesson. He’s becoming alien and he can’t go back. He has no other choice but to live in the slums and eat catfood. And guess what? He really hates it. He helps his alien buddy to escape Earth solely because he’s hoping the guy will come back in a few years with a “cure” for his alienness. When whites fantasize about becoming other races, it’s only fun if they can blithely ignore the fundamental experience of being an oppressed racial group. Which is that you are oppressed, and nobody will let you be a leader of anything.

This is not a message anybody wants to hear, least of all the white people who are creating and consuming these fantasies. Afro-Canadian sci-fi writer Nalo Hopkinson recently told the *Boston Globe*:

In the US, to talk about race is to be seen as racist. You become the problem because you bring up the problem. So you find people who are hesitant to talk about it.

She adds that the main mythic story you find in science fiction, generally written by whites, “is going to a foreign culture and colonizing it.”

Sure, *Avatar* goes a little bit beyond the basic colonizing story. We are told in no uncertain terms that it’s wrong to colonize the lands of native people. Our hero chooses to join the Na’vi rather than abide the racist culture of his own people. But it is nevertheless a story that revisits the same old tropes of colonization. Whites still get to be leaders of the natives—just in a kinder, gentler way than they would have in an old Flash Gordon flick or in Edgar Rice Burroughs’ Mars novels.

When will whites stop making these movies and start thinking about race in a new way?

First, we’ll need to stop thinking that white people are the most “relatable” characters in stories. As one blogger put it:

By the end of the film you’re left wondering why the film needed the Jake Sully character at all. The film could have done just as well by focusing on an actual Na’vi native who comes

into contact with crazy humans who have no respect for the environment. I can just see the explanation: “Well, we need someone (an avatar) for the audience to connect with. A normal guy will work better than these tall blue people.” However, this is the type of thinking that molds all leads as white male characters (blank slates for the audience to project themselves on) unless your name is Will Smith.

But more than that, whites need to rethink their fantasies about race.

Whites need to stop remaking the white guilt story, which is a sneaky way of turning every story about people of color into a story about being white. Speaking as a white person, I don’t need to hear more about my own racial experience. I’d like to watch some movies about people of color (ahem, aliens), from the perspective of that group, without injecting a random white (erm, human) character to explain everything to me. Science fiction is exciting because it promises to show the world and the universe from perspectives radically unlike what we’ve seen before. But until white people stop making movies like *Avatar*, I fear that I’m doomed to see the same old story again and again.

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## Analyzing the Situation

1. Who is Annalee Newitz’s audience for this analytical reading of *Avatar*? What is it about the text itself that leads you to this conclusion?
2. In her synthesis, Newitz references movies that are contemporaries of *Avatar*, but she also references older films. What does she gain in referring to movies that are 20 and 25 years older than *Avatar*?
3. Newitz’s essay participates in a situation in which there are a tremendous number of players. How would you identify and describe the players in this situation?

## Analyzing the Rhetoric

1. What is Newitz’s purpose in citing Nalo Hopkinson and the one unnamed blog?
2. In what ways does Newitz use synopsis and summary?
3. How does Newitz use the first person to establish her position in this essay?

## Discussing

1. This chapter later suggests that when analyzing a text (or anything, for that matter) it helps to state your first reactions as questions, not statements, so you can avoid making judgments. As a class, state your first reactions to Newitz’s essay about *Avatar* as questions and discuss.

**professional example**

2. Does Newitz convince you? Do you agree with her analysis? Take some time to discuss how you respond to Newitz's analysis and the ways in which her analysis does or does not support her contention.
3. In what ways does the success of *Avatar* provide Newitz an opportunity to respond to the film from the perspective she does? Discuss why Newitz might have chosen *Avatar* as the impetus for writing about films, in general, as she does.

**Writing**

1. Analyze the argument that Newitz makes and the evidence she uses to support it. That is, conduct a detailed content analysis of the essay. Then write an analytical essay of your own that scrutinizes how Newitz makes her argument. You may also want to conduct some rhetorical analysis.
2. Given the context that Newitz has provided—racial approaches to action films—consider another adventure movie that Newitz does not address. Then write your own analysis of the film you choose, addressing how that film may or may not depict the “fantasy” Newitz describes.

## three examples

# SIDE BY SIDE

Each of the three writing examples analyzes a particular kind of text: a speech, a photograph, and a movie. Each uses its analysis to explain a more complex context: terrorism and loss, visual culture, and representations of race. Consider how each writer conveys the analysis and how each uses the analysis toward an overall purpose.

	annotated example	student example	professional example
	 <p>TIM COLLINS, "Straight from the Heart"</p>	 <p>NICKY CADIZ, "The Jersey Shore and Harper's Bazaar"</p>	 <p>ANNALEE NEWITZ, "When Will White People Stop Making Movies Like 'Avatar'?"</p>
<b>PURPOSE</b>	To analyze Marie Fatayi-Williams's speech, its historical value, and its contribution to how we talk about terrorism and violence.	To argue that our culture is so saturated with visuals that we have become accustomed to blindly believing them.	To analyze the film <i>Avatar</i> to answer the question "What do white people fantasize about when they fantasize about racial identity?"
<b>AUDIENCE</b>	Readers of the UK's <i>The Guardian</i> newspaper.	Nicky's writing teacher and peers interested in visual culture.	Science fiction film fans.
<b>CONTENT ANALYSIS</b>	Collins identifies what is significant in Marie Fatayi-Williams's speech. He specifically explains the substantive information she conveys within the historical context of the speech.	Nicky questions the appearance of the <i>Jersey Shore</i> girls in the cover photo. Her analysis examines what might be suggested to readers by including the girls, dressed in expensive clothing, in the photo.	Annalee Newitz's analysis examines the content of <i>Avatar</i> , but does so as a means to a more encompassing analysis of science fiction films as reflecting larger, cultural characteristics like racism.
<b>RHETORICAL ANALYSIS</b>	Collins is deliberate in his examination of Fatayi-Williams's language and delivery. He notes, for example, that Fatayi-Williams's language echoes verses of the Bible and of the Koran.	Nicky's analysis considers the visual rhetoric of the photograph and the rhetoric the <i>Jersey Shore</i> girls and the <i>Harper's Bazaar</i> editors use to discuss the cover photo.	Newitz provides some visual rhetorical analysis, but her more significant rhetorical analysis focuses on the role of power and institution in this rhetorical situation.
<b>DISTRIBUTION</b>	Circulated through a widely read newspaper.	Shared with her classmates and teacher.	Posted on a popular technology blog.
<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	Collins uses his own experiences in giving emotionally charged speeches in trying times. He moves back and forth between discussing Fatayi-Williams's speech and clarifying his analysis by offering comparisons with his own experiences.	Nicky frames her analysis with introductory and concluding discussions about the role of visuals in contemporary culture.	Newitz provides an analytic overview of <i>Avatar</i> . She then compares particular aspects of her analysis and of <i>Avatar</i> with other films of the same genre.
<b>LANGUAGE</b>	Collins's language is confident and authoritative. He is not only a colonel but also an expert on language and speech delivery.	Nicky's language identifies specific details about the <i>Jersey Shore</i> girls' photo. She also carefully chooses her language to create a tone of playful critique.	Although Newitz's blog post presents an analysis that requires careful thought, her tone is conversational.

# Prepare

## 12.2 Differentiate between content analysis and rhetorical analysis

Type of Analysis	Preparing Your Analysis
<b>CONTENT ANALYSIS</b>	Content analysis is the examination of what a text is about. Content analysis takes into account information accuracy, meaning, substance, relevance, interpretation, and other such characteristics.
Questions for Content Analysis	Ask: What is the main idea of the text? What are the secondary ideas of the text? What interests me about the text? Who and what are the main characters of the text? How are those characters described? What information is conveyed by the text? How is the text similar to or different from other texts of the same theme or genre? Is the text logical?
<b>RHETORICAL ANALYSIS</b>	Rhetorical analysis is an examination of why the writer made particular rhetorical choices in composing a text and whether those choices were effective. This type of analysis examines rhetorical devices, linguistic or visual, to understand what effect they may have on the content and how the text works.
Questions about Purpose	What appears to be the purpose of the text? Is this purpose explicitly identified within the text or implied?
Questions about Situation	In what situation did this text arise? Who is the writer/speaker? What position does the writer have in the situation?
Questions about the Writer/Speaker	How does the writer/speaker establish ethos? Is the writer's voice evident in the document?
Questions about Audience	Who is the audience? What characteristics of the text lead you to this conclusion?
Questions about Organization	How is the text organized or arranged? Does the writer transition smoothly between different ideas?
Questions about Language	How do you describe the language the writer uses? Does the writer use jargon, formal language, technical language, slang, or idioms? Does the writer use words you are not familiar with? Are they defined? What kinds of style and tone does the text use? Are those choices effective for this document?
Questions about Medium and Method	What method does the text primarily exhibit; that is, is the text argumentative, persuasive, antagonistic, explanatory, descriptive, informative, emotional, and so forth? In what medium is the text presented? Does that medium affect how you read the text?
Questions about Genre	Can the text be categorized as a familiar genre? How does the genre work in conjunction with the content of the text?

## 12.3 Use effective strategies to conduct textual and process analyses

Strategy	Developing Your Analysis
Situate	Identify your purpose for analyzing the text and your purpose in writing that analysis so you can better devise how you will conduct your analysis.
Make a claim	By establishing a claim, you can focus your written analysis on a particular approach and guide your audience through that analysis.
Identify the expected	Identify what parts you would expect to find in the type of thing you are analyzing. For example, we would expect a novel to have plot, characters, and setting. When analyzing an image, we expect that image to have an optical center.
React carefully	Try framing your reactions not as statements but as questions. After reading an essay, rather than “That essay really interested me; it was insightful,” ask “What was it about that essay specifically that interested me? What did I find insightful?”
Look for details	Clarify for yourself the details you identify so you can better clarify them for your audience. Identify what remains unclear, even after your attempts to clarify, and record that information in your notes. Details of a text may be unclear intentionally or problematically, which you may need to address.
Narrow your focus	When analyzing a text, tightly focus your approach on only those issues that are relevant to your purpose.
Identify the parts	Classify the parts you identify to figure out how they work together to form the whole. You may want to create a labeling system for yourself to identify the parts, how they work, and where they fit.
Examine the words	In addition to clarifying for yourself terms that are jargon, idioms, slang, and so on, make certain that you understand the nuances of words’ meanings that can subtly alter the message.
Use concrete language	Concrete language (words that are either tangible or perceptible through the senses such as visual, audio, or tactile attributes) allows you to be clear about what your analyses reveal.
Summarize	Consider providing a complete summary before presenting the details of your analysis.
Synthesize	Synthesis involves analyzing a whole and its parts to determine how the whole or parts might contribute to developing a new idea. Considering your analysis in relation to other information and other texts also can strengthen how you synthesize.
Organize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Organize by importance.</i> Present the most relevant information first.</li> <li>• <i>Organize by criteria.</i> Organize your findings according to which criteria are most important.</li> <li>• <i>Organize by scope.</i> Organize your information beginning with broader conceptual information and tapering to more specific details.</li> <li>• <i>Organize by chronology.</i> Begin with what you noticed first and move through your analytical process as it unfolded.</li> </ul>

# MAPPING YOUR SITUATION

## NETWORKS

- In what networks will my analysis circulate?
- How is my analysis related to others' analyses?
- How might my analysis affect the situation?

## WRITERS AND SPEAKERS

- Who are the other writers and speakers in this situation?
- What have they said about this situation?
- What other analyses are presented?

## RELATIONS

- What is my relation to the situation?
- What are the relationships between writers/speakers, audience, and players?
- What are the relationships to external forces, like culture, religion, or politics?
- What are the power relations?

## AUDIENCE

- Who will read/see my analysis?
- What do I know about my intended audience?
- Who will the analysis affect directly and indirectly?

## MEDIUM AND METHOD

- In what genre will I deliver my analysis?
- What method will I use to convey my analysis?
- How will I distribute my analysis?

## CONTEXT

- Where will my analysis take place?
- Where will my analysis appear?
- What limits are imposed on my analysis?

## PURPOSE

- What am I analyzing?
- Why am I analyzing?
- What does my analysis need to convey?
- Does my analysis serve a larger purpose?

Mapping your situation will generate ideas you can use to compose your analysis. Start by answering these questions about each part of the situation. Begin with your purpose and work outward to relations and networks.

## Writing Projects

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### Essay

Select a text—a film, a book, an essay, a blog page, and so on—and read it carefully. Then conduct a thorough content and rhetorical analysis of the text. Once you feel comfortable with your analysis and your understanding of the text, write an analytical essay that describes and explains the text you selected.

### Visual Analysis

Using any one of the techniques discussed in this chapter, write an analysis of this image.



### Digital

Google Analytics is a service provided by Google that analyzes how a website is visited and used. The service is designed to help businesses and organizations learn more about how clients use their websites. Take some time to learn more about Google Analytics, both what it does and how different organizations use it. Then identify three organizations that make their Google Analytics data public. Analyze the data each provides. Design a web page that uses your analysis to depict how Google Analytics may or may not improve a website's function.

## Research

As digital technologies saturate academic disciplines, humanities scholars have begun to explore the possibilities of using computer technologies in humanities research and teaching. The “digital humanities” have emerged as a central area of studies within the humanities. However, there is little agreement as to what “digital humanities” might include. Conduct some research about the digital humanities, learning how various writers and institutions define “digital humanities.” Analyze several of the definitions that you locate. What are the commonalities and differences among the definitions? Using your research, write a document that analyzes the various definitions and then synthesizes the parts of the definitions that you identify as most useful, elaborating what you see as a cohesive definition of the term.

## Radical Revision

Act 2, Scene 2 from William Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* is a rather famous scene; it is the well-known and often-performed balcony scene. Locate a copy of the written scene. Read the scene and then analyze it, taking into account both content analysis and rhetorical analysis. Write an analysis of the scene. Once you have written your analysis, consider how you might recreate the balcony scene in a contemporary setting using contemporary media. Using the animation storytelling application Xtra Normal, write and design an animated version of the scene that situates the conversation in a context familiar to you and your peers. Use your analysis to ensure that you retain key elements of the scene within your revised approach.

**12.4** Use effective strategies to analyze visuals

## Analyzing Visuals

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Many of the analytical methods and strategies discussed earlier in this chapter about written texts can be applied to analyzing visuals; however, you should also develop analytical approaches that are unique to reading visuals. In this section, you can examine ways of thinking about visuals and develop strategies for analyzing visuals, particularly three key concepts: visual rhetoric, visual literacy, and visual analysis.

*Visual rhetoric* is the study of how visuals make and convey meaning. Visual rhetorical analysis often analyzes the relationship between writing and visuals as a way of better understanding how visuals communicate. Visual rhetorical analysis is different from design analysis in that it focuses on communication and meaning, whereas design tends to focus on the aesthetic.

*Visual literacy* refers to one’s familiarity and ability to interpret meaning from visual texts. Like other forms of literacy, visual literacy is both learned and culturally influenced. Being adept at reading visuals within a cultural situation is visual literacy.

*Visual analysis* comprises many well-developed methods and processes, summarized in the following charts.

General Concepts about Visual Analysis	
Direct analysis	Looks at what is contained in a visual's content. Direct analysis may include identifying various subjects within the image, perspectives (like camera angles), patterns, and so on. Direct analysis questions should evolve from what you see in the visual.
Indirect analysis	Examines what is outside of the visual that helps audiences determine a visual's meaning. For example, if you have been asked to analyze an aerial photograph of the 2010 BP Deepwater Gulf of Mexico oil spill, an indirect analysis would likely reveal information about environmental disaster, ocean currents, oil drilling, and other similar subjects as influencing what an audience takes from the photograph but which are not directly depicted in the image itself.
Visual rhetorical analysis	Examines visual rhetorical tools at play in a visual, just as a writer does in a piece of writing. Visual rhetorical analysis makes conscious choices about how a visual will be designed, produced, and situated, breaking a visual into its parts. Visual rhetorical analysis applies written textual analysis, asking about purpose, audience, ethos, and so on, but it extends its analysis to visually specific rhetorics: use of color, use of space, flow, balance, repetition, and so on.

Within these three types of analysis, direct, indirect, and visual rhetorical, you can also approach your analysis using the strategies described in the following chart.

Strategies for Approaching Visual Analysis	
Technical analysis	Examines the techniques the writer/producer used to make the visual. Techniques for a photograph might include camera angle, hue and saturation, balance, center of interest, viewpoint, lighting, texture, tone, contrast, framing, and perspective. Techniques for a painting might include materials, brush use, color, shape, movement, perspective, tone, and contrast.
Social/situational analysis	Examines what a visual might mean in a given context. Social analysis, for example, might consider what meaning an audience interprets from a photograph of, say, the Changing of the Guard ritual at Buckingham Palace and what social/cultural understanding of that ritual the audience would have to have to interpret that visual. Situational analysis asks specifically how a given context imposes or changes the meaning of a visual.
Content analysis	Examines, through either direct or indirect analysis, what you see or don't see in a visual. Content analysis can scrutinize things like setting, composition, and characters.
Analysis of medium and method	Scrutinizes how a visual conveys meaning specifically because of how it was composed and the medium in which it is presented.
Semiotic analysis	Examines how the signs and symbols of a visual convey meaning.

# Writing Process

## GUIDELINES

Use the guidelines in this chart to plan, review, and evaluate your process for writing an analysis. Each step in the process should support the overall purpose of your analysis.

### SITUATE

- Understand your reasons for conducting the analysis
- Understand how relations affect your analysis
- Identify how the constraints affect your analysis
- Distinguish the role of location in your analysis
- Recognize the speakers or writers in the situation and how they affect your analysis
- Identify and analyze the audiences involved in the situation
- Consider what genres, media, and methods are used in the situation
- Acknowledge how various institutions and power affect the situation
- Consider the ecological relationships

### PLAN

- Confirm your reason for conducting this analysis
- Clarify your purpose in analyzing
- Consider your form for delivering your analysis
- Understand the purpose of the document in which your analysis will appear
- Consider what might be the best genre, media, and method to deliver your analysis
- Begin to take notes

### RESEARCH

- Determine what kind of information you will need to support your analysis
- Conduct research to gather the information you need
- Confirm that your research will be valid within the context of the analysis
- Identify any visuals you may need to analyze or to depict your analysis
- Organize your information

### DRAFT

- Confirm your purpose
- Confirm that your choices in genre, media, and method will be effective within the situation
- Draft and organize the content of your analysis
- Use visual processes to develop any visuals you will need
- Design your document

### REVIEW AND REVISE

- Review your document for clarity and concision
- Review your document for accuracy
- Review your document for degree of detail appropriate to the situation and purpose
- Review your document for extraneous information
- Review your document for organizational approach
- Review your document for explanations of key terms necessary within the situation
- Review your document for style appropriate to the situation
- Confirm your research and citations
- Review your document for visual effectiveness and readability
- Consider revising the title to most accurately reflect the document's purpose

### EDIT

- Proofread carefully
- Correct all mechanical and grammatical errors

### EVALUATE

- Seek feedback from peers (take advantage of peer-editing opportunities)
- Ask for feedback from a representative member of the target audience
- Ask for feedback from an editor in whom you are confident
- Evaluate the usefulness of any feedback you receive and revise accordingly

### DISTRIBUTE/CIRCULATE

- Consider technologies of circulation
- Publish in a form that will be visible within the situation
- Identify methods for increasing circulation (like search engine optimization) within and beyond the specific situation
- Consider audience access
- Identify possible sources of audience response

## Seeking Feedback

Peers, target audiences, and editors can offer valuable observations that will strengthen your writing. You will encourage more constructive feedback from these readers if you structure your questions for them carefully. Consider asking these kinds of questions to get feedback:

### EVALUATION Guidelines

#### INITIAL REACTION

- What are your initial reactions to the analysis?
- What do you see as the purpose of the analysis?
- What are the strengths of the analysis?
- What are the weaknesses of the analysis?
- Does the analysis hold your interest?
- Generally speaking, what is the primary thing the writer must do to improve this document? Are there details the analysis does not present that you thought should be present? Is the analysis focused?

#### SITUATION

- Who do you understand this analysis to be written for, and what leads you to that conclusion?
- Does the analysis fulfill its purpose effectively?
- Has the writer accounted for the audience by explaining all that needs to be explained?

#### READABILITY

- Does the title provide an accurate, clear representation of the document?
- Did you understand the analysis?
- Are there parts that are difficult to follow or understand?
- What organizational strategy does the writer use to present the analysis?
- Are you able to follow the organization of the analysis?
- Is the degree of detail suitable for this analysis?

#### CONTENT

- Does the analysis make sense?
- Does the writer provide a concrete summary or description of the thing that is being analyzed?
- Does the writer provide the necessary information to support the analysis?
- Is there anything particularly interesting that the writer presents?
- Is there unnecessary or extraneous information in the analysis?
- What details stand out for you?
- Does the writer provide extraneous or unnecessary details?

#### VISUALS

- Does the writer use visuals to clarify or explain the analysis?
- If so, are the visuals appropriate to the purpose?
- Do the visuals work in conjunction with the writing or independently?
- Are the visuals clear and easy to read?
- Does the document design distract from or support the purpose and/or readability of the analysis?
- What recommendations regarding visuals do you have for the writer?

#### MECHANICS

- Are there evident mechanical distractions in the analysis?
- Are there sentences that are unclear?
- Are there sentences or paragraphs that are particularly well written?
- Are all references cited appropriately?

## Summary

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To analyze is to examine something carefully. College students analyze texts for three reasons: to participate, to practice, and to model. Analyzing texts involves conducting two kinds of analysis: content analysis and rhetorical analysis. Writing to analyze requires that you combine two important and detailed activities: writing and analyzing. Visuals, like any text, can be analyzed. Analyzing visuals involves the key concepts of visual rhetoric, visual literacy, and visual analysis.

### Chapter Review

1. Why is **analysis** important to your work in college?
2. What is the distinction between **content analysis** and **rhetorical analysis**?
3. What are some strategies for conducting **textual and process analysis**?
4. What are some strategies for **analyzing visuals**?
5. How can you use **visuals** to support your analytical writing?
6. How might you adapt your **writing process** to address analytical writing specifically?

## Thinking and Writing about the Chapter

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The prompt at the beginning of this chapter asked you to think and write about the role of analysis in how you learn. Now that you have read this chapter about writing to analyze, go back to the journal entry or blog post that you wrote in response to the Initial Thoughts prompt and analyze what you write. First, analyze the content of what you wrote in light of what this chapter discusses and then analyze the rhetoric of your writing. What does your analysis reveal about your initial thoughts about analysis?

### Discussion Threads

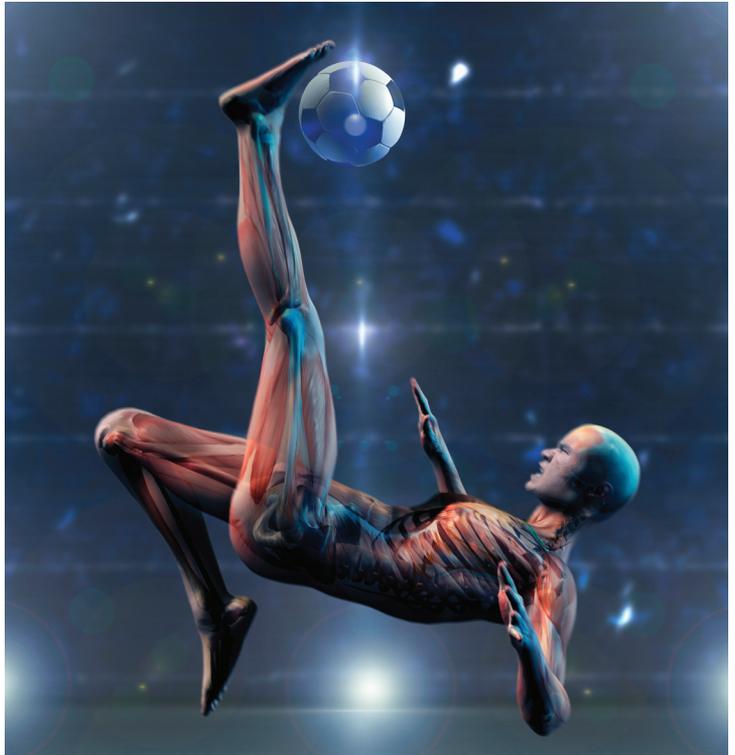
1. *Situations of Writing* claims that we write in college for three primary reasons: to learn, to participate, and to express. Discuss the ways in which analysis and analytical writing contribute to each of those three reasons for writing.
2. Much of this chapter addresses methods and approaches for analyzing texts. In what ways might you be able to apply those methods and approaches to analyzing your own texts, your own writing? Discuss how you might become a better analytical reader of your own writing as a way of becoming a better analytical writer.

### Collaboration

1. Because analytical essays—particularly essays that analyze literary works—are such a familiar college writing assignment, many online clearing houses advertise the sale of analytical term papers, essays, research papers, book reports, and exam responses. In

small groups, take some time to search for sites that sell college-level analytical documents. You can easily find these sites by searching for terms like “analytical essay” or “critical literary analysis.” Once you have found a few such sites, analyze what the sites offer users. Consider how they rhetorically represent their services, how they list the kinds of documents they make available, and how they assess the value of their documents. Identify what they mean by “analytical” in terms of the kinds of papers they have available. You may also want to scrutinize how they obtain the documents they are selling. With these questions in mind as a starting point, begin to develop more specific analytical questions, searching for details about how these companies market and distribute academic analytical documents. Then collaboratively write an essay that presents the analytical information you have gathered.

2. To the right you will find a graphic called “Anatomical man kicking a soccer ball.” Working independently, analyze the graphic and develop a series of questions for analysis. Write a short analysis of the picture. Then, in small groups, compare your analysis with the analyses of others in your group. Collaboratively, examine elements common to each of your analyses and elements unique to each analysis. Then combine the elements of each analysis to write a single, collaborative (and more detailed) analysis of the picture.



## Writing

1. The Declaration of Independence is one of the most significant documents in U.S. history. Schoolchildren in the United States are taught about the Declaration; some are asked to memorize parts of it. Yet, however familiar or unfamiliar the Declaration may be to you or others, the document itself warrants close textual analysis.

You can find a transcript of the Declaration of Independence in the National Archive web pages. Using the analytical tools and approaches discussed in this chapter, write an analysis of the Declaration of Independence. You may want to conduct content analysis and rhetorical analysis, as well as situational analysis of the document. Keep in mind that the Declaration of Independence is complex in its content and form; be sure your analysis is focused.

- Below you will find a photograph taken of a German film crew documenting the daily life of the Maasai people in Narok, Kenya. Using any of the methods or approaches discussed in this chapter, write an analysis of this photograph.



- On June 27, 1969, New York City Police raided The Stonewall Inn, a noted gay bar in Greenwich Village. At the time, such raids were almost commonplace. However, during this particular raid, patrons of The Stonewall decided to fight back. A riot outside the Stonewall ensued, with thousands fighting the police force amid cries of “Gay Pride!” As the first time in American history that the homosexual community fought back, the incident is considered to be the catalyst moment that initiated the gay rights movement in the United States and worldwide.

Conduct some research to learn more about the Stonewall riot, the situation that led to the riot, the cultural atmosphere in the United States that contributed to the riot, and the effect of the riot. Then write a situational analysis of the riot itself, of the outcome of the riot, or the situation that led to the riot.

### Local Situation

Most colleges and universities use their web pages to promote the mission of the school. College and university web pages also provide current students with information about degree requirements, course requirements, and curricular details. Analyze your school’s mission statements and how they are expressed via the Web. Then examine how the web pages represent the curriculum for your major (or a major you might be interested in pursuing). Write an essay that analyzes the ways in which the major you select is represented and how it is ecologically connected with how the mission for the college or university is expressed through the Web.