

## Analyzing a Journal Article or an Essay

Your analysis should NOT contain comments on every question below; instead, develop a select few questions into a detailed and interesting analysis of an article or essay by answering how and why.

### EXAMINE THE TITLE

- What does the author tell you in the title?
- Is the title brief/provocative/relevant?
- Does the title indicate the author's attitude toward the subject?

### IDENTIFY THE MAIN IDEA

- Where is the main idea?
- Could the main idea escape the reader completely?
- Was the main idea stated in more than one place?
- Was the placement of the main idea the best arrangement for the article/essay?
  - What are the advantages/disadvantages in such an arrangement?
  - Did the author adhere to and support the main idea? How?

### ANALYZE THE STRUCTURE

- Can you identify a definite plan of organization?
- Did the author
  - Categorize the material?
  - Chronologically develop ideas?
  - Contrast and compare?
  - Use a combination of any of these?
- Is the structure clear and logical?
- Is there a better way to organize the paper, to portray the main idea better?
- Does the author have logical support for ideas?

- Are there
  - Too many generalizations?
  - Any mistakes in logic?
  - Evidence to support claims?
- How does the author add interest and variety?
- Does the author use
  - Anecdotes, incidents, conversations?
  - Descriptive or narrative materials?
  - Actual situations or definite places?
  - Quotations?
- Is the ending
  - As effective as the beginning?
  - Interchangeable with the beginning?
  - A restatement of a high point?
  - A weaving together of threads of ideas within the article/essay?
  - A "driving home" of the main idea?

#### **EVALUATE THE ARTICLE'S/ESSAY'S STYLE (THE ADAPTATION OF IDEAS INTO LANGUAGE)**

- What is the author's personality in writing?
  - Are individual situations or overall ideas stressed?
  - Does the author's background influence the article/essay?
  - What is the author's point of view?
- What techniques are used to produce style?
  - Vocabulary?
  - Satire?
  - Imagery and figurative language?