

Writing an Art Critique

Learning how to critique a work of art takes practice, and the more you practice the more interesting it gets! The process outlined below is a good starting point for students just starting to write about art, and its also a good refresher for those that practice all the time. Just remember to observe the work carefully, use your art vocabulary, and back up your arguments with facts.

1. Describe	2. Analyze
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Information: Artist's name, title, date, size, and category (painting, sculpture, etc.) • Subject Matter: Recognizable images of people, animals, things, conditions. What are figures doing? • Medium: graphite, acrylic, watercolor, plaster, etc. • Art elements and how they are used: line, shape, space, form, color, value, and/or texture? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which Principles of Design are dominant in the work? How are they created? • What is the focal point? • Unity or Variety? • Pattern? • rhythm or movement? • proportion? • Balance?
3. Interpret	4. Evaluate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a Mood or Feeling you associate with the work? • Similes and metaphors based on things from your description and analysis may help identify the meaning of an artwork. • State your Hypothesis or Theory about the meaning of the work based on your information. • Defend your hypothesis based on facts from your description and analysis, or with evidence from other sources such as art history or art books or magazines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the degree of skill, choices, subject matter and purpose work together? • Does the composition (organization) supports the content or subject? • Is this a new, novel, or inventive treatment of an idea, medium, or style by an individual? • How does the work compare with similar artworks? • Based on what you have seen and written, is the work successful?

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