Analyze: break something down methodically into its parts

The Main Idea

Students need to analyze. In all disciplines, there is a pervasive goal of teachers in all disciplines to have students analyze. The term may even seem difficult, at first, to define the concept or to frame it as a skill. Indeed, the term analysis offers itself to principle and definition since it comes from the root of the Latin word analytics (to divide or analyze). Yet analyzing a painting, a current event, a passage of text, or a conversation, each requires similar steps that may not be instantly obvious to all students.

Underlying Skills

1. Analyze: break something down methodically into its parts
2. Core Connections: provides an at-a-glance view of related national and state standards
3. The Main Idea: gets the gist of each skill
4. Before: Preparing Students to Analyze sections set the stage for successful instruction
5. Shaded boxes provide guidance on introducing students to each move

Before: Preparing Students to Analyze

Students must bring misconceptions to the task of analysis. As you practice analysis in your subject area, be prepared to clarify the skills for the following with your students:

- Suspend your judgment. 
  - Everyone should be trained in evidence. You can use analysis to form an academic argument, but analysis differs from an opinion. 
  - Rhetoric should be trained in analysis. Students need to understand what rhetoric is, what it is not, and how to analyze it. 
  - Students need to be trained in analysis, in how and why you analyze with evidence. 

- Practice Mental Moves. 
  - Students must develop the habit of watching for repetition or other structural elements. 
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- Save student work so that you can show a class a successful example of analysis. 
  - Have students practice the task of analysis on the piece in pairs or groups. 
  - Assign short texts to small groups or pairs. 
  - Practice Mental Moves. 
  - Use short texts to small groups or pairs. 
  - Have students practice making the mental moves and answering the questions described in the Mental Moves feature in the side bar. 

- Before you teach students to analyze a text, case, situation, or event, try these four things:
  - Model: Show students what is that you can show. Show them the successful analysis of a piece broken down into unite or component parts (for example, page 9). Have students practice the task of analysis on the piece in pairs or groups. 
  - Define Expectations: What does a successful analysis in your discipline look like? If it’s presented in an essay, do you expect to see specific types of evidence, a particular type of thesis statement, or a particular conclusion? 
  - Build Content Knowledge: Give students the academic language and understanding they need to look for evidence of text. Do they need to understand terms such as description or dialogue to build understanding? Give students the academic language and understanding they need to look for evidence of text. Do they need to understand terms such as description or dialogue to build understanding?

WALK THROUGH

Detailed definitions clearly break down each concept

Bold headings foreground each term and highlight related keywords
**Practice Mental Moves:** As students prepare to construct academic arguments, have them research ideas and then discuss these ideas in small groups or pairs. Assisting the question listed in the Mental Moves feature in the sidebar. Have these questions on the wall and keep revisiting them so that students internalize them and can transfer them to new learning situations.

**Obstacles to the Moves**

When teaching students to argue, watch out for these areas of difficulty:

- **Faulty Logic:** During an argument or a mistaken assumption (such as a misunderstanding of a plot point, for instance), can undermine a strong argument. Help students avoid such missteps by asking them to research carefully.

- **Lack of Clarity:** Academic arguments often reside in formal papers. Sometimes, students will be so convinced that their audience wants a certain level of formality in writing that they overdo it and lose clarity and precision.

- **Hasty Assumptions:** As with faulty logic, overgeneralizing (say, about a historical era) can lead to a weak argument. Help students be precise.

**Mental Moves**

1. **Make a Claim**
   - What is my position?

2. **Support the Claim**
   - What evidence best supports this position?

3. **Anticipate Opposition**
   - What might an opponent of my position claim?

4. **Consider Your Audience**
   - What type of appeal will best convince my audience?

5. **Integrate**
   - How will I structure my discussion of claim and counterclams?

**During:**

**During: Practicing Analysis**

Students get better at analyzing with practice. Whether they’re trying to make sense of a football play or the design of a football stadium, repetition is key to developing and ideal skill.

Explanatory notes: Watch the “text” in paragraph, a poem, an advertisement, or a video—the key skill in analysis is closer reading and observation. Close reading doesn’t come naturally to many students; practice helps more students put a “read and done” mentality to a habit of sounding and digging deeper.

To give students practice in closer reading, try this:

- Present a short text to the class (for example, a magazine ad, an opening paragraph, or a commercial).
- Have students work in small groups to select key details—words from a text, literal descriptions of a picture, or phrases—that they think might be meaningful. Each group should list at least six.
- Combine the results from all groups on the board. Then, ask students to work with a partner to draw an inference from the list. What overarching emotions or ideas emerge from the list as a whole?
- As a class, discuss the inferences. Could you create a thesis statement about the meaning of the piece based on these insights? If yes, what might it be?

**ELL Focus: Do This One Thing to Help**

Inference is likely to be harder for English language learners (ELL) students than others, even dealing with visual hints, but previous knowledge. Try an inference activity that begins with the visual and allows students to state important details in their own languages before composing their comprehensive statements in English.

**Discussion, Presentation, Technology, and Multimedia**

- **Discuss.** Analyze can occur at many levels. Close reading takes place microscopically, students must practice a meaning in the level of words in order to make sense of a text. But macroscopically, or “zooming out,” inference can also function. Discussing a critical vehicle for the level of comprehension and enabling students to discuss a critical vehicle for the level of comprehension and enabling small group discussions based on literature and on either side of the end of a unit, usually at the beginning or end of a unit.
- **Note Map.** Consider role play as a means of asking students to analyze. Assign each student a character or historical figure. For instance, to represent a discussant—students will have to do the same process of gathering evidence and drawing conclusions to portray a historical personage.

**Discussion, Presentation, Technology, and Multimedia sections cover important classroom considerations**

**ACADEMIC MOVES**
Here is one paragraph from Spencer’s final draft:

After grappling with some of the complicated ideas in the speech and learning the historical context with his teacher, however, Spencer wrote a final draft essay.

Nonetheless, the assignment to analyze a nonfiction text, which he had been working on in his tenth-grade composition class, proved challenging. After reviewing his notes on the speech:

A key step in Spencer’s approach to the text was his annotation of the speech. His teacher and his college advisor, both noted that his essay was solid in its analysis of the speech, but that he could improve his ability to construct more complex sentences. A focus on the ability to incorporate quotes more smoothly, for instance, and on being able to incorporate evidence into his essay, would improve his ability to construct an essay—the ability to incorporate quotes more smoothly, for instance, and the ability to construct more complex sentences.

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Rubric for Analytical Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEL</th>
<th>THESIS AND ORGANIZATION</th>
<th>USE OF EVIDENCE</th>
<th>ORGANIZATION</th>
<th>STYLE, VOICE, AND CLARITY</th>
<th>COMPOSITION AND MECHANICS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The thesis is clear, and introduces an argument that goes beyond a literal level. The analysis is nuanced and introduces an original, interesting insight.</td>
<td>The response is well-developed throughout, appropriately supports the analysis, and introduces an original, interesting insight.</td>
<td>The organization is excellently executed, supporting the thesis with transitions that are clear and support the analysis throughout.</td>
<td>The response is mostly clear and add to the effectiveness of the student’s response.</td>
<td>Few or no errors in usage or syntax are present in the response.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The thesis is clear, and goes beyond a literal level. The analysis goes beyond a literal level with a sophisticated interpretation that the student supports with the selected details.</td>
<td>The response is well-developed throughout, adequately supports the analysis, and introduces an original, interesting insight.</td>
<td>The organization is well-executed, supporting the thesis with transitions that follow the introduction and conclusion.</td>
<td>The response is mostly clear and add to the effectiveness of the student’s response.</td>
<td>Few or no errors in usage or syntax are present in the response.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The thesis is clear, and goes beyond a literal level. The analysis goes beyond a literal level with an interpretation that the student introduces in the response.</td>
<td>The response is well-developed throughout, adequately supports the analysis, and introduces an original, interesting insight.</td>
<td>The organization is executed with some focus and some supporting ideas included in the introduction and conclusion.</td>
<td>The response is mostly clear and add to the effectiveness of the student’s response.</td>
<td>Few or no errors in usage or syntax are present in the response.</td>
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Notes From This Chapter:
What ideas or activities from this chapter do you want to remember as you teach students to analyze?

Planning Page: Analyze

Learning Goal
What will your students analyze? What learning outcomes or assessments do you wish to see?

Notes
What did you decide students will be analyzing? Issues, situations, or works?

Notes From This Chapter
What ideas or activities from this chapter do you want to remember as you teach students to analyze?

Planning Pages provide space for recording lesson objectives.

Reproducible rubrics simplify the assessment process.