

Writing Workshop

Analytical Essay

In this unit, you read several critical commentaries and opinion pieces that examine both the external world and the interior world of the mind. The essays represent the authors' efforts to understand the world and the different ways we think about it. In this workshop, you will learn how to write an analytical essay using a logical structure and textual evidence to support your thesis.



Complete the workshop activities in your **Reader/Writer Notebook**.

WRITE WITH A PURPOSE

WRITING PROMPT

Write an **analytical essay** that focuses on a nonfiction text. Present a well-supported thesis and an analysis of contradictory views and information.

Idea Starters

- nonfiction texts written by authors of fiction that you enjoy
- nonfiction texts written during a historical period that interests you
- nonfiction texts written about a topic or subject that interests you

THE ESSENTIALS

Here are some common purposes, audiences, and formats for analytical writing.

PURPOSES	AUDIENCES	GENRES/FORMATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to analyze a nonfiction text • to provide insight into an important subject or movement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teacher and classmates • parents • literary club members • Web log readers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • essay for class • blog • message board posting • literary review in school newspaper • podcast



TEXAS KEY TRAITS

1. FOCUS AND COHERENCE

- contains a clear **thesis statement**
- identifies the **title** and **author**

2. ORGANIZATION

- uses a clear **organizational schema** to convey ideas
- provides effective **explanation** of and **support** for the thesis
- uses effective **transitions** to show connections between ideas

3. DEVELOPMENT OF IDEAS

- includes **evidence** and **details** from the selection to support ideas
- provides information on all **relevant perspectives** and an analysis of **contradictory views**

4. VOICE

- engages the **audience** with an effective introduction and conclusion
- expresses a unique **perspective**

5. CONVENTIONS

- demonstrates a command of **grammar, capitalization, spelling, usage, and punctuation**

Writing Online



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KEYWORD: HML12-1076

Planning/Prewriting



WRITING 15A Write an analytical essay that includes effective introductory and concluding paragraphs, rhetorical devices and transitions, a clear thesis statement, a clear organizational schema, substantial evidence, information on all relevant perspectives, and an analysis of views that contradict the thesis.

Getting Started

CHOOSE A TEXT

Find a nonfiction text, such as an essay, speech, memoir, history, journal, or letter, about a subject that interests you. Identify the work's title, author, and topic.

▶ ASK YOURSELF:

- What subjects do I enjoy reading about?
- Have any of my favorite authors written on the subject?
- What is the text's topic and the author's purpose for writing?

THINK ABOUT AUDIENCE AND PURPOSE

As you choose a text to analyze, keep in mind that your **purpose** is to develop and support your own analysis of the work. Your analysis should enhance your **audience's** understanding and appreciation of the text.

▶ ASK YOURSELF:

- Who is my audience?
- What do I want my audience to know or think about the work?
- How can I convey my own appreciation of the text to my audience?

ANALYZE THE MAIN IDEA

Remember that nonfiction texts express an idea or insight. To determine the **main idea**, you will need to study the text carefully. Once you identify the main idea, you will need to consider how relevant and valid that idea is.

▶ ASK YOURSELF:

- What does the author express directly?
- What does the author express indirectly?
- How do the writer's voice and use of rhetorical techniques convey key ideas?

ANALYZE THE WRITER'S USE OF TECHNIQUES

Look at the writer's use of rhetorical techniques and literary elements, including **diction, figurative language (simile, metaphor, personification), imagery, irony, repetition, symbol, and tone**. A discussion of these techniques will help you and your audience members gain insight into the text and its main idea.

▶ ASK YOURSELF:

- What effect does the author's choice of words have on the reader?
- What things or ideas does the writer describe through figurative language?
- What words, phrases, or ideas are repeated? What is the effect of the repetition?
- What is the writer's attitude toward the subject?

DEVELOP A THESIS STATEMENT

Sum up your ideas about the text's main idea and its validity in a sentence that will guide the rest of your analysis. The **thesis statement** should make a statement about the text that you can support with textual evidence.

▶ WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

In her essay "The Death of the Moth," Virginia Woolf effectively uses the existential struggle of an insect as an extended metaphor for all of human existence.

Planning/Prewriting *continued*

Getting Started

GATHER SUPPORT

Select two or more key points that support your thesis and give readers reason to accept the validity of your analysis. Use textual **evidence**—**direct quotations, paraphrases, and summaries**—to support each key point. **Elaborate** on each piece of evidence, providing information on other perspectives and analyzing views that contradict your thesis.

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Key Point: The moth symbolizes life and energy.

Support: Quotation: "The same energy ... sent the moth fluttering ..."

Elaboration: Woolf uses the word energy several times to make the connection clear.

ORGANIZE YOUR ANALYSIS

Organize your analysis in a logical manner—either **chronologically** or by **order of importance**. Create a plan to organize your thoughts. Use **transitional words and phrases** to show connections between ideas.

To show chronology, use words such as *after, before, during, then, next, and last*. To show order of importance, use words such as *most important, mainly, and first*. To connect ideas, use transition words such as *also, and, as well as, and like*.

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Title and Author: "The Death of the Moth" by Virginia Woolf

Organization: Chronological order

* **Introduction:** Thesis statement: In her essay "The Death of the Moth," Virginia Woolf effectively uses the existential struggle of an insect as an extended metaphor for all of human existence.

* **Body:** Explain symbolism of moth; use evidence from essay; elaborate on details.

* **Conclusion:** Restate thesis; provide insight with quote about life being strange.

PEER REVIEW

Share your working thesis statement with a peer. Ask: What evidence from the text will help support my analysis?



In your *Reader/Writer Notebook*, develop your writing plan and a working thesis statement. Consider these tips as you gather evidence.

- Reread parts of the text that discuss important ideas.
- Write down quotations that support your key points. (Be sure to write the quotations down exactly as they appear in the text.)
- Think about the relevance and validity of the ideas expressed in the text.



WRITING 13A–B Plan a first draft; develop drafts in open-ended situations that include transitions and rhetorical devices to convey meaning.

Drafting

The following chart shows a structure for organizing an effective analytical essay.

Organizing Your Analytical Essay

INTRODUCTION

- Present background information that provides context for your analysis.
- Provide the text's **author** and **title**.
- Include a clear **thesis statement** about the text's main idea and its relevance or validity.

BODY

- Organize key points in **chronological order** or by **order of importance**.
- Include evidence from the text to support your key points. Elaborate on how the evidence supports your key points or thesis.
- Use **transitional words** and **phrases** to connect ideas and show how they are related.

CONCLUSION

- Restate your thesis, and summarize your key points.
- End your analysis with a final thought or insight for your audience to ponder.

GRAMMAR IN CONTEXT: TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSIONS

Writers use transitional expressions to show relationships between ideas. Transitions can be used to show time, to compare and contrast, to show causation, to emphasize, and to show position, among other things.

Time

*The moth becomes temporarily still; **meanwhile**, she admits, "I forgot about him."*

Compare/Contrast

***However**, as the essay progresses, the inevitable occurs.*

Causation

*She realizes her effort to help is fruitless. **Consequently**, she puts the pencil down.*

Emphasis

***Even** those who shrug at the death of a moth must consider that we all, as living, breathing creatures, face the same fate.*

Position

***Beyond** the moth, she sees a landscape through the window, full of energy and life.*



Develop a first draft of your analytical essay, following the structure outlined in the chart above. As you write, be sure to use transitional expressions to connect ideas.

Revising

As you revise, evaluate the content, organization, and style of your essay. Your goal is to determine if you have achieved your purpose and effectively communicated your ideas to your intended audience. The questions, tips, and strategies in the following chart will help you revise and improve your draft.

ANALYTICAL ESSAY		
Ask Yourself	Tips	Revision Strategies
1. Does the essay have an effective introduction that identifies the title and author of the text being analyzed? Does it include a clear thesis statement?	▶ Underline the title and author of the essay. Double underline the thesis statement.	▶ If needed, add the author's name and title. Add a thesis statement.
2. Does the essay include key points, or reasons, that support the thesis statement?	▶ Bracket each key point.	▶ Add key points that support the thesis statement.
3. Is there sufficient relevant evidence to support each key point?	▶ Put a check mark by each relevant piece of evidence—quotation, paraphrase, or summary.	▶ Add textual evidence to support each key point. Replace or delete any evidence that does not support the key point.
4. Is evidence clearly explained through elaboration? Does the elaboration analyze contradictory views?	▶ Draw an arrow from each piece of evidence to its elaboration.	▶ Add elaboration to explain what the evidence means or to address contradictory views.
5. Is the organizational pattern of the essay easy to follow?	▶ Highlight the key points, which you have already bracketed. If they are not organized in a logical order, rearrange them.	▶ Rearrange body paragraphs into a logical order, such as order of importance or chronological order. Add transitional words and expressions to connect ideas.
6. Does the conclusion restate the thesis?	▶ Circle the restatement of the thesis.	▶ If needed, add a restatement of the thesis.



PEER REVIEW Exchange your analytical essay with a classmate. As you read and comment on your classmate's essay, make sure that you focus on the validity of its thesis statement and the logic of its organization. Discuss whether your classmate has provided clear reasons or key points and supported them with evidence and elaboration. If not, give concrete suggestions for improvement, using the revision strategies in the chart.



WRITING 13C Revise drafts to clarify meaning and achieve specific rhetorical purposes, consistency of tone, and logical organization by rearranging the words, sentences, and paragraphs to employ tropes, schemes, and by adding transitional words and phrases.

ANALYZE A STUDENT DRAFT

Read this student draft, and notice the comments on its strengths as well as suggestions for improvement.

Life and Death

by Julia Morado, Donnellon High School

- 1 A close examination of a seemingly trivial event, a moth's death, can help us explore universal questions. In her essay "The Death of the Moth," Virginia Woolf effectively uses the existential struggle of an insect as an extended metaphor for all of human existence.
- 2 To Woolf, the moth symbolizes life and energy. She refers to the moth with the masculine pronouns "him" and "his." By doing so, she makes his struggle representative of all living things—including human beings. She explains, "The same energy which inspired the rooks, the ploughmen, the horses . . . sent the moth fluttering from side to side of his square window pane." She describes the moth by saying, "Watching him, it seemed as if a fibre, very thin but pure, of the enormous energy of the world had but thrust into his frail and diminutive body." Woolf contemplates that perhaps the moth's purpose was "to show us the true nature of life." The first part of the extended metaphor is clear as Woolf observes that the moth represents the essence of life.

Julia states the **title** and **author** and presents her **thesis statement**.

Her first **key point** is that the moth is a symbol of life and energy. Julia uses **direct quotations** from the text as supporting **evidence**, but she can better incorporate them into her essay.

LEARN HOW **Interweave Partial Quotations** Julia can better incorporate quotations by using only the strongest part of the quoted material. Using strong verbs and direct objects is a good way to interweave quotations into your analysis.

JULIA'S REVISION TO PARAGRAPH 2

reinforces this thought by saying it seemed as if some of that energy
 She describes the moth by saying, "Watching him, it seemed as if a fibre,
 very thin but pure, of the enormous energy of the world had but thrust into
 his frail and diminutive body."

ANALYZE A STUDENT DRAFT *continued*

3 Even when confronted with the representation of “something marvelous,” Woolf confesses that she, like all human beings, “is apt to forget all about life.” The moth becomes temporarily still; meanwhile, she admits, “I forgot about him.” She forgets the moth—and the marvel of life it represents—in the course of her daily activities.

Julia makes another **key point**—humans often take life for granted.

4 However, as the essay progresses, the inevitable occurs. The moth begins to die, futilely struggling and fluttering to the bottom of the window, finally resting on his back on the windowsill. Seeing his vain efforts to recover, Woolf picks up a pencil to help the moth, but realizes the presence of death. Her effort to help is fruitless. As she observes the finally still moth, Woolf imagines him to say, “death is stronger than I am.”

Julia’s analysis follows **chronological order** and uses **transitional expressions** to show it. She quotes textual **evidence** but doesn’t **connect it to her thesis**.

5 Woolf uses the moth’s struggle to contemplate life and death. “Just as life had been strange,” she says, “death was now as strange.” She explores the mysteries of both states through the extended metaphor of the moth’s existential struggle. Human existence mirrors that of the insignificant moth, even those who shrug at the death of a moth must consider that we all, as living, breathing creatures, face the same fate.

Her **conclusion** revisits the **thesis** and adds a final thought for readers to contemplate.

LEARN HOW **Connect Supporting Evidence to the Thesis** Julia uses a quotation as evidence, but she does not connect it to her thesis. Julia revised paragraph 4 to connect textual evidence to her thesis.

JULIA’S REVISION TO PARAGRAPH 4

As she observes the finally still moth, Woolf imagines him to say, “death is stronger than I am.”

In the metaphor of the moth’s death, Woolf’s message is clear: All living things will inevitably succumb to death. In accepting that death is stronger than our will, we accept that there is a larger, more powerful force that controls our fate.



Use the feedback from your peers and teacher as well as the two “Learn How” lessons to revise your analytical essay. Evaluate how thoroughly you have presented and supported your thesis. Also, consider how well you connected your evidence to your thesis.

Editing and Publishing

In the editing stage, you review your essay to make sure that it is free of grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors. You don't want mistakes to distract your audience from focusing on your ideas.



WRITING 13D–E Edit drafts for grammar, mechanics, and spelling; revise final draft in response to feedback from peers and teacher and publish written work for appropriate audiences.

GRAMMAR IN CONTEXT: COMMA SPLICES

A comma splice occurs when two complete thoughts are joined by only a comma. Also called a run-on sentence, a comma splice can be corrected in one of four ways: separate the comma splice into two sentences, change it to a compound sentence by adding a comma and coordinating conjunction, change it to a compound sentence by adding a semicolon, or change it to a compound sentence by adding a semicolon and conjunctive adverb.

As Julia edited her essay, she realized she had incorrectly punctuated a sentence and created a comma splice. Julia corrected the comma splice by adding a semicolon and a conjunctive adverb.

Human existence mirrors that of the insignificant moth, even those who shrug at the death of a moth must consider that we all, as living, breathing creatures, face the same fate.

PUBLISH YOUR WRITING

Share your analytical essay with an audience.

- Submit or post your essay to a Web site devoted to the author of the work you analyzed.
- Create your own blog, and post your essay on it. Add past and future writing assignments to your blog to create an online portfolio.
- Adapt your essay into a power presentation, and present it to the class or make it available on the Web.



Correct any errors in your analytical essay. Make sure that you elaborate and connect your evidence—especially direct quotations—to your thesis statement. Edit carefully, ensuring that your analysis is free of comma splices. Then, publish your final essay where your audience is likely to see it.



Scoring Rubric

Use the rubric below to evaluate your analytical essay from the Writing Workshop or your response to the on-demand prompt on the next page.

ANALYTICAL ESSAY	
SCORE	TEXAS KEY TRAITS
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus and Coherence Focuses consistently on a clear thesis• Organization Shows effective organization throughout with smooth transitions• Development of Ideas Supports a thesis thoroughly, using clearly stated evidence and elaboration• Voice Expresses the writer's unique perspective and engages readers• Conventions Exhibits a mature control of grammar, mechanics, and spelling
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus and Coherence Focuses on a clear thesis, with minor distractions• Organization Shows effective organization throughout, with minor lapses• Development of Ideas Offers mostly thoughtful key points, with a mixture of general and specific evidence and some elaboration• Voice Expresses a perspective that is not unique and does not completely engage readers• Conventions Exhibits general control of grammar, mechanics, and spelling
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus and Coherence Includes some loosely related ideas that distract from the writer's thesis• Organization Shows some organization, with noticeable gaps in the flow of ideas• Development of Ideas Offers routine, predictable ideas and key points with uneven evidence and little elaboration• Voice Expresses a flat or generic perspective and engages readers only slightly• Conventions Exhibits a limited control of grammar, mechanics, and spelling
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus and Coherence Shows little awareness of the topic and purpose for writing• Organization Lacks organization• Development of Ideas Offers unclear and confusing ideas and demonstrates minimal evidence and no elaboration• Voice Exhibits little or no interest in the original text or in analyzing it for readers• Conventions Exhibits major problems with grammar, mechanics, and spelling



Preparing for Timed Writing



WRITING 13B Develop drafts in timed situations.

1. ANALYZE THE PROMPT

5 MIN



Read the prompt carefully. Then, read it again, underlining the words that identify the audience, the topic, and the purpose.

PROMPT

Works of literature are often associated with a literary movement, such as realism, regionalism, naturalism, or modernism. Choose a literary movement that you have studied. Write an analytical essay explaining to classmates how the movement affected literature of the period.

Topic → literary movement
Purpose ↑ explaining to
 ↓ *Audience* classmates

2. PLAN YOUR RESPONSE

10 MIN



Once you have decided on a literary movement, ask yourself some questions.

- What background information will my readers need?
- What literary works or authors can I cite as examples of the movement?
- What effect did the movement have on literature?
- What contradictory views, if any, can I address about the movement?

3. RESPOND TO THE PROMPT

20 MIN



Start writing by introducing and stating your thesis—a statement about the literary movement’s effect on literature. Then, write down your key points.

Organize your response by order of importance, addressing the most important effect first. Then, do the following:

- Provide evidence—examples of authors or specific literary works—to support your thesis.
- Elaborate on how each piece of evidence supports your thesis.
- Conclude your essay with a restatement of your thesis and a summary of your key points.

4. IMPROVE YOUR RESPONSE

5–10 MIN



Revising Compare your draft with the prompt. Does your draft clearly state a thesis about the literary movement’s effect on literature? Does it provide sufficient supporting evidence? Do you end with an insight about the literary movement or its effect on society?

Proofreading Find and correct any errors in grammar, usage, or mechanics. Make sure that your paper and any edits are neatly written and legible.

Checking Your Final Copy Before you submit your paper, examine it once more to make sure that you are presenting your best work.

Technology Workshop

Creating a Power Presentation

You can reach an audience in a new and effective way by presenting your ideas in a power presentation. Modern computer software and other equipment can help you create a presentation that is informative, expressive, and interesting.



Complete the workshop activities in your **Reader/Writer Notebook**.

PRODUCE WITH A PURPOSE

PROMPT

Adapt your analytical essay into a **power presentation** that conveys your thesis and supporting evidence in a clear and visually interesting way.

TEXAS KEY TRAITS

A STRONG POWER PRESENTATION . . .

- includes at least one slide for each major idea of the essay
- uses a consistent and attractive font style and graphics
- includes relevant and engaging images and sound
- synthesizes information from different viewpoints



WRITING 15D Produce a multimedia presentation with graphics, images, and sound that appeals to a specific audience.

Plan Your Presentation

Start planning your power presentation by identifying the basics—your subject, your purpose, a main idea, and the information you want to include. Then, you can begin to shape the material in a way that will engage your viewing audience.

- 1. Plan Your Slides** Your presentation should include at least one slide for each of the following: your thesis statement, each key point, supporting evidence for each point, and your conclusion. For each slide, write a headline and include two or three bullet points. Be sure to include information from a variety of viewpoints.
- 2. Use Graphics, Images, and a Consistent Design** Add borders to your slides if you wish. Consider adding interesting images that relate to your ideas. However, be sure that the images you add do not distract from what you are trying to say. Keep the tone of your slides appropriate for your audience and purpose. For a more serious subject, you might use a plain font for a formal look. For a lighter subject, you might use a playful font and a variety of colors. Be sure to present each headline in the same font style, size, and color. Likewise, present all key points in the same font style, size, and color.
- 3. Consider Adding Music, Animation, or Sound Effects** Adding audio or animation to your presentation is a great way to engage your audience. However, consider the appropriateness of your choices to your purpose, your topic, and your audience. Also, be sure that any music, animation, or sound effects are consistent with the overall tone of your presentation.



Media
Tools

Go to thinkcentral.com.
KEYWORD: HML12-1086

Deliver Your Presentation

ENGAGE YOUR AUDIENCE

Don't simply read through each slide of your presentation. Explain and expand on each bullet point. When you are finished going through all the slides, ask listeners if they have any questions. Thank listeners for their questions, and restate them so that the whole audience is sure to hear what is being asked. As you answer each question, you may want to return to a specific slide if doing so will help you explain your response.

USE VERBAL TECHNIQUES

Be sure to consider how you will deliver your information. Your use of verbal techniques can be just as effective as the slides you are presenting. Although your presentation should be somewhat formal, try to speak in a relaxed manner. Speak loudly enough so that everyone can hear, but not so loudly that you are yelling. Use a slow, steady pace with a natural rhythm, and enunciate your words clearly. Try to sound confident about the ideas you are presenting.

USE NONVERBAL TECHNIQUES

Just as verbal techniques can be used to complement your presentation, facial expressions and gestures can also make your presentation more effective. The following tips will help you make the most out of the facial expressions and gestures that you use:

- Make eye contact with your listeners as you explain the information contained in your slides.
- Use hand gestures to emphasize key points in your presentation.
- Adjust your facial expressions to match the content of your speech.
- Address all sections of the audience during your presentation by alternately facing people in different parts of the room as you speak.



As a Presenter Present your power presentation to a friend or family member. Ask for feedback on the organization and content of your slides as well as on your presentation techniques. Use the feedback to improve your slides and presentation skills.

As a Viewer/Listener Listen attentively to your classmates' presentations. Look at the presenters when they speak, and carefully consider the slides used in the presentation. Identify the thesis and key points of the analysis. If any points seem unclear, ask for clarification when the presentation is over. Pay attention to each presenter's use of verbal and nonverbal techniques, and note their effectiveness.

