

ACADEMIC MOVES

WALK THROUGH

Detailed definitions clearly break down each concept

Bold headings foreground each term and highlight related keywords

The Main Idea gets at the gist of each skill

1

Analyze

break something down methodically into its parts

break down • deconstruct • examine

Analyze: break something down methodically into its parts to understand how it is made, what it is, how it works; look at something critically in order to grasp its essence

CORE CONNECTIONS

- Determine central ideas or themes of a text and **analyze** their development (RL2)
- **Analyze** how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text (RL3)
- **Analyze** how specific word choices shape meaning or tone (RL4)
- **Analyze** the structure of texts (RL5)
- **Analyze** how two or more texts address similar themes or topics (RL9)
- **Analyze** and interpret data to determine similarities and differences in findings (NGSS, MS-PS1-2)

The Main Idea

Analysis is such a pervasive goal of teachers in all disciplines that it may even seem difficult, at first, to define the concept or to frame it as a clear process. Indeed, the term *analyze* appears so often in prompts and academic instructions that it's easy to assume that this is a skill students already possess. Yet analyzing a painting, a current event, a passage of text, or a conversation, each requires similar steps that may not be intuitive to all students.

Underlying Skills

- **Understand genres and conventions.** What comprises a novel? What are the elements of a science experiment, a primary source, or a poem?
- **Recognize tools or elements.** In order to analyze, students must be able to pick out pieces of a text such as rhetorical devices, elements of design, or types of argument.
- **Recognize patterns and structures.** Students must develop the habit of watching for repetition or other structural elements.

Core Connections provides an at-a-glance view of related national and state standards

Underlying Skills showcases the objective of the lessons in each section

Before: Preparing Students to Analyze sections set the stage for successful instruction

Shaded boxes provide guidance on introducing students to each move

Before: Preparing Students to Analyze

Students may bring misconceptions to the task of analysis. As you practice analysis for your subject area, be sure to clarify the need for the following with your students:

Suspend your judgment.

Analysis should be based on evidence. You can use analysis to form an academic argument, but analysis differs from an opinion.

Example: Imagine you're asked to analyze the effectiveness of a speech by the mayor of your town. Whether or not you voted for the mayor or agree with his/her platform is not the point; your analysis must be based on the tools used to convey meaning within the speech itself.

Do more than summarize.

Too often, students who are asked to analyze fall back on recounting only what happens. Analysis involves critical thinking and examination.

Example: An essay prompt asks you to analyze a character in a novel. Rather than merely describing what the character does, you must look at how the author uses tools such as description or dialogue to build the character in a way that creates meaning.

Before you teach students to analyze a text, issue, situation, or work, try these four things:

- **Model:** Save student work so that you can show a class a successful example of a piece broken down into its component parts (see 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 effectively. Do they need to understand terms such as *diction* or *tone*? Do they need to know *how* to read a political cartoon or a data chart? Prepare students for success by giving them the tools to analyze in your content area.
- **Practice Mental Moves.** Assign short texts to small groups or pairs and have students practice making the mental moves and answering the questions described in the Mental Moves feature in the side bar. As you introduce skills such as analyzing, post the moves on the wall and keep circling back to them so that students internalize them and transfer them to new learning situations.

Sidebars
distill the
intellectual
process behind
each academic
move

- **Practice Mental Moves:** As students prepare to construct academic arguments, have them research ideas and then discuss those ideas in small groups or pairs by answering the questions listed in the Mental Moves feature in the sidebar. Post these questions on the wall and keep circling back to 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.** Basing an argument on 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

Argue

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 counterclaims?

**During:
Practicing**
sections get
straight to
the heart of
modeling
usage and
giving students
practice

During: Practicing Analysis

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

In approaching texts—whether the “text” is a paragraph, a poem, an advertisement, or a video—the key skill in analysis is **close reading** and observation. Close reading doesn't come naturally to many students; practice helps move students past a “read and done” mentality to a habit of rereading and digging deeper.

To give students practice in close reading, try this:

- Present a short text to the class—for instance, a magazine ad, an opening paragraph, or a commercial
- Have students work in small group to select key details—word from a text, literal descriptions of a picture, or patterns—that they think *might* be meaningful. Each group should list around ten.
- Combine the words from all groups on the board. Then, ask students to work with a partner to draw an inference from the list as a whole?
- As a class, share and discuss the inferences. Could you create a thesis statement about the meaning of the piece from these insights? If so, 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 when dealing with verbal texts, but pictures bridge language. Try an inference activity that begins with the visual and allow students to write down important details in their own languages before composing their conclusive statements in English.

Discussion, Presentation, Technology, and Multimedia

- **Discuss.** Analysis can occur on many levels. Close reading takes place microscopically; students must practice **zooming in** to the level of words in order to make sense of a text. But macroscopic, or “zooming out,” exercises are also valuable activities. Discussion is a critical vehicle for this level of comprehension and analysis. Small group discussion should happen frequently and can also take place at the end of a unit, novel study, or grading period.
- **Role Play.** Consider role play as a means of asking students to analyze. Assign each student a character or historical figure, for instance, to represent in a discussion—students will have to use the same process of gathering evidence and drawing conclusions to portray a figure accurately.

Mental Moves

Argue

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**ELL Focus:
Do This One
Thing to Help**
sections give
quick-tips for
differentiating
instruction

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

After: Producing sections spotlight students making their academic moves

The task describes a sample student assignment

After: Producing Analysis

Student Example 1: The Analytical Essay

By the end of his tenth grade year, Spencer was one of the top writers in his class. Naturally insightful about literature and abstract ideas to begin with, Spencer acquired skills during tenth grade that improved his ability to construct an essay—the ability to incorporate quotes more smoothly, for instance, and the ability to construct more complex sentences.

Nonetheless, the assignment to analyze a nonfiction text, William Faulkner's short but thorny Nobel Prize acceptance speech, proved challenging. After grappling with some of the complicated ideas in the speech and discussing the historical context with his teacher, however, Spencer wrote a typically strong essay.

A key step in Spencer's approach to the text was his annotation of the speech. Spencer's teacher helped him move beyond simple highlighting to careful zooming in by suggesting he mark the following then conferencing with him about his notes on the speech:

- Words and phrases that convey more than a literal meaning
- Shifts and transition words
- Phrases that seem to sum up a big idea
- Examples of unusual syntax, such as fragments or rhetorical questions

Here is one paragraph from Spencer's final draft:

Faulkner speaks to future writers more than he thanks the givers of the award, which is generally what an award-receiving speech might concern, inspiring them to prevail and reminding them of the worth of the poet in mankind's existence. In the second paragraph, for instance, Faulkner begins to speak of mankind's fears, and how they can affect his spirit—this then leads to the benefits of letting go of these fears: good writing based on universal "truths of the heart." In this middle section of the speech, Faulkner uses diction: "sweat," "heart," "bones," "scars," and "oloids," to produce a very literal image of the human body, expressing the toil that man must labor through to create good universal stories. Faulkner does not write this off as an easy task but one that takes courage to forget all one's fears, lest they end up writing empty stories, ones that leave no mark on any "universal bones." He uses body imagery as a window to describe.

1. Look Closely
Spencer homes in on a single paragraph to illustrate his point.

2. Select Details
Spencer collects a series of specific words that serve as evidence for his argument.

3. Find Patterns
Spencer has broken the speech into three parts for his essay, noting the structural transitions between each section of Faulkner's argument.

4. Infer
Throughout his paper, Spencer looks for more than the literal level of Faulkner's message.

Student examples focus on a range of genres and illustrate the product to look for and the process to get there

Shaded boxes highlight the mental moves as they appear in a student work

Scaffolding With Webb's DOK pages demonstrate how to strategically lead instruction for each skill to drive deeper understanding

Scaffolding Analysis With Webb's DOK
HOW SPENCER WORKED

Level One (Recall)

- *Sample Task:* Annotate or make notes in order to identify and remember appropriate evidence for your analysis.
- *What Spencer Did:* Read through the speech, marking phrases he thought he might quote with particular attention to inferences.

Level Two (Skill)

- *Sample Task:* Organize the details you have found into categories that will contribute to your understanding of the bigger picture. *How do details x and y differ from z?*
- *What Spencer Did:* Analyzed each paragraph of the speech, honing in on the main point and how it contributed to overall meaning.

Level Three (Strategic Thinking)

- *Sample Task:* Plan your argument by considering an overall point and how to support it. *Which groups of evidence can support _____, and how should they be presented?*
- *What Spencer Did:* Developed a thesis statement and wrote the essay by integrating quotations, paraphrasing, and his own interpretations.

Level Four (Extended Thinking)

- *Sample Task:* Compare this piece to others of similar or different genres and, using research and knowledge built over time, analyze it in the context of other speeches and its historical time.
- *What Spencer Might Have Done:* Spencer might have gone on to compare Faulkner's speech to another Nobel acceptance speech, such as Toni Morrison's, researching context and applying knowledge built from other units of study or even from other classes in his comparison.

Reproducible rubrics
simplify the assessment
process

Rubric for Analytical Responses

SCORE	THESIS AND OVERALL ANALYSIS	USE OF EVIDENCE	ORGANIZATION	STYLE, VOICE, AND CLARITY	CONVENTIONS AND MECHANICS
5 Outstanding	A well-developed thesis introduces a sophisticated interpretation that goes beyond a literal level with nuanced and interesting insights.	Ample and appropriately selected details effectively support the analysis throughout the response.	Clear and consistent organization with well-executed transitions excellently supports the analysis, including an excellent introduction and conclusion.	The response is clear and original and employs appropriate stylistic elements for effect in an exceptional manner.	Syntax, grammar, and conventions are correct and add to the effectiveness of the response.
4 Exceeds Expectations	The thesis is clear and introduces an interpretation that goes beyond a literal level.	Appropriately selected details support the analysis throughout the response.	The organization is clear and supports analysis; the introduction and conclusion are well-executed.	The response is clear and employs appropriate stylistic elements for effect.	Few or no errors are present in usage or syntax.
3 Meets Expectations	The thesis is clear; interpretation may not reach beyond literal or obvious levels.	Details adequately support the analysis but may demonstrate some inconsistencies in execution or application.	The organization, including introduction and conclusion, are adequate to support the analysis.	The response is mostly clear and adequately employs stylistic elements.	Minor errors in usage or syntax may be present, but without repetition or undermining overall effectiveness.
2 Approaching Expectations	The thesis is vague or unclear; the analysis may not accurately interpret the work.	There is insufficient evidence to support the analysis or details are not always adequate to support analytical points.	Some flaws in organization or lack of clarity and transitions make the analysis hard to follow.	The response may be unclear or misuses stylistic elements in ways that interfere with voice and meaning.	Patterns of errors in usage or syntax undermine the effectiveness of the response.
1 Well Below Expectations	The thesis is vague or absent, and analysis is inaccurate.	Evidence and details are missing or insufficient to support the analysis.	The organization lacks focus and clarity; transitions may be unclear.	The response is vague or lacks clarity; stylistic choices may confuse rather than enhance meaning.	Significant errors in usage or syntax obscure the meaning and effectiveness of the response.

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Planning Pages provide
space for recording
lesson objectives

Planning Page: Analyze

Analyze: break something down methodically into its parts to understand how it is made, what it is, how it works; look at something critically in order to grasp its essence

Learning Goal		
What will your students analyze? What learning outcomes or assessments do you wish to see?		
Before	During	After
How will you prepare students to analyze texts, issues, situations, or works?	What activities will you use to model, scaffold, and engage students in analysis?	How will you measure the effectiveness of your lesson?
Notes From This Chapter		
What ideas or activities from this chapter do you wish to remember as you teach students to analyze?		

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