

Assignment: Formal Analysis Paper, Due Date (see syllabus)

Format: 2 ½-4pages, 12 point font, times new roman, double spaced, printed and stapled.

The formal analysis assignment is a written analysis of a work of art using proper terminology to describe and analyze the work. Visit the Indianapolis Museum of Art (free admission with student I.D.) and choose an artwork from their collection. Use this artwork to write your formal analysis. Follow the instructions below to write your paper after selecting a work of art from the Indianapolis Museum of Art.

Part 1: General Information

1. In the first paragraph of your paper, explain general information about the artwork that you were able to gather by looking at the label next to the artwork to gather artists name, date (when was it made?).
2. Explain the subject matter. Who is represented in the artwork? What is represented in the artwork?
3. Location. Where is the work of art now? Where was it originally located? Does the viewer look up at it, or down at the artwork? If it is not in its original location, does the viewer see it as the artist intended? Can it be seen on all sides or just one?
4. Technique and Medium. What materials did the artist use? How was it executed? How big or small is it?

Part II: Brief Description

In a few sentences, describe the work. Some terms used in Part III might also be used here, yet Part III will use the terms more elaborately.

1. What does it look like?
2. Is it a representation of something?
3. Tell what the subject is and what aspects are emphasized.
4. Is it a non-objective work?
5. **Which of the elements are dominant in the artwork?**

Part III: Form

This is the key part of your paper to explain the layers (elements) that create the composition and overall form. Part I & II are essentially an introduction leading up to this main section of your paper, the formal analysis. To start, is your artwork two-dimensional or three-dimensional? Use the terms below to describe your artwork in detail. Imagine describing it to someone so that they could replicate the image in their mind.

Art Elements:

1. Line (straight, curved, angular, flowing, horizontal, vertical, diagonal, contour, thick, thin, implied, etc.)
2. Shape (what shapes are created and how)

3. Value (also referred to as light)(source of light, flat, strong, contrasting, even, a range of values, emphasis, shadows, etc.)
4. Color (primary, secondary, mixed, complimentary, warm, cool, decorative, values, contrast, etc.)
5. Texture (actual, implied, repeating, etc.)
6. Space (depth, overlapping, kinds of perspective, etc.)
7. Time and Motion (kinetic art, a sense of a passage of time)

Principles of Design:

1. Emphasis
2. Balance
3. Proportion/Scale
4. Pattern
5. Repetition
6. Rhythm
7. Unity
8. Variety

Part IV: Opinions and Conclusions

In this part of your paper, you will offered an informed opinion about the work. This opinion will be based on the analysis in Part III.

1. Discuss how and why the key elements and principles of art used by the artist create meaning.
2. Support your discussion of content (meaning) with facts about the work that you described in the previous sections.

Tips for Success:

1. Keep your paper concise and use proper terminology, punctuation, and grammar.
2. You must visit the Indianapolis Museum of Art to choose an artwork.
3. Take time to view the artwork at the museum rather than just taking a photo and going home. Explore other artworks that are near this artwork and compare them to your chosen artwork. What makes your chosen artwork unique, similar? Think about the space it is displayed in and the lighting in the space. Is there any sound that contributes to the artwork?
4. While at the museum, take notes about the artwork.
5. Italicize or underline titles of works of art. If the title is long, use the full title for the first time you mention it, but you may shorten the title further in the paper.
6. Use present tense in describing works of art.
7. This is not a research paper, but rather an observation and personal opinion based on your observation. You should be able to get all of the information you need just by visiting the artwork at the museum and coming to class regularly to learn how to use the terms correctly.
8. Turn your paper in on time.