Critical reading can serve many functions. Sometimes you examine a text critically to **analyze** it, sometimes to **compare** it to other texts, and sometimes to **evaluate** it.

To *analyze*means to break a text down into its parts to better understand it. When you read for analysis, you notice the components of a text and how they work together. As you examine those components, you make inferences and interpret the message of the text (both the overt message and the subtler or hidden message). Ask yourself questions like these while reading:

**Audience and Purpose**

* Who is the intended audience? (e.g., scientists, academics, educated laypeople, the general population)
* What is the author’s purpose? (e.g., to inform, to entertain, to persuade, to share new research)

**Argument and Evidence**

* What is the [thesis](https://academicguides.waldenu.edu/writingcenter/writingprocess/thesisstatements)?
* What are the main points that support the thesis?
* What [evidence](https://academicguides.waldenu.edu/writingcenter/evidence) is used?

**Methods (for Research Studies)**

* How was the study conducted? Is it qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods?

**Language and Tone**

* What is the tone the author uses? (e.g., formal, informal, critical, objective)
* How does the author’s use of language and tone support the audience, purpose, and argument? (e.g., specialized terminology, simple word choice, words with emotional connotations)