**Evaluating an Article Summary/Analysis Assignment**

**Using the 5 Elements of *Writing at Fontbonne***

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he first element of writing is **Focus**, which means the concentration or emphasis on a subject or objective. **Focus** may be addressed in the following terms: objectives of assignment, thesis, argument, main point, central theme, conclusions, or recommendations.

What is the **focus** of an article summary/analysis and how is it evaluated?

Essentially, an article summary and analysis assignment will have two paragraphs or sections (depending on the length of the article): a paragraph or section that ***summarizes*** the argument or big idea of an article and identifies key supporting details of the argument or big idea and a paragraph or section that ***evaluates*** the argument or big idea and the use of evidence or support for it.

Thus, the **focus** for this assignment has two parts: summary and analysis.

In order to determine whether or not the assignment meets the **focus** or to what degree it meets the **focus**, ascertain if the assignment contains both summary and analysis. Often, students have more difficulty analyzing than summarizing; therefore, ask students to use a topic sentence that makes an analytical claim. If the second paragraph lacks such a claim, then the paragraph may not have the appropriate **focus**.

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he second element of writing is **Development**, in other words, support and/or elaboration of the **focus**. **Development** may include explanation, description, analysis, narration, exploration, source material or data use, or methodology discussion.

How is **development** assessed in an article summary/analysis?

The summary is **developed** by identifying key pieces of support for the argument or big idea of the article. If a student provides only the main idea of an article but does not show how the writer supports that big idea, then the summary lacks development.

The evaluation or analysis is **developed** by making an analytical claim, which is supported through textual evidence. If a student doesn’t make a claim, then the **focus** cannot be **developed**. Alternatively, the student may make a claim, but then fail to support it by providing textual evidence. Considering these possible scenarios will help you to evaluate **development**.

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he third element of writing, **Organization**, applies to the coherent order and grouping of material. **Organization** may be addressed in the following terms: overarching structure, paragraph structure, or use of transitions.

How is **organization** employed in a summary/analysis assignment and how is it evaluated?

In a summary/analysis, there exists an **overarching structure** and a **paragraph structure**, both of which can be evaluated. In the overarching structure, the writer will mark sections of the assignment by creating at least two paragraphs, one of which is devoted to summary and one of which is devoted to analysis.

The **organization** of each paragraph should minimally consist of a topic sentence that indicates the focus (summary or analysis), supporting details/evidence taken from the article, transitions linking ideas together, and a concluding sentence.

If a student doesn’t provide a clear and focused topic sentence in each paragraph, then the **organization** suffers. If a student intermixes summary and analysis, then the **organization** is problematic. If the student fails to connect points through appropriate transitions, then the **organization** is not as strong as it could be. Keeping both the **overarching and paragraph structures** in mind will help you to evaluate **organization**.

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he fourth element of writing is **Style**, which is the tone conveyed toward material and/or audience. **Style** may be implemented or be evaluated through the following means: word choice, sentence structure, voice, or persona.

How is **style** evaluated in a summary/analysis assignment?

Regarding **style**, it would be appropriate to use academic diction and 3rd person point of view—not 1st person point of view—in an article summary/analysis assignment. Sentence structure should be evaluated in order to ascertain if there are clear and varied sentences. Further, if the point of view shifts, or the diction is problematic due to slang or incorrect word choice, then the **style** suffers.

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he fifth element of writing—**Conventions**—is adherence both to standards of grammar, punctuation, spelling, and to discipline-specific rules of formatting and citation. For example: APA, MLA, AP Style, or other style guides.

Which **conventions** are utilized in a literature review and how are they assessed?

Regarding **conventions** as it relates to grammar & usage, a student should use appropriate **conventions** for both the assignment and the discipline. For instance, it would not be appropriate for a student to write in fragments (grammar) or to adopt nonstandard capitalization (usage) in the assignment.

Systems of documentation are also a part of **conventions**, so students should understand the rules related to citing in-text citations and other formatting rules for a system of documentation appropriate to the discipline, usually APA or MLA.

***If you have questions or concerns***, please contact Teresa Sweeney, M.F.A., Writing Specialist, Kinkel Center for Academic Resources, via email at [tsweeney@fontbonne.edu](mailto:tsweeney@fontbonne.edu) or phone at 314.719.3608.