



School of Liberal Arts

University Writing Center  
"Because writers need readers"  
Cavanaugh Hall 427      University Library 2125  
(317)274-2049              (317)278-8171  
[www.iupui.edu/~uwc](http://www.iupui.edu/~uwc)

---

*Analyzing a Text, Advertisement or Other Source in W131*

To analyze a text, advertisement or other source of information or response for an upcoming paper, try doing the following:

1. Determine what the text or source means before deciding how you feel about it.
2. Define the significant parts or elements of the source and identify how they are related.
3. When you identify these elements, ask yourself the following questions:
  - Which elements are most important?
  - Why are these elements so important?
  - If the elements are repeated, why has the author repeated them?
  - If the elements contrast, why do they contrast and how do these contrasts help me to understand what the source is about?
  - Look for elements that seem unusual or do not fit. Is there something significant about these unusual elements and what new way of thinking about the sources do these elements suggest?
4. Having done this analysis, ask yourself: What multiple or competing ways of interpreting the source arise? Might another reader perceive this source differently?
5. Next, ask yourself: Which of the interpretations of the source do I find the most interesting, the most persuasive or the best to work with?
6. Then ask yourself: In what ways can this most compelling interpretation be supported with evidence from the source? (This is a question that takes you back to the important element identified in #2 and #3.)
7. Finally, ask yourself: What evidence could contradict my favorite interpretation and how can my favorite interpretation be adjusted to account for this contradictory evidence?

**SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS**  
INDIANA UNIVERSITY  
University Writing Center  
IUPUI