

Analysis Sheet

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You'll probably recognize these questions as a variation of the SOAPS analysis. I find it works well, if scaffolded, for all readers.

The first thing I always have students do after reading something is paraphrase it. If it is difficult or dense reading, I may ask them to 'translate' it into their own words. I have specific guidelines for this: It must be done each time they see a shift. That shift is usually a paragraph or stanza, but sometimes it may be only a line or sentence. At first, I will clue them in on this. Very occasionally, I allow them to clump chunks of text, but I give them the clumps.

Once the students have paraphrased, they need to answer the following questions.

1. Who is the speaker of the piece? To whom is he or she speaking?
Annotate the text to show evidence for your answers.
2. What was the occasion for writing this? In other words, what was going on socially, culturally, historically or economically that may have influenced the writer? (I introduce the word context later.) Annotate if you see evidence for your opinion.
3. What is the speaker's attitude or tone about the topic? Annotate for this.
4. What is the purpose of this piece? What does the writer want the reader to do with his message? Annotate for evidence of this.
5. What would author 1 say to author 2 about the topic? Do they agree or disagree? On which points? Make a T-chart or bullet these. How would author 2 respond? Explain in a paragraph or more.

When introducing these questions, I start with a group pair/share activity and then whole group share. To be able to find evidence in the text to support their opinions is difficult for some students, and this gives them plenty of practice. I collect and give a grade to the group answers stapled on top of each person's individual answers.

Finally, I ask the students to annotate for at least three literary or rhetorical techniques that they noticed and explain the effect of these techniques on the message. I also start this activity with paired or small group work before assigning an individual assessment.