

## **WRITING A CRITIQUE (CRITICAL ANALYSIS)**

**A critique is a careful analysis of an argument to determine what is said, how well the points are made, what assumptions underlie the argument, what issues are overlooked, and what implications are drawn from such observations. It is a systematic, yet personal response and evaluation of what you read.**

### **Opening Notes**

Ask yourself:

- What is the nature of the piece?
- Who wrote it, why, and what are his/her qualifications?
- What is the significance of the piece?
- What are its objectives? How well are they achieved?
- What is the design or method for the piece?
- Does the design help the piece achieve its objectives?
- What is the particular appeal or lack of appeal?
- What assumptions underlie the piece? Are they offensive? Obvious?
- How do the assumptions and biases affect the validity of the piece?

### **Organization**

1. Introduce the subject of your critique – the reading under analysis.
2. Review the background facts or issues that must be understood before the point of the reading can be appreciated: significance, design, appeal, and so on.
3. Review the assumptions in the reading that must be understood before you take a position.
4. Make your position statement clear: what is your evaluation? On what basis are you making it, given what you have stated in #2 and #3?
5. Review the author's ideas in light of the position you identified and elaborate on each point that relates to your central position.
6. State your conclusions, reminding the reader of the points you have made and your reasons for making them.

Adapted from Behrens and Rosen, *Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum*, Little Brown, 1982.