

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

Art Criticism Paper

Adapted from: "Art Criticism: How to Criticize a Work of Art," by Rosalind Ragans

Objective: To evaluate and interpret a piece of professional artwork. You will analyze the piece based on the elements of art and the principles of design. You will interpret what the artist is trying to communicate through the piece. Finally, you will critique the piece based on your artistic knowledge.



Your paper will consist of 7 components:

1. A cover page with your name, date of visit, name of gallery/museum, location, title of work, date of work, size of work, and medium. The cover page must also include a photograph, Xerox, computer print, or drawn image of the piece you are reviewing.

You must also attach a ticket stub or business card from the location you visit.

2. **Introductory paragraph** - Describe in general information about the piece and the context in which you viewed it.
3. **Description** – What do you see?
 - a. Study the work carefully. Describe the work in full detail. Use examples from the work.
 - b. Your description should create a clear image of the work in the mind of the reader. Do not analyze, interpret, or judge – yet.
4. **Analysis** – How is the work organized? Look for the elements and principles that seem to dominate the work. Use specific examples to support your statements. **Underline these words in your paper.**
 - a. You must address a minimum of **three** of the elements of art:
 - **Lines** – are they real or implied, curved, straight, directional?
 - **Space** – positive or negative?
 - **Shape or Form** – Geometric or freeform? Is the art 2-D or 3-D?
 - **Colors** – Warm, cool, bright, dull (shading and tinting), soft, bold?
 - **Texture** – Real or implied? Rough, smooth, shiny, dull? What is the texture of the medium and the objects portrayed?
 - **Value** – Light or dark? Does it reflect or absorb light?
 - b. You must address a minimum of **three** of the principles of design:
 - **Contrast** – Variety and visual differences within the work?
 - **Balance** – Formal (symmetrical) or informal (asymmetrical) balance?
 - **Unity** – Does the work hold together visually?
 - **Movement** – How does your eye move around the work? Is there the illusion of action?
 - **Proportion** – What are the size relationships?
 - **Emphasis** – What part is dominant? Subordinant? How is this achieved?
 - **Rhythm** – Are there repeats of elements and images?
5. **Interpretation** – What is happening? What is the artist trying to communicate? Find the meaning in the work, using your intelligence, imagination, and even courage to explain the meaning of the work. This can be based on the facts observed, your analysis of the piece, even your own life experiences. Sometimes the period in which the work was completed, or even the title, influences the meaning of the work.
6. **Judgement** – What do you think of the work? Does the work hold together visually? Does it communicate with the viewer? Judge whether the work succeeds or fails. Your opinion should be back up by what you have discussed in the previous paragraphs. There are three theories of judging art in this step:
 - a. **Realism** – Imitating what we see in the real world.
 - b. **Formalism** – Using the elements of art and principles of design to organize the work.
 - c. **Emotionalism** – The mood the artist communicates.

Which of these theories would you apply to your judgment?

*****You MUST visit a gallery. I will not accept a paper written on a piece of artwork in your home, from a book, or from memory. Attach a ticket stub or business card from the gallery as proof of your visit.**

Art Criticism Paper Rubric

Grade yourself on the rubric BEFORE you submit your paper. I will not accept papers that have not been graded by you first. Be real when you grade yourself. Attach the rubric to the completed paper.

	5 – Above Standard	3.5 – At Standard	2 – Approaching Standard
Cover Page	<p>A cover page with the following information is included: name, date of visit, name of gallery/museum, location, title of work, artist, date of work, size of work, medium. The cover page also includes a reproduced image of the work reviewed.</p> <p>Ticket stub or business card from gallery is attached.</p>		<p>No cover page.</p> <p>No reproduction of the image is included.</p>
Introductory Paragraph	<p>The introduction includes detailed, relevant information about the piece, which sets the reader up to understand the context in which you viewed the piece.</p> <p>The introduction gives an abstract of the paper.</p>	<p>The introduction includes relevant information about the piece, which sets the reader up to understand the context in which you viewed the piece.</p> <p>The introduction gives a brief abstract of the paper.</p>	<p>The introductory paragraph is lacking, missing, not detailed, and/or doesn't explain the context in which you viewed the piece.</p> <p>No abstract is included.</p>
Description (x2)	<p>Gives a detailed account of what the art depicts. The reader can imagine the piece as if they were seeing it for themselves. Does not include interpretation.</p>	<p>Accurately describes the artwork and what it depicts. Provides a somewhat vivid account of the imagery. Does not include interpretation.</p>	<p>Not detailed or not present. The reader cannot imagine what the artwork looks like. Less of a description and more of an interpretation.</p>
Analysis (x3)	<p>More than three of the elements of the elements of art and more than three of the principles of design are addressed.</p> <p>Words are underlined.</p> <p>Analysis is well articulated and thorough.</p> <p>Examples from the work are used to support every statement.</p>	<p>Three of the elements of art and three of the principles of design are discussed in clear detail.</p> <p>Words are underlined.</p> <p>Analysis is thorough.</p> <p>Examples from the work are used to support most statements.</p>	<p>Author has not addressed the minimum of three elements of art and three principles of design and words are not underlined.</p> <p>Analysis is confusing and poorly articulated.</p> <p>Examples from the work are not used to support your statements.</p>
Interpretation (x2)	<p>Clear and thoughtful explanation of the meaning of the work. A solid attempt has been made to discover what the artist is trying to communicate. Examples from the work have been used to support your statements.</p>	<p>Well articulated attempt to explain what is happening in the work and its meaning. Examples from the work have been used to support most of your statements.</p>	<p>Interpretation missing or poorly articulated.</p> <p>No examples from the work have been used to support your statements.</p>
Judgment (x2)	<p>Your detailed and well articulated discussion applies the theories (realism, formalism, and/or emotionalism) with examples from the work to support your answer. You articulate your thoughts about the work regarding its appearance, message, and success/failure as a piece.</p>	<p>Your discussion applies the theories (realism, formalism, and/or emotionalism) with examples from the work to support your answer. You articulate your thoughts about the work regarding its appearance, message, and success/failure as a piece</p>	<p>Theories of realism, formalism, and emotionalism are not applied to the piece. Judgment lacks examples from the work as support.</p>
Spelling/ Grammar	<p>Paper is free from spelling and/or grammatical mistakes. It has obviously been proofread and spellchecked. Sentences are complete and logical.</p>	<p>Paper has 3-5 spelling and/or grammar mistakes. Sentences are complete and logical.</p>	<p>Paper has more than 5 spelling and/or grammar mistakes. No complete sentences. Proofread next time!</p>
Format/ Typed	<p>12 point, Times New Roman Font was used, paper double-spaced.</p>	<p>Paper was not in a readable font and/or not double-spaced.</p>	<p>Paper was not typed.</p>

Total Points: _____ / 65