

Suggested Exercises to Accompany “Summary vs. Analysis”

1. Make an overhead transparency of “Summary & Description vs. Analysis & Argument” and go through the document as a whole group discussion.

A. For “summary” and “description,” read each example and discuss why the claims are *only* summary and description. You can also ask, “what kinds of statements could we add to these claims to make them go beyond summary and description?”

B. For “analysis,” read the example to the class and ask, “what idea is being analyzed? What is providing the evidence for this analysis?”

C. For “argument,” read the example to the class and ask, “what is the arguable claim here?” and “on what analytical claims is this argument based?”

(5-10 minutes total)

2. Use excerpts from student writing for further explanation and practice. This kind of exercise works especially well when a group of papers or other assignments indicates that many students in your class are having difficulty distinguishing between summary and analysis.

A. Cull examples of summary, description, and analysis from your students’ papers. Collect them on a handout or overhead transparency.

B. Go through the examples with the whole class, asking students to identify each statement as summary, description, or analysis (or even just summary or analysis) and explain why they believe the statements are summary, etc. You might even ask them to consider how they might alter a summary statement to make it analytical. OR put the students in pairs or small groups with handouts and have them do the same exercise together.

(using three examples each of summary and analysis: 10 minutes in whole group; 20 minutes in small groups)

Alternatively, you might have students go through their own papers and label summarizing or analyzing statements in the margins. You might want to save this kind of exercise for the student who is having a particularly hard time distinguishing between summary and analysis.