

Text Analysis

A text analysis restates the essential contents of a text in a much more limited number of words than the original text. It also involves presenting the main ideas in alternative wording and leaving out most examples and minor points. A text analysis should contain:

- The author's thesis or main argument
- The aim of the research or the text
- An overview of the content
- Any conclusions made by the author

Content

Early in your analysis, you should provide a short statement that lets the reader know what the reviewed text is about. You should also let the reader know what the aim or purpose of the text is. The distinction between a text's subject matter and its aim or purpose could be illustrated by sentences like: *This article/chapter is about..... Its purpose is to...*

Your text analysis should then give an overview of the main points of the text and outline the key evidence supporting the author's claims or arguments. There is no need to recount all the data or evidence offered by the author. Instead, present the information that is most compelling and convincing. Make sure you have presented enough material for your reader to be able to follow the logic of each important argument or section.

Structure

You should roughly follow the original text's order of presentation and its chain of argument. Your writing should give the same relative emphasis to each area of the original text. This helps provide your reader with an accurate view of the original text.



Style

You will need to use reporting verbs to help communicate your summary of the text. Reporting verbs are words like *argues*, *states* and *claims*. Here are some ways they can be used:

Sommers (2002) argues that.....
The research indicates that.....
The authors believe that.....
Joling (2008) describes the situation as.....
Smith and Lee (2011) present their data.....
Collin et al. (2012) define this skill as.....

Tip

Once you have written your text analysis, reread it with these questions in mind:

Would someone who has not read the original text have a good sense of what it is about after reading this summary?

Could I read this summary aloud to the author in the honest belief that it accurately summarises their work?

If the answer to either question is 'no', modify your work.

Sample text analysis

Here is an example of a text analysis of a journal article by a Bachelor of Social Work student. What do you think makes this a good text analysis?

The significance of a trusting relationship between young people and social workers is emphasised in Jobe and Gorin's (2013) article and supported by information gathered from interviews with 24 young people. The interviews revealed that there are several key factors that contribute to the trust being built between the social worker and young person including being able to express themselves, having a consistent relationship with one social worker, and having regular meetings to be kept informed. The authors argue that unfortunately these needs are not always met due to lack of resources.

The authors note that their research findings echo earlier research conducted in this area. Previous studies found that relationships with social workers are valued by children and young people "when they feel their views have been taken into account and kept informed about what is happening" (Munro, 2010, as cited in Jobe & Gorin, 2013, p.430). Furthermore, it has been found that resource issues such as lack of social work staff, poor social work retention rates, large volume of referrals, and time-consuming system processes impacts immensely on the relationships between the social worker and child.

Jobe and Gorin's (2013) study involved interviewing 24 young people aged from 11 to 18 years old who were referred to Children's Social Care Services in the UK. The interviews revealed that a good relationship with a social worker was seen as crucial by the young people for both disclosure and engagement with services. Almost of the young people interviewed based their opinions of the service on their relationships with individual social workers. The authors highlight that this, however, is at odds with the current system where cases are passed between units so there is little consistency and young people have to tell their stories to numerous social workers. The authors hope that their paper will influence authorities to make changes that put social workers' relationships with young people at the centre of children's services.

References

Jobe, A., & Gorin, S. (2013). 'If kids don't feel safe they don't do anything': Young people's views on seeking and receiving help from Children's Social Care Services in England. *Child and Family Social Work*, 18(4). 429-438. doi:10.1111/i.1365-2206.2012.00862.x