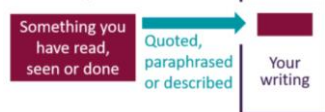


Critical Vs Descriptive Writing

This table defines the differences between **descriptive** and **critical writing**.

Descriptive writing = informing of what you have read, done or seen



Descriptive writing is shown on the left, this is a writing style to **try and avoid** when writing academically as it does not show an advanced understanding of the complexity of a subject.

Instead, focus on **developing your critical writing skills** that will enable you to identify how important a factor is within a topic and how various information and theoretical aspects both relate and contradict one another.

Critical writing = using something you have read, done or seen to **persuade** the reader of your position



Descriptive writing	Critical writing
States what happened...	Identifies the significant points of what happened.
States what something is like...	Evaluates the strengths and weaknesses attributed to something.
Explains the story...	Evaluates certain information against other research and theories that are prevalent within the topic area.
Explains what the theory is about and the key academics that have developed the theory.	Discusses the relevance of a theory in relation to the topic. Examines how different academics have interpreted and developed the theory in various ways.
States the methods that are used in the research.	Identifies exactly why the methods are useful for the certain type of research and aims/questions.
Describes the time at which research/events occurred.	Why is this time significant? Clearly, identify outside effects!
Lists the different interpretations of a theory.	Critically compares/contrasts each theory – which one is the most relevant to your research/essay question?
Offers broad and sweeping conclusions.	Draws well-defined and concise conclusions that reflect and summarise the content of the essay and argument.
Lists the various links between theories.	Clearly develops the links between each theory, considering the effect that this understanding has upon the topic area.

Critical Vs Descriptive Checklist

Use the below checklist to check your own writing, or get a peer (another student) to help you.

	Item	Okay ?	Comment
Critical vs. descriptive writing	Is there a good balance between critical and descriptive writing (generally more critical writing than description)?		
Arguments	Are the arguments supported using evidence from other sources (not just the writer's own ideas)?		
	Is more than one source used?		
Analysis and Evaluation	Does the writer analyse the evidence from other sources, e.g. by breaking it down, comparing or contrasting, categorising, organising?		
	Does the writing evaluate the evidence from other sources, e.g. by identifying strengths and weaknesses, critiquing, criticising, making judgements?		
Conclusions	Are the writer's conclusions justified? Is there a clear line of reasoning leading up to the conclusions?		



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