

# What is a critique?

A critique is an oral discussion strategy used to analyze, describe, and interpret works of art. Critiques help students hone their persuasive oral information gathering and justification skills.

The primary goal of our critiques is to highlight and analyze the meanings of the work being presented. In this way, we will help each and help ourselves to focus our future work toward the specific meanings we want to convey.

During the critique, you will be asked to recall specifics of the work you just experienced. For the first two critiques, you will be **required** to take notes during the presentation of your fellow students' work. Use this guide to know what to take notes on.

## A. Description

Describe the work without using value statements such as "It is good" or "I like it."

- What is the title?
- Describe the subject matter. Are there recognizable images or sounds?
- Describe the important aesthetic elements of the work (i.e., framing, composition, space).
- Describe the technical qualities of the work (i.e., lens choice, focus, fidelity, timing).
- Describe the work in its space. Where and how are you experiencing it?

## B. Analysis

Describe how the work is organized as a complete whole. Use your observations about the aesthetic and technical qualities from the previous section.

- How is the work constructed or planned (i.e., order, timing, shape, flow)?
- Identify some of the patterns or differences throughout the work (i.e., images, sounds, compositions).
- Identify some of the points of emphasis in the work (i.e., directing of the eye, highlighting certain parts of objects or spaces).
- What are the relationships between objects and subjects? How does the work 'treat' the objects and subjects?
- What does the work 'think' about its subject? (i.e., it talks about love, but it doesn't talk nicely about love)

## C. Interpretation

Describe what the work helps you to feel and to think about. Use your observations and ideas from the two previous sections to support your answers:

- Describe the expressive qualities you find in the work. What would you say the emotional 'tone' of the work is (i.e., sad, happy, eerie, joyful)?
- What does the work expect you to know? What does it teach you?
- How does the work relate to other ideas or events in the world or in your other studies?
- Think of the work as a kind of essay, asking and then answering a question. What is the question? How does it resolve it?
- What is the theme of the work? What is it about?