



Analyzing Prompts: Strategy Guide

The following questions should be used to analyze and mark a writing prompt. A sample prompt has been provided below.

1.) What is the prompt asking you to do?

- Circle directive words in the prompt like analyze, describe, argue, etc., and underline what you're being asked to do. Sometimes prompts include questions. These questions should be turned into statements. Begin your statements with a verb that best describes what you have to do to answer the question. Circle the verb and underline what you're being asked to do.

Possible Questions	Turning Questions into Statements
What is the author's attitude toward the subject?	Analyze the author's attitude toward the subject.
Does the author provide credible evidence?	Evaluate the credibility of the evidence.

2.) How can I use the prompt to help organize my paper?

- Number the verbs you have circled in an order that makes sense to you and your reader.

3.) Who is my intended audience?

- Place a box around the intended audience if it is stated directly. If the intended audience is suggested, write the intended audience in the margin and place a box around it. If the prompt does not specify an audience, ask your teacher for guidance or write to a general academic audience.

4.) What sources (if any) am I being asked to use?

- Write the name of the source(s) next to the prompt.

Example of "Analyzing a Prompt"

Melissa Healy offers a perspective on social media that challenges a common assumption among adults that constant "electronic chatter" produces teens who are socially underdeveloped and withdrawn. Write an essay for a parent magazine explaining how you and your friends use social networking. Using your own experiences and the research in Melissa Healy's article, construct an argument for social media sites. Make clear for parents how teens could benefit from spending their time in the "digital world."

Source:

Healy's text and personal experience