Analysis

Try repeating, questioning, and reflecting onthe use of individual words or phrases. Do not go overboard here, but every now and then, put pressure on a text’s phrasing, a key metaphor, etc.

Are there any places in the text where the author oversimplifies the situation, establishes a false dichotomy, or relies on another logical fallacy? Why? (See the Writing Center’s handout, “Overview of Logical Fallacies)

Ask what the author’s standpoint is. Who is the author speaking for or “representing” in this piece? Who is the author speaking *to* in this piece? What can the author see – and what does the author overlook – by virtue of where he or she is standing? (For instance, a woman writing about childbirth has one standpoint; a man has another.)

Pay special attention to the beginning and ending of each text. Writers/artists usually choose their opening and closing moves carefully. What effect do these moves have?

Ask yourself what is conspicuously absent, as well as what is present, from the text’s account of a topic.

Evidence

Direct quotations

Facts that support a claim

Historical details that provide context for (and possibly complicate) a claim

Biographical information about important people in your paper

Descriptions of visuals (the layout of a website, a photograph that accompanies a headline, the shape of a building or room, the opening shot of a film)

Description of music/sound

Description of a text’s structural logic (including how one paragraph or example leads to another in a printed text or how one shot/scene leads to another in a film)