

Scientific Article Critique: The Purpose of a Text

This is where you start, by first evaluating an article and trying to figure out the purpose for its creation. You must be able to think as the author of this document would.

Try to avoid statements such as “I think the author / document means this...” This kind of statement is based on your opinion. Practice saying / writing “The author / document means this... because it is supported by ____ (give evidence from the text).”

Items to consider while rereading:

- Why was this article written?
 - Did the author create this piece to inform, present an analysis, editorial, as a feature, etc.?
 - Is the intent of the article to present information, sway the opinion of the reader, express opinions, etc.?
- Why did the author choose the format presented (graphics, style of language, layout, etc)?
- Who is the intended audience?
 - Who was the author trying to reach?
- What does the article “say”?
 - Is there more to the article than what it appears to be?
 - What sources does the article cite as evidence?

Performance Based Assessment: Letter to Editor Critique of a Scientific Article

Due Date _____

Your first task will be to read several articles on a current hot news topic in science to evaluate the author's scientific prowess. Now that you've assessed the validity of a number of scientific articles and have selected the dodgiest of them all, you're next task is to make sure this rubbish doesn't continue to circulate the internet.

As a concerned citizen your goal is to write a letter to the editor of the publication that created the pseudoscience article masquerading as a valid scientific article. Your letter should evaluate the reliability of the article, scientifically address the shortfalls through identifying and elaborating on specific passages in the article that present problems. In addition, your letter should make suggestions about how the editor might remedy the situation by making specific corrections.

Here are ways to show your understanding through your letter:

- Paragraph 1
1. Write in a neutral, objective and scientific tone.
 2. Create a statement that assesses the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in the article support the author's claim (see details in paragraph 2).
 3. Explain how the use of language in the article is used to incite specific reactions in the reader.
- Paragraph 2
1. Evaluate the reliability of the article by identifying quotes that specifically reference at least **TWO** of the following to help assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence:
 - Pseudoscience
 - Opinion
 - Persuasive language
 - Active voice
 - Experimental Design
 - Correlation versus causation
 - Jumps in logic
 - Lack of controls
 - Improper citations
 2. Provide suggestions for correcting any misinformation

Upon completion, this letters will be sent to the editor of the publication for review.

Pip, pip....cheerio!

Rubric for Article Critique (25 points):

Level	Task-Specific Clarification
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter not submitted.
1-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter is not written in a neutral, objective and/or scientific tone. • Introductory statement does not clearly assess the reasoning and evidence support the author's claim. • Does not clearly explain or just states how use of language is used to incite specific reactions in the reader. • Incorrectly identifies examples in the reliability of the article or states without supporting quotes. • Suggestions for correcting misinformation are not realistic.
3-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter is written in a neutral, objective and/or scientific tone, with many spelling/grammatical errors. • Introductory statement assesses the reasoning and evidence support the author's claim citing one specific piece of evidence correctly. • Describes one example of how use of language is used to incite specific reactions in the reader correctly. • Correctly identifies one specific example in the reliability of the article or states with supporting quote. • Provides a suggestion for correcting misinformation presented by the author.
5-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter is written in a neutral, objective and/or scientific tone, with few spelling/grammatical errors. • Introductory statement assesses the reasoning and evidence support the author's claim citing at least two specific pieces of evidence. • Explains at least two examples of how use of language is used to incite specific reactions in the reader. • Correctly identifies at least two specific examples in the reliability of the article or states with supporting quotes. • Provides a logical suggestion for correcting misinformation presented by the author.
7-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter is well written in a neutral, objective and/or scientific tone. • Introductory statement clearly assesses the reasoning and evidence support the author's claim citing more than two specific pieces of evidence. • Clearly explains at more than two examples of how use of language is used to incite specific reactions in the reader. • Correctly identifies more than two specific examples in the reliability of the article or states with supporting quotes. • Provides a logical suggestion for correcting misinformation presented by the author for each incident cited.