

# WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DESCRIPTION AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS?

(adapted from Moon, cited in Cottrell 1999:23)

| <b>Descriptive writing</b>                | <b>Critical/analytical writing</b>                     |
|---|--|
| States what happened                      | Identifies the significance                            |
| States what something is like             | Evaluates (judges the value) strengths and weaknesses  |
| Gives the story so far                    | Weighs one piece of information against another        |
| States the order in which things happened | Makes reasoned judgements                              |
| Says how to do something                  | Argues a case according to evidence                    |
| Explains what a theory says               | Shows why something is relevant or suitable            |
| Explains how something works              | Indicates why something will work (best)               |
| Notes the method used                     | Indicates whether something is appropriate or suitable |
| Says when something occurred              | Identifies why they timing is important                |

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| States the different components | Weighs up the importance of component parts                |
| States options                  | Gives reasons for the selection of each option             |
| Lists details                   | Evaluates the relative significance of details             |
| Lists in any order              | Structures information in order (eg. of importance)        |
| States links between items      | Shows the relevance of links between pieces of information |
| Gives information               | Draws conclusions  |