

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DESCRIPTION AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS?

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

Descriptive writing	Critical/analytical writing
States what happened	Identifies the significance
States what something is like	Evaluates (judges the value) strengths and weaknesses
Gives the story so far	Weights 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 the 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