

Process Analysis

In process analysis, the writer describes how to do something or how something happens by describing the steps or stages in the process. The writer breaks down the process into steps and describes them in detail in order to inform or persuade the reader about that process. Process analysis may be used to describe a simple process such as how to bake a cake or change the oil in a car, or it may be used to describe a complex process such as how a scientist conducts an experiment or how Congress passes a law.

Examples of Process Analysis

Peer Example Process Analysis Paragraph



Alicia

“In both my paragraph and essay, I analyzed the process I follow when breaking up with a boyfriend, and I also tried to persuade my audience that there is no point in hurting someone unnecessarily.”

How to End a Relationship

When it comes to breaking off a relationship, I try to follow the golden rule I learned as a child in Sunday school: I try to treat others the way I would want to be treated myself. First, I try not to break up with a boyfriend until I'm sure the relationship can't be saved. I tell my boyfriend if one of his behaviors is bothering me, and I try to work out conflicts before they get out of hand. Even if he chooses not to change his behavior, at least I have given him a chance. If nothing else, giving a boyfriend a chance to change makes me feel less guilty about breaking up. Once it's clear that a break up is inevitable, I try to tell him as quickly and kindly as I can. There is no point in hurting someone unnecessarily, so I try to be firm but kind. I let him know that he's a great person and I still care for him, but I'm no longer in love with him and I'm not interested in continuing the relationship. Even though following this process may take longer than the cruel-and-quick method, the results are worth it. I feel good about myself, and I've managed to remain friends with many of my ex-boyfriends.

Peer Example Process Analysis Essay

Alicia

How to End a Relationship

According to Paul Simon, “There must be fifty ways to leave your lover.” Unless a woman intends to marry the first man she goes out with, breaking up with a boyfriend is inevitable. Methods of breaking off a relationship are as different as the people who practice them and can range from cruel to kind. One of my girlfriends swears by her quick-and-dirty method. She starts going out with her boyfriend's best friend if she wants to break up. She swears it works every time. Even though her technique may be fast and sure, I prefer a slower, kinder method. I try to follow the guidelines I learned as a child in Sunday school: I try to treat others the way I would want to be treated myself. First, I try not to break up with a boyfriend unless I'm sure the relationship can't be saved. I try to work out conflicts and problems before they get out of hand. I let my boyfriend know if one of his behaviors such as smoking bothers me, and I tell him if I am feeling ignored when he watches football for three hours on Saturday night. Even if he chooses not to change his behavior, at least I have given him a chance. It's a technique I learned at work from a supervisor who said she never fired anyone without giving her a chance to improve her shortcomings. If nothing else, giving a boyfriend a chance to change makes me feel less guilty about breaking up.

Once it's clear that a breakup is inevitable, I try to tell my soon-to-be ex-boyfriend as quickly and kindly as I can. My mother always told me, "What goes around, comes around," and I've tried to take her advice into consideration in the way I tell a boyfriend that I'm not interested in continuing the relationship. There is no point in hurting someone unnecessarily, so I try to be firm but kind. I avoid saying things like "I'm breaking up with you because you're a jerk or a slob." Instead I try to let him know that he's a great person, but that I'm no longer in love with him and I'm not interested in continuing the relationship. Even though following this process may take longer than the cruel-and-quick method, the results are worth it. First of all, I feel good about myself and feel like I've lived up to my own standards by not hurting anyone unnecessarily. Second, by being kind, I can often remain friends with my ex-boyfriends. It's always better to keep a friend than to make an enemy. My ex-boyfriends have helped me fix a flat tire and repair the gutters on my mother's house. Especially in a small town like this one, it's wise not to have everyone you ever dated saying mean things about you behind your back.

Organization of Process Analysis

The process you are analyzing will dictate the structure of your paragraph or essay. Break the process down into its component parts (or steps) and structure your writing around logical divisions in the process you are analyzing.

Thesis Statements for Process Analysis

The thesis or topic sentence names the process that will be described or analyzed. Often the thesis contains an attitude or opinion about the process.

Changing a tire is easy if you follow the right steps.

This thesis lets us know that the process to be analyzed is changing a tire, and it gives us an opinion that it is easy if you follow the right steps.

You don't have to be Italian to make pasta carbonara.

This thesis also announces the process and indicates an opinion.

Anyone can fail a class if she tries hard enough.

The subject is failing a class, and the opinion is that you have to make an effort to do it. It's a good bet the tone of this paper is going to be sarcastic.

Bathing a dog doesn't have to be a miserable experience for either party.

The topic is bathing a dog, and the opinion is that it doesn't have to be unpleasant.

Transitions

Transitions for process analysis are generally time and sequence markers:

afterward	in the end
at last	meanwhile
at the same time	next
at this point	soon after
by this time	subsequently
eventually	then
finally	to begin with
first, second, third, etc.	

Tips on Planning Process Analysis

1. First, divide the process into logical major parts. For example, if you are describing how to buy a car, you might want to divide the process into the actions you take before you go to a dealership (consult *Consumer Reports*, talk to friends, prepare a list of questions, etc.); actions you take when you are negotiating.
2. Next, list the individual steps or stages in the process, making sure not to leave out any steps, including any preparation that might be necessary. For example, if you were describing how to change a tire, you would want to include directions on how to jack up the car properly before changing the tire.
3. Describe each step in detail. Try not to leave anything out. Remember that your readers may not be familiar with the process you are describing, so your directions will have to be explicit and complete. For example, if you are writing to a general audience about how to change a tire and include the direction "Remove the lug nuts," you shouldn't assume the reader knows what lug nuts are or how to remove them; you will have to explain these details.
4. Anticipate any problems that might arise at each step in the process, and tell the reader how to avoid or remedy the problem. For example, if you are describing how to change a tire, you would want to explain what to do if any of the lug nuts stick.

Avoid incomplete directions. For example, if you forgot to tell your reader to add baking powder to the cake batter, more than likely the cake will not rise. If you forget to tell your reader to engage the parking brake before he or she jacks up the car, your reader could be seriously injured.



