

Review for Formal Analysis

RUBRIC

- I. The essay begins with a clear **statement of the thesis** that concisely summarizes the argument being made in the essay. /10
- II. The essay **argues it's thesis well**; it is a logically organizes presentation of an argument that flows convincingly from point to point. /20
- III. The essay provides an **accurate description** of the object and its **key formal aspects** while building toward an analysis of how these formal aspects are combined by the artist to create a particular effect. /40
- IV. The essay uses vocabulary introduced in the course. /15
- V. The essay is clearly written with no awkward or confusing sentences or inappropriate word choices; adheres to the conventions of formal academic writing. /15

TO DO

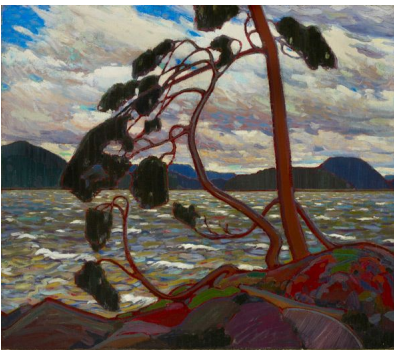
Step 1: Intro to Formal Analysis

Formal Analysis: not merely an itemization or description of all the formal aspects of a particular artwork.

- Thinking of the artwork in formal tone.

Thesis is the central claim.

Use form to create meaning; significance, analysis formal choices; not in the larger sense, don't dwell on significance.



Tom Thompson's "The West Wind" is an iconic work in history of Canadian art.

1. Make a list of first impressions; describe what you see, questions will unleash.
2. Now, a more systematic list.

LINE → lots of line, outline of the trees, mountains, foreground shapes on the rocks.

→ Curves of the branches give the sense of movement.

→ Horizon line contrast to tensioned branches

→ The energy in the branches had diminished a bit by how stiffly they've been arranged.

SHAPE → Triangular composition by internal movement from tree, flat areas of colour contrasting with the curved areas in the water and sky.

→ Foreground, middle-ground, and background.

→ Space isn't critical in this work.

VALUE → Light and dark are used for dramatic effect.

COLOUR → Most important; foreground; there is red & green as complementary colours in the tree.

→ Coolness of the blues and greys from the clouds.

→ Blue & orange and ochres are complementary in the sky and lake.

Thesis 1: Tom Thompson's large oil on canvas, "The West Wind" is a study in contrast between formal elements that imply energy and movement and those that suggest stability.

Thesis 2: Tom Thompson's large oil on canvas, "The West Wind" is a study in contrast between formal elements that imply energy and movement and those that suggest stability. The artist's use of horizontal and vertical lines flat areas of colour, as well as the careful design of key aspects of the composition all contribute to a sense of stability. In contrast, his use of curving lines, dynamic juxtaposition of the bright colours, lively agitated brushstrokes in the sky and water, and dramatic tension between light and dark all suggest dynamism and immediacy.

Thompson, like other members of the group of seven, were early influences in his career as a commercial illustrator by the stylistic conventions of **art-nouveau**.

Art-Nouveau: harmonious compositions, decorative stylization, often involves graceful curves, often rendered with contour outline.

Step 2: Take an "AGO Tour" with class.

Lawren Harris' "Lake and Mountains".

Jean-Paul Riopelle "Chevreuse II"

Kota Artist, Gabon, "Reliquary Guardian Figure"

Peter Paul Rubens, "The Massacre of the Innocents"

Franz Hals, "Isaak Abrahamsz"

Arent Aerntsz, "Skaters on the Amstel"

Salomon Von Ruysdael, "The Ferry Boat"

Hendrick Andriessen, "Still Life (Vanitas)"

The Salon and Modern Gallery

REQUIREMENTS

Length: 1250 words.

Double-spaced

Appendix with images of your work.

TITLE PAGE: Essay title, course number and title, name, student number, tutorial number, name of TA, name of course director.

**Apply vocabulary and techniques learned in class, without becoming involved in a discussion of the object's larger meaning; not a discussion of the works social or political meaning.*

**Your thesis statement should also tell us some basic facts; artwork you are looking at, who made it, the date and which gallery it's in. → Should amount to no more than one short paragraph.*