Critical writing examples

Example 1: 3rd Year Film Student

Roland Barthes' (1978) essay *Rhetoric of the Image* explains semiotic theory as applied to moving image and the two levels of meaning of the signified, the denotational and the connotational. The denotational is the literal meaning of the sign, that detonates something real. The connotational meaning is the interpretation of the sign and the cultural and contextual association of the sign…If we take formal aspects of the images seen in *The Birds* (1963) to analyse the visual metaphors used, the connotations of the sign create deeper meaning of the text. The character of Lydia Brenner is consistently dressed in black and white; the relationship of these two colours throughout the film is allegorical to the relationship between birds and humans, and the contrast between the colours signifies morality suggested by its association to light and darkness (Allen, 2002, p. 282) …Black and white or darkness and light are often used to signify good and evil, and the connotational meaning that the audience interprets are culturally grounded. This visual meaning is furthered at the end of the film. As the central characters drive away from Bodega Bay birds flock above the car, but now are segregated into black and white, beginning to restore the natural order of the animals…The restoration of the natural order brings an element of hope that the attacks will subside, without a traditional 'happy ending' in place. The metaphor of black and white is another example of Hitchcock visually translating thematic devices from du Maurier's (1952) short story to evoke the same emotive response from the audience, and replicate the stark horror of the original in an inventive way for the different medium.

Descriptive writing: example questions	Critical Analysis: example questions
• What does the evidence state? • What is the subject matter? • What is the context behind this information?	• How can this information be applied? • So what does it mean or show? • Why is it significant? • So what conclusions can be drawn?

Critical writing examples

Example 2: 3ʳᵈ Year Graphic Communication Student.

Since the creation of Channel 4, the brand has set out to be 'radically different… [and] provide innovative programming and cater for minority audiences not served by existing channels' (Brown, 2007), suggesting that, in contrast to the BBC …, this channel already had very specific brand values set in place. It is clear to see by the initial branding, created by Lambie-Nairn, that the channel was breaking the boundaries, being playful and being exciting, something that the public had not really seen before from TV channels. The separate colourful interlocking blocks (fig 3.1), which form a number four, were fluidly used throughout the brand as a form of communication. The reasoning behind these blocks as the branding was due to 'Lambie-Nairn [researching] Channel Four's philosophy and [seizing] the fact that they would be buying all their programmes in, so Channel Four would be a patchwork' (Barnes, 2016) as well as the movement of the blocks symbolising the "coming together". This allowed the channel to have a personality, for example jokingly forming a number five (fig 3.2) rather than four, accompanied by a "malfunction" with the usual theme music, as the blocks come together. This humorous behaviour had not been seen through British channel branding before, which can only have made Channel 4 stand out even more, as the channel had found a gap within the market and focused their branding on this. The ethos of this branding has certainly been a huge success, as the foundation of the brand visuals have arguably remained virtually the same, aside from minor tweaks, from the launch in 1982, to present day.

Descriptive writing: example questions	Critical Analysis: example questions
• What does evidence state? • What is the subject matter? • What is the context behind this information?	• How can this information be applied? • So what does it mean or show? • Why is it significant? • So what conclusions can be drawn?