

In academic writing, writers are often expected to use a combination of summary and analysis in their papers. However, the two processes are often confused especially by beginning writers. This handout aims to help you better identify the differences between summary and analysis.

Summary	Analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The purpose of a summary is to reduce information already known down to its essential parts.• The information stated usually consists of the main points and key supporting points.• Summaries can use direct quotes or paraphrasing to convey the main or key points. However, more often, a paraphrase is used.• Summaries do not evaluate, judge, or interpret the information. They present the facts as the original writer or speaker intended.• When writing a summary, writers should avoid adding their personal reactions, biases, opinions, and beliefs.• Summaries are typically substantially shorter than their source texts, as they contain only the key points presented in an abbreviated form.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The purpose of an analysis is to interpret or find meanings or patterns in information.• Analyzing statements will take a step beyond summary and describe the writer's personal findings and interpretations of the source material.• An analysis usually is presented after a statement of evidence, which can have direct quotes or summary. After the evidence is presented, the analysis of that evidence should not summarize or describe the information. Rather, an analysis will uncover something new about the evidence.• Analysis can provide readers a more thorough understanding of the facts presented, but writers should avoid adding their personal reactions, biases, opinions, and beliefs.• Although an analysis may be influenced by personal beliefs, an analysis tends to be based more in facts and patterns than thoughts and emotions.

On the back page of this handout, we have provided an example of a summary paragraph and an analysis paragraph to help you identify the differences between them.

Prompt: You will choose a short film, and determine what the short film is communicating to its audience through the marriage of narrative and technique. Your job is to construct an analysis around a thesis statement arguing what the message is that is being communicated within this short piece. This message isn't the plot; rather, you need to find out what the main theme of the story is, and then tell us how the short film conveys that through the use of various techniques.

Summary Paragraph

In "Mr. Foley," a short film directed by D.A.D.D.Y., the sound effects are the star. In film production, a Foley artist is the person who generates sound effects artificially to play over footage. This important job is exaggerated into absurdity in this short film, where a man named Mr. Foley wakes up in a hospital and suddenly all the sounds he makes and hears is produced by a team sitting in his room. The first thing we hear as an audience is white noise, almost like a record player's static. Next, as Mr. Foley's bandages are removed we hear music start to swell. We also catch glimpses of hands manipulating cloth and ripping tape off a surface as well. Sounds are exaggerated to the extreme: as the nurse clicks her pen one of the men across the room clicks a giant pen.

This paragraph above is a great example of a summary. It merely describes what is happening in this short film, without analyzing any meaning or providing any argument about the different sounds and shots it mentions.

However, this would not be appropriate for the prompt given above. It clearly asks for an analysis of the short film's use of technique, so some revision of the paragraph above is needed to make it appropriate for the assignment. Below is a paragraph with more analysis added.

Analysis Paragraph

In "Mr. Foley," a short film directed by D.A.D.D.Y., the sound effects are the star. In film production, a Foley artist is the person who generates sound effects artificially to play over footage. This important job is exaggerated into absurdity in this short film, where a man named Mr. Foley wakes up in a hospital and suddenly all the sounds he makes and hears is produced by a team sitting in his room. ***Through the exaggeration of sound effects, "Mr. Foley" emphasizes the artificiality of sound production in Hollywood, and questions its efficacy and representation of reality.*** For example, the very first sound we hear as an audience is white noise, almost like a record player's static. This ambient sound represents blank, neutral noise in absence of other sounds, but is quite obviously artificial. Thus, the message of the film begins to take shape within even the first few seconds of the story. As Mr. Foley's bandages begin to be removed, music swells and the camera cuts to close up shots of hands manipulating cloth and ripping tape off of a surface. When the camera cuts back to Mr. Foley's face (with surprise spreading across it), we understand that these sounds represent the gauze rubbing against itself and tearing away from his skin. In the next shots, we see both occurring in the same frame as the nurse clicks her pen and one of the men making the sounds clicks a giant pen to create an extreme exaggerated version of that sound. However, by visually pointing out the artificial production of the sounds, the film highlights their fake, false nature, calling into question Hollywood's overproduction of sounds.

This version more appropriately responds to the above prompt, because it not only points out and describes details from the short film, but also follows through on them to connect them to the meaning presented in the thesis statement (bolded). The underlined red portions indicate the analysis injected into this paragraph.