

1. Do not write about the audience of your film AT ALL in your essay. I do not care about the audience, how they feel, what they think, or how immersive their experience is. Doing so is irrelevant to the assignment, and it shows me that you have nothing to say about your film. It indicates that you are relying on or speculating about effects rather investigating causes. Instead, focus on the object in front of you rather than the people sitting behind you while watching the film. Writing about the audience of the film demonstrates to me that you are a C writer and do not have any interest in improving. I do not mean to say that the audience is not important but rather that the film is far more important and can be more directly ascertained since that is what you are supposed to be analyzing, and it lies in front of you. The audience could be thinking virtually anything about the film and is likely to change on the day the film is viewed and by whom is watching it. Moreover, you will not know what an audience actually thinks unless you talk to them directly, and that is outside the purview of our assignment.
2. Do not write about the director of the film. You may mention the director's full name in your introduction when you introduce your film and its title. After that, I do not want to hear anything more about the director. Your task is to analyze the film, not the director.
3. Do not write about yourself or how the film makes you feel and think about it. Your feelings and reactions are personal, not analytical. They do not belong in your essay, and they suggest that you might be writing a personal diary rather than an academic essay.
4. Do not write about how a film **uses** narrative/literary vocabulary or semiotic terms. These terms/concepts are tools for critics like you to read film. They are not used by filmmakers though filmmakers may be aware of them on some level. To say that a film uses such terms is to get the story backward. YOU are reading these terms into the film in order to illuminate it.
5. Do not write a long summary about the film. Summary must be used as a tool, not a goal. Writing a long summary indicates you have nothing substantive to say about the film. Also, we write plot analyses, not plot summaries. In doing so, we summarize briefly in order to indicate key plot points. However, we do not allow summarizing to obscure our analyses. This fact we learned in WAM Chapter 1.
6. Do not praise your film. Do not call it a "masterpiece" or "effective" or otherwise evaluate the film in a way that might detract from the neutral and more objective approach of analysis. Allow your readers to make their own decisions about the aesthetic merits of the film. Approach the film with a kind of scientific "attitude" where you suspend judgments as you attempt to read the film.
7. I would greatly prefer that you do not provide a long laundry list of topics you will cover in your thesis statement. It is far better for you to make a clear point based on implicit meaning of the film or a point related to cultural criticism rather than supplying a list. Lists are boring to read. Many of the sample essays on the website employ such lists unfortunately. It would be truly great if you did not follow those particular examples in that one respect.