

Analyzing/Deconstructing Photographs, Cartoons, Ads, & Paintings



When you are analyzing ANY image text, it is important to:

Look closely, Look Long

Ask Probing Questions

Put it together and interpret meaning

Using the mnemonic device Colorful Fruits Like Cherries Pack Good Flavor (CFLCPGF) this table was created to walk you through the process of analyzing image texts that you may encounter for your IO or the Paper 1.

For Cartoons & Ads, the mnemonic is: Coral Needs Our Love and Care (Composition, Narrative Objects/Characters, Language, Color)

COMPOSITION (“Colorful”)

How is the image framed? What is in the foreground and background? Is there more graphic weight on the right or left? If a photo, what is the angle of perception? Does the artist use:

High angles (looking down)?

Low angles (looking up)?

Close-ups (suggesting intimacy)?

Long Shots (suggesting distance)?

Eye-Level Shots(suggesting equality)?

How does the author's use of camera angle and distance indicate his or her attitude toward the subject? (TONE) Do we notice the rule of thirds being applied here? If so, how? Are there leading lines? How is our eye being directed?

FOCUS (“Fruits”--for Cartoons, this is “Narrative”) is being told here?) What is the depth of field here? Are some things blurred or less detailed in the background? How does this create dimension? If this is a Cartoon, you will be looking at NARRATIVE. What story is this cartoon telling us? How? How does it make us feel?	
LIGHT (“Like”) What kind of lighting do I notice being used: is it natural or created by a light source? Where does the light seem to be coming from? What is the effect of the light (dappling, shadows, etc)? Is the image light or dark? If this is a Cartoon, you will be looking at LANGUAGE. What language is used in the cartoon? Narrative boxes, thought bubbles, speech bubbles? Is there irony? Metaphor?	
COLOR (“Cherries”) What colors do I see in the image? What moods are created? How is shading used? Do colors create contrast? Is it light or dark?	

PEOPLE/PLACES/OBJECTS (“Pack”) Who is in the image? Who is emphasized? Are the subjects meant to stand for or symbolize something? How would you describe their facial expressions? What is suggested by their body language? What are the people doing, literally? Is there a sense of social class/power? Where is this image taking place - what does the landscape look like? Is there a historical time referenced? How?	
GAZE (“Good”) Where are the people looking? Can we see what is capturing their attention?	
FRAMING/CROPPING (“Flavor”) What is in the frame of the image?	