



General characteristics of text types

Though the tasks themselves vary greatly, there are some characteristics that you should stick to when writing a *Klausur*. Most typically you will need to write a text confirming that you understood the text given, which usually takes the form of a summary. A summary is a concise recounting of a text's most important information. As this, it should start with an introductory sentence which states at least the title, the author/orator, the time of the text, where it has been published and what the overall topic is.

In the summary you are supposed to refer to the text in present tense (although common sense might dictate the use of past tenses – if the text refers to the extinction of dinosaurs it should be obvious that you cannot write: »... says that they starve to death.«). Furthermore, you are to use formal and factual language (no fancy words or fillers, no short forms like »isn't« or »can't«). Likewise, a summary has no quotations or your personal opinion. Be careful to give only the most important information and do NOT copy phrases or sentences from the original text. Often a focus on specific aspects of the text can be found in the task.

The second task is usually an analysis along a presented task with foci that are supposed to guide your elaborations. The analysis is also to be written in present tense and in formal and factual language (see above) but in contrast to a summary you can also give your personal impressions/opinions as long as they further the point and are presented coherently. Passive constructions are to be preferred to personal constructions (»It will be presented« instead of »I will present«). In general, your analysis should focus on material from the text and its importance and meaning within the text (see below). Be sure to structure your text decently.

The first part of any analytical essay is the introduction to your paper. There are many different ways of introducing your elaborations but the easiest seems to be stating what you are about to show with your analysis (*Deutungshypothese*). E. g. »School is a place that no innocent child should have to suffer...«. Another valid way would be to paraphrase the task but do NOT copy it and do NOT write another summary introduction (that information is already known).

The main part of your elaborations should be made up of different paragraphs each, ONE centred around one point you would like to analyse (see below). We would strongly recommend taking notes on the points of interest, cutting down on the list if you feel like you cannot convincingly present that point (time issues/lack of material) and then ordering the left-over ideas (e. g. by relevance or obvious connections between them). An aspect-oriented approach (as opposed to a purely chronological approach) is mandatory for *Abitur* tests.

After finishing your methodical examination of the text, finish your work of beauty with a proper conclusion. There is an abundance of ways to conclude your text but you might want to consider the following:

- Gather up your main ideas and bring them together keeping in mind what you set out to show (i.e. picking up what you formulated in *Deutungshypothese*).
- Sum up your findings but hint at something that has not yet been considered (because it was not part of the excerpt) but might be interesting for further studies.
- Give a quotation from the text (preferably one you have not yet written about) which puts your thoughts in a nutshell.

No matter what type of conclusion you decide on, make sure it is in line with your introduction for the analysis.

Analysing texts

Analysis is a Greek word meaning *breaking something up into smaller parts*. It means that you try to understand how something works by investigating individual parts or components of it.

Basically, analysing texts is the same for most text types. The task should tell you, what to focus on. You can analyse ...

- text structure, i.e. where paragraphs begin and end, what they are about and how they are related to each other,
- argumentative structure, i.e. how the arguments are ordered and how they relate to each other and the reader (or audience),
- style and register, i.e. which type of language the text uses,
- mood and atmosphere, i.e. which mood and atmosphere a text creates,
- the character or the development of characters in a fictional text (aka *characterisation*),
- stylistic devices and rhetorical means, i.e. which stylistic devices and other »tricks« a text uses to convince the readers or the audience.

Do **not** analyse line by line – that might make you write about one specific device in several different places. You repeat yourself which is bad style and also costs a lot of time. Instead, analyse every individual device only once, but you may quote examples from different parts of the text.

No matter what you analyse, you always need to relate three distinct bits of information:

1. *Quote* – Quote from the text what you want to analyse and give the line number(s). Of course, you should only quote the relevant bits – use [...] where necessary.
2. *Name* – In many, not in all cases, there is a technical term for what you quote. Use it (»School is hell« is a metaphor.«)! If there is no technical term, explain in your own words what is relevant about the words/passage you analyse (»The character looks at his shoes all the time.«). In some rare cases, (1) and (2) can be combined, if you choose your quotations cleverly.
3. *Explain* – When you have found relevant passages to analyse, explain their effect or function, i.e. the reason why an author does something. Do **not** explain the meaning, do **not** be vague. »...to make the text more interesting« or »...to make the reader think« is usually too vague for an analysis. »...to associate school with a concrete image of evil and thus make it appear sinister« is better.

Some possible functions of stylistic devices:

- i. to create a sense of belonging/community
- ii. to encourage the listener to do sth/to give hope
- iii. to create vivid/graphic mental images
- iv. to emphasize certain aspects/ideas
- v. to amuse/entertain the listener
- vi. to provoke/criticize/satirise
- vii. to arouse the listener's interest / catch the l.'s attention
- viii. to appeal to the listener's emotions
- ix. ...

Useful phrases for analysing texts:

<p>In the third/fourth/... paragraph of the text/article/speech/...</p> <p>In the following/ensuing/next paragraph ...</p> <p>After that/thereafter/subsequently ...</p> <p>What follows/comes next/ensues is ...</p>		
<p>The paragraph</p> <p>The passage</p>	<p>contains information on...</p> <p>presents the views of...</p> <p>informs readers about...</p> <p>highlights the fact that...</p> <p>sums up...</p> <p>sheds additional light on...</p>	
<p>Throughout the text/speech/...</p>	<p>the author uses/employs/...</p>	
<p>A recurrent rhetorical device is...</p> <p>One device the speaker uses is...</p> <p>A striking rhetorical device used by the speaker is...</p> <p>At one point in his speech/text/ ... she makes use of ...</p> <p>One of the most effective devices is...</p> <p>The most powerful device is...</p>		
<p>The word</p> <p>The expression</p> <p>The use of this register</p>	<p>evokes/stirs up images of...</p> <p>is a misnomer/an anachronism/an exaggeration/...</p> <p>has connotations of...</p> <p>translates into something like...</p> <p>is probably meant to...</p> <p>makes the reader think that...</p>	
	<p>carries (strong)</p>	<p>negative</p> <p>positive</p>
	<p>undertones of</p>	<p>undertones</p> <p>criticism</p> <p>disapproval</p> <p>...</p>
<p>As a reader/listener</p>	<p>one associates the word/expression/... with</p> <p>one is reminded of...</p> <p>one immediately thinks of...</p>	

