

Visual Response Planning

When beginning the planning for your visual response it is important to follow these steps.

1. Brainstorm.
 - a. *Look at the image and pick out all the ideas you can (big and small) from the clues that the visual elements provide.*
 - b. *Record these observations on scrap paper. The more you brainstorm, the more likely it is you will have a better understanding of the image and what the artist is trying to communicate.*
 - c. *Use a "What/So What/Now What" chart to brainstorm, or to deepen your own brainstorming.*



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2. Note all the ideas that seem the most important to the overall meaning of the image. Extra emphasis should be on checking to make sure you can **support** those ideas with details from the picture (i.e. "I can tell this image is about peace, because the two figures are shaking hands, which is an expression of unity.")

3. Next, you will need to plan and put together an outline to write your essay with. Go to your assignment planning area or use a scrap piece of paper to start this. Consider using another mind map or a linear outline to organize your ideas.

Continue to the next page to see an explanation of how to plan and write an outline for the Visual Response.

Planning and Writing an Outline for the Visual Response

Read the outline below to gain an understanding of one way to plan and write an outline for a Visual Response Essay. This is intended to be a guideline of how to possibly organize your information.

A. Introductory paragraph

An introductory paragraph always contains the following elements:

- A hook sentence
- A brief description of the image (what's going on? What is the type of image (photo, painting, etc.)? What are the colours like? What is the overall mood of the image? Is it humorous? Political?
- Thesis statement/the theme of the image you are focusing on

Goals of the introductory paragraph

- Engage your reader and lead in to your discussion with a hook sentence
- Give your reader a good idea of what the image looks like so they have an idea of what you will be discussing later on and can follow your discussion.
- The **thesis statement/ main theme** of focus will guide your entire response
 - When thinking about the theme of the image, consider what the text creator is trying to communicate. What is the main idea or observation they are making about humanity through this image?
 - Your **thesis statement** containing the theme you focus on should be 1-2 sentences long. Later, you should be able to pull 2-3 ideas from this to act as the main ideas for your body paragraphs

B. Body Paragraph(s)

Visual responses can have as many body paragraphs as desired, though it is suggested to try and have *at least* two. This means you will need at least two discussion ideas that relate to the image and your thesis.

Goals of the Body Paragraph(s)

The general goals of the visual response are:

- Body paragraphs give you 2-3 opportunities to explore and discuss 2-3 ideas involving the theme you choose as your thesis. When choosing your discussion ideas, keep this in mind. You should have brainstormed these 2-3 ideas to discuss prior to writing your outline.
- To support your prediction of the image's theme with evidence. After introducing your body paragraph idea, you should explain your idea clearly and then discuss evidence from the image that supports your assertion.

The structure of a body paragraph might look as follows

Body Paragraph 1 (2, 3...)*

- a. Introduce topic sentence (discussion idea 1)
- b. Explain the idea clearly and why it is significant (what is the idea? Why is it important?)
- c. Indicate how this idea is supported by the image (what evidence from the image tells you that your idea is accurate? Describe)
- d. Concluding sentence: Explain any other necessary details important to your idea (use evidence where necessary) and wrap up the discussion of this particular idea.

Rinse & Repeat for Body Paragraphs 2 and 3!

*Note: The structure of this essay body paragraph can be used in any essay. The only things that may differ are the types of evidence (novels, poems, plays, etc.) and the number of sub-ideas you explore within the paragraph.

Sub-ideas are ideas you may discuss that are different aspects of your body paragraph's main idea (i.e. If my body paragraph topic was "doing laundry", I might have two sub-ideas regarding "cold water wash" and "hot water wash". I'd still be discussing laundry, but I'd be going into more detail about different aspects of it). *All sub-ideas that are brought up in a body paragraph must have evidence included that support them.*

C. Concluding Paragraph

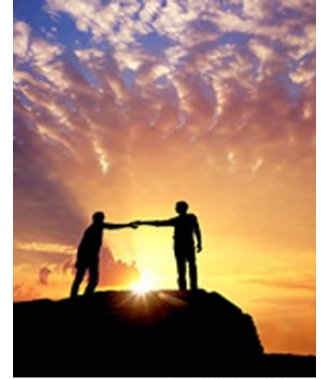
A concluding paragraph is your opportunity to draw the discussion to a close in a meaningful way. A good conclusion validates your efforts of writing the whole essay, if you can think of something meaningful to impart to others that might read it. A conclusion has a very specific structure:

- a. Lead-in sentence: Hint to your reader that you are done talking about the main ideas of your discussion and are going to conclude (Hint: Use transition words like "Finally, lastly, in the end, consequently, in conclusion, all in all, altogether, due to, indeed, overall, thus, to sum up, ultimately")
- b. Review and briefly summarize your discussion ideas
- c. Re-emphasize your main idea or thesis: **do not** simply repeat your thesis. Re-emphasizing your thesis is your opportunity to re-affirm your thesis (affirm whether it is still correct, or needs some re-defining based on your discussion) but also give it more depth, now that the support for it has been discussed (in body paragraphs)
- d. Connect your thesis to the world you live in. Why is this message important, or why should it be important to humanity?

Example of a Visual Response Outline

A. Introductory paragraph

- Hook sentence
"A simple hello could lead to a million things," by Anonymous
- Brief description of image
 - *silhouettes of two male statues shaking hands on top of a hill or a mountain*
 - *Colourful clouds and the sun going down behind them.*
- Thesis statement/main theme of image: ***Settling differences peacefully can result in positive benefits for all parties involved***
 - ***Tip:*** *If you did a "What? So What? Now What?" Chart, you would look in the "Now What" section to find this, or find ideas to help form your main idea of theme for the image.*



B. Body Paragraph(s)

Visual responses can have as many body paragraphs as desired, though it is suggested to try and have *at least* two. This means you will need two discussion ideas that relate to the image and your thesis.

Body Paragraph Example 1

- Introduce topic sentence (discussion idea 1):
 - *Communication is important.*
- Explain the idea clearly and why it is significant
 - *Communication helps us exist with others, and it is important because it can often prevent misunderstandings, disagreements and even violence.*
- Indicate how this idea is supported by the image
 - *The two statues face each other, which implies a readiness to communicate, whether with physical (the hand shake) or verbal communication.*
 - *They don't carry weapons or armour, and look like normal men who might share a common goal, like talking with one another, as they are in close proximity.*
- Concluding sentence:
 - *It can be communication that paves the way for agreements or compromises to be possible between troubled parties.*

Body Paragraph Example 2

- Introduce topic sentence (discussion idea 1):
 - *Agreement can take the form of compromise*
- Explain the idea clearly and why it is significant
 - *Considers what's in the best interest of both parties, and works to achieve the goal, despite differences*
- Indicate how this idea is supported by the image
 - *Each man is on a different level, which could mean two different perspectives are held over an issue. One man is standing on two straight legs, while the other man's legs are slightly bent but look like they're straightening out. This might imply they have reached a common goal in their compromise.*
 - *The handshake in the image also confirms a positive resolution, as the handshake is a symbol of agreement and commitment beneficial to both parties.*
- Concluding sentence:
 - *Compromise can happen even if two parties vary in their perspectives, if both are willing to put the communication, time and commitment in.*

C. Concluding Paragraph

This is your chance to leave your reader with something thought-provoking to consider when they put your essay down. What do you want them to think about as they walk away, in relation to your thesis/main idea and your discussion?

- Lead-in sentence: *Peace is not always as easy as a spoken conversation between two willing participants.*
- Review and briefly summarized ideas: *It is possible though, if all sides of a conflict stay open in both communication and their ability to cooperate.*
- Re-emphasize your main idea or thesis: *The positive benefits of creating and maintaining peace through communication and compromise can be long-lasting and powerful.*
- Connect your thesis to the world you live in. Why is this message important, or why should it be important to humanity?
 - *Choosing to speak thoughtfully and be empathetic of others when trying to solve a conflict is crucial to affecting peace and positivity for all people involved. The minute that judgment, ignorance or assumptions become involved, is the minute that communications will erode or suffer a breakdown. Even the smallest miscommunication can be solved by merely speaking openly and compromising, but it must be us that affect this change around us. In the words of Mahatma Ghandi, "be the change you want to see."*