

Here are some guidelines for writing analytical papers:

1. Make a point. Find something you want to say about the material, state it in the first paragraph, and stick to it. Make sure you end up in the same place that you start.
2. Organize your paper around your point. Present musical evidence to support it. Exclude extraneous material, however fascinating.
3. Write in well-organized paragraphs that have clear roles in your argument. Make certain that each paragraph has an evident topic and contributes to your argument. State the point of your paragraph at its beginning, not at the end as punch line.
4. Start with the assigned music, do some analysis, and then find a point. Go back and round up the evidence that supports your point, find more if necessary, and discard everything else.
5. Make an outline and write from it. When you have completed a draft, re-outline it from the text to see whether its logic is still clear.
6. Do not narrate or simply describe music—make an analytical point about it. Use a diagram if you need to convey the order of events in a piece. Do not supply musical detail until you have first explained why it is worth noticing. Find some way to organize other than going through the piece in measure-number order.
7. In an analytical paper, avoid the temptation of writing about music history or the composer's life, or of giving a capsule history of the genre, or of making sweeping claims about music in general. Write about the piece at hand from the start.
8. Write in musical terms—avoid subjective or purely descriptive words. Write in plain English, though; don't clutter the paper with unnecessary jargon. Do not write about the process (about analyzing, noticing, or "this paper") or that things are interesting or notable; write directly about the piece. Make the composer the subject of many of your sentences.
9. Edit. Read your paper aloud. Choose every word carefully. Jettison each unnecessary word. Stick to the assigned length.
10. Proofread.
11. Use the abbreviations m. (m.6) and mm. (mm.45-48) when citing particular places in the piece.
12. Give your paper an interesting title. Do not be cute, or clever, or cryptic; be interesting.
13. **Print the paper double-spaced with one-inch margins in a simple font. Do not put extra blank lines between paragraphs. Do not justify the right margin--leave it ragged. Put your name, the date and the course number at the top of the first page; do not use a title page or a report cover. Number the pages.**