Definitions

Traditional Definition: Separating a complex object – like a poem, monument, event - into parts and studying each part closely in order to better understand the whole object better.

Classroom Definition:
• The act of making meaning out of observations
• Creating original interpretations of the objects you see, the texts you read and the topics you study
• Correlating smaller observations to larger classroom themes

Summary and Analysis - What is the difference?

SUMMARY – Identification of the main ideas, descriptions, characteristics and/or elements of an artifact (novel, article, monument, event, etc). It answers the what, where, when, and who questions without giving any new information.

Ex. The Harry Potter novels tell the story of a boy wizard learning skills at Hogwarts School and defeating his nemesis Voldemort.

ANALYSIS – Interpretation of the main ideas or concepts of an essay, article, or object. Analysis builds on summary by adding interpretations not found in the original artifact.

Ex. Harry’s impulsive and aggressive nature put other characters in unnecessary danger and therefore, Prof. Snape is the real “hero” of the book series.

Opinion and Analysis - What is the difference?

OPINION - Statements that are personal beliefs, preferences, likes, or dislikes. These statements do not have to be based on evidence or fact; their nature is subjective.

Ex. I like butter beer.

ANALYSIS - Objective interpretations based on factual evidence. Personal views or perspectives are not included.

Ex. The sugar content in butter beer makes the drink addictive.
Methods of Analysis

1. Connections to Larger Themes
   - Definition: The act of associating a text or artifact to larger abstract topics. For example, connecting the character of Hermione Granger to Feminism
   - Larger themes are overarching topics that have multiple angles, like power, individualism, gender roles, agency, performance, progress, rebirth, etc

2. Inter-textuality
   - Definition: Drawing connections between two texts
   - Types of Inter-textuality: Using one text to understand another. Using one text to disagree or contradict another. Reading evidence through the eyes of an author (Ex. What would Smith say about Hogwarts Castle?). Identifying the academic conversation (Ex. How might J.K. Rowling respond to her critics?)

3. Significance
   - Definition: The act of identifying the importance of your ideas
   - Adding Significance to your paper means to answer the “so what?” question. Here are other questions to ask yourself: Why is the argument important? So what if the argument is true? What are the consequences of my reading of this artifact? Why does my position matter?

4. Interpreting Patterns
   - Definition: Locate similar events, reactions, responses, or words in a text or artifact. Find similar occurrences that may be repeated on purpose.
   - This kind of analysis requires two steps.
     ✓ Identify a pattern between locations, peoples, events
     ✓ Make meaning out of the pattern. Why is the pattern there? What might you learn about the text or artifact based on the existence of the pattern? How might the pattern connect to the artifact as a whole?

5. Rhetorical Analysis
   - Definition: Identifying the methods or strategies used by the author to make his or her argument
   - In this kind of analysis, pay attention to the appeals (ethos, pathos, logos), types of evidence used, intended audience, and purpose of the essay. Determine how the arguments are constructed by breaking the essay into parts.

6. Counterarguments
   - Definition: The act of disagreeing with another argument or position and identifying clear reasons for your disagreement. You can disagree with the whole or part of the argument.
   - Identify an alternative position and then discredit it by disagreeing and including solid rationale for the disagreement. You can incorporate counterarguments into your papers in order to strengthen your own position.