



DALLAS BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

Writing a Fine Arts Paper

- A Fine Arts Paper is a critical analysis of a particular work of art based on its form, content, and merits.
- The paper is written about a painting, sculpture, building, photograph, play, opera, or a movie that the student has seen in person.
- It is usually written in the MLA format.

What is the Purpose of a Fine Arts Paper?

- The purpose of this paper is to describe and analyze the work of art, while implementing the knowledge, terminology, and skills gained in the class.

Things to Remember:

- The paper should be written after one has had some time to reflect over the performance or work of art.
- It is also helpful to take notes during the performance. If the subject is a painting, sculpture, building, or photograph, it may be helpful to sketch the piece or note details for inclusion in the essay. This lets the author of the paper look back at what he or she was thinking during the time of observation.
- In the paper, discuss terminology such as “form” and “element.” This essay is generally not a research project. However, if research material is used, it **must** be cited in the preferred format of the professor.

Basic Structure of a Fine Arts Paper:

- Introduction: The introduction should include where one decided to go, who or what was seen, and why one chose to attend that particular performance or museum.
- Analyzing the work based on form: In this section, describe how the work was put together, the medium that was used, the subject matter, and the historical context of the piece or performance.
- Analyzing the work based on content: This section should include what one feels the meaning of the performance or the work of art is, as well as what the artist was trying to convey through the art.
- Analyzing the work based on merit: When writing this section, describe the value of the work. The writer is entitled to have an opinion that differs from the mainstream but should give detailed reasons for personal opinion.
- Conclusion: In this final section, focus on the experience. This includes any feelings stirred by the art and anything that the observer gained from the art.