

INVENTION

In some ways, analyzing a written text is relatively easy because the elements are literally printed or posted in black and white. However, written texts have many elements, not just words but layers of implication and suggestion. There are subtleties lurking between, beneath, and around the text itself. No matter what you are analyzing—a blog, magazine article, journal article, or even a book—the process involves a sizable set of questions.

Point of Contact

Your target text can be any written published document. We suggest that you choose something easily accessible—a text that you can review often or even annotate as you read. Consider one of the following options for your analysis. And for more information on each category, see pages 442–445 in Chapter 15:

- **Journal Articles:** Journals are written for scholars in a specific academic field such as history, linguistics, rhetoric, engineering, nursing, or chemistry. The information is specialized—sometimes so highly specialized that following the logic proves difficult to those outside of the field. Still, not all journal articles require years of study or expertise. In fact, finding a journal related to your chosen field may generate good analytical focus. If you are studying psychology, for instance, you might find an interesting article in *Psychology Quarterly*.
- **Magazine Articles:** Magazines are aimed at general audiences rather than scholars in a specific discipline. The information is presented so that nonspecialized readers can easily follow the ideas and consider the claims. You might think of magazines in two—very broad—categories: the widest possible readership and special interest. The first category usually provides highly accessible articles. They are brief (less than 500 words), accompanied by photos, and come to quick conclusions. Some titles include *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Men's Health*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Women's Day*. The second category offers more in-depth reporting, longer analyses, and even personal essays written by specialists in a field. Titles include *The Economist*, *Forbes*, *National Geographic*, *Orion*, *Scientific American*.
- **Books:** An entire book could serve as a target text—especially if the book makes a single and coherent argument or stays focused on a particular event. The upside of taking on a book is the sheer amount of material. There is plenty to consider. However, the amount of text could also pose a challenge. If you are dealing with hundreds of pages, you might find it difficult to narrow down the main idea—the thesis, the supporting premises, or even the purpose.