

Barbara Shaddix  
Analysis & Constructive Evaluation

## Read and Complete the Essay's Descriptive Outline

### Rhetorical Situation

Reader:        Intended audience: professor, perhaps other students  
Writer:        Student/fellow student  
Subject:       Ways families can provide emotional support to new college students

### Says/Does: Essay Level

Proposition    *says*: When this feeling of insecurity overcomes students entering college, there are several ways families can provide them with emotional support so that they can adjust to a strange environment.  
Plan            *does*: Describes some of the “several ways” families can provide support.

### Says/Does: Paragraph Level

Paragraph 1    *says*: When students enter college it is often a very different experience than they had anticipated.  
                      *does*: Describes how students feel lost and rudderless without their high school support groups and with the changes they are experiencing. Suggests that families can provide a solution.  
Paragraph 2    *says*: First, the family can take over the job of talking with the students.  
                      *does*: Describes how students lose touch; how they come to realize why family matters; and how they can reconnect with their siblings.  
Paragraph 3    *says*: Another way families can give emotional support to their children in college is through rituals, acts performed on a regular basis that a person can depend on to occur.  
                      *does*: Defines key term and explains impact. Gives a personal example with lots of details.

## Analyze the style choices made in “Family and School”

Analytic Tool	Findings
Sentence Patterns (Groups <a href="#">1</a> , <a href="#">2</a> , <a href="#">3</a> )	Pattern 1 (P1): 6 P2: 6 P3: 1 P5: 1 P6: 3 P7: 14 No P4 sentences
Verbs (Groups <a href="#">1</a> , <a href="#">2</a> , <a href="#">3</a> )	A little more than half of all verbs are active and are mostly intransitive. Nearly half of the verbs are passive.
Choosing Adverbials (Groups <a href="#">1</a> , <a href="#">2</a> , <a href="#">3</a> )	The use of adverbials is very common; there are about 20 examples.
Choosing Adjectivals (Groups <a href="#">1</a> , <a href="#">2</a> )	Nearly as common as adverbials, adjectivals are also frequently used.
Choosing Nominals ( <a href="#">Wholeclass Group</a> )	Nominals rarely occur in the first two paragraphs. However, they proliferate throughout the third paragraph as various nominals are used for “ritual” and “Sunday dinner.”
Sentence Rhythm: End Focus, Strong Focus, the It-Cleft, the What-Cleft, and the There-Transformation (Groups <a href="#">1</a> , <a href="#">2</a> )	There are 3 It-Clefts, 2 There-Transformations, and 1 What-Cleft. Most sentences use end focus appropriately. The single what-cleft is used in combination with an it-cleft and loses much of its effectiveness due to being buried within the text of the sentence.
Other Stylistic Variations (Part 1: <a href="#">Wholeclass Group</a> / Part 2: Groups <a href="#">1</a> , <a href="#">2</a> )	There are two uses of repetition in the text. Other stylistic variations are absent.
Coordination and Subordination: Creative Compounding (Groups <a href="#">1</a> , <a href="#">2</a> , <a href="#">3</a> )	There are two conjunctions used to open sentences within the first paragraph. In the second paragraph, the third sentence has two competing conjunctions. Conjunctions are also common in prepositional phrases throughout. The single example of creative compounding occurs in the opening sentence for the third paragraph, where there is an asyndetic construction used to define “ritual.” There is one standard syndetic conjunction in paragraph three, as well.

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Analysis: Qualitative Description of the Writer's Style (Write a few sentences that describe the qualities of the writer's sentences that are themselves the hallmarks of the writer's style.)	This writer has some issues with following through on the <i>says</i> versus <i>does</i> level. Passive voice is overused, especially in the first paragraph, as a way of distancing the writer from the subject. The paragraphs slowly grow stronger through the piece; the third paragraph is written the best.
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**Correlate the findings of your grammatical, stylistic analysis with the hierarchically ordered features of the written product**

<b>Product</b>	<b>Attributes</b>	<b>Style: Positive</b>	<b>Style: Negative</b>
<i>Rhetorical Situation</i>	Scene, Writer, Reader, Subject, Exigence, Purpose	Does a good job selecting a potentially rich rhetorical subject	Says versus Does disparities
<i>Content</i>	Quantity, Quality	Many supporting details are used	Does not always answer the exigency described in the main idea
<i>Organization</i>	Beginning, Middle, End, Patterns of Development, Unity, Coherence	The piece follows an overall logical structure in the problem/solution format. Follows a coherent theme throughout.	Needs to make sure details support main idea – change either the details or the main idea
<i>Paragraphs</i>	Patterns of Development, Unity, Coherence	The third paragraph is the best written. It starts with a strong main idea in “rituals” and moves from general to the specific clearly and concisely.	The first paragraph is coherent, but excessively passive. The second paragraph starts with the idea of the family but discusses the student’s choices.
<i>Sentences</i>	Grammatical, Effective	Writer is beginning to develop an effective style	Wordy and confusing with many passive constructions
<i>Words</i>	Precise, Concise	Avoids vague details	Care should be taken to avoid using the wrong word
<i>Mechanics</i>	Spelling, Punctuation	Readable and understandable	Comma issues throughout

## Compose a Constructive Evaluation of the Writer's Style

Dear Student,

Your paper has an interesting subject and a compelling thesis. Of particular note is your third paragraph, as it is clear, concise, and uses well-chosen details to support the idea of the importance of ritual.

Some suggestions to help improve your writing:

1. Remember to use the passive voice sparingly. Its purpose is to draw attention to specific ideas, but overuse muddies the picture. In your first paragraph, 8 out of 11 sentences are in the passive voice (uses a form of the **be** verb: am, is, was, are, were, being, been). Revise, using more action verbs to communicate your ideas with clarity and concision.
2. In your second paragraph, your third sentence is a complex-complex-compound-compound sentence (yes, just as confusing as it sounds!). Consider revising it for clarity by either re-writing it into at least two separate sentences or by removing all unnecessary information.
3. Make sure your supporting details match your main idea. Your second paragraph begins with the idea that families should become proactive communicators, but your details discuss the student's realizations and behaviors. Consider revising your main idea to better suit your details.

Overall, a great job! You are well on your way to becoming a strong communicator.

Prof. Shaddix