

How to read a press article

First reading

Read the text once.

>> Try not to focus on what you don't understand. On the contrary pay attention to the key words you recognize.

>> Try and identify the general structure or the movements.

>> You may also try to spot some key link words (and circle them)

>> After reading the text once, you should be able to sum it up in one or two sentence(s) or to choose one key sentence / passage in the text.

Second reading (one or two)

>> You need to identify clearly the leading idea in each paragraph. You can scribble very short notes (words) in the margin.

>> Then you need to EITHER divide the text into logical parts OR identify two or three leading ideas that dominate in the text

(this is when you can try and "DRAW" the text)

Note: Sometimes the articles are well organized and amount to a demonstration. But sometimes they are not and the same idea may be repeated in two or three different parts of the text.

>> Analyse the syntax, the logical elements, the link words

- contrast / opposition: *although, whereas, but, however, on the contrary, on the other hand*
- listing of arguments, causes, consequences or examples: *first, then, finally // first, secondly.. // one aspect ... another aspect... // also, too...*
- chronological elements: *for a long time, up to now, nowadays, recently...*

>> And you also need to analyse the type of article and tone to try and get what the journalist's aim or target is.

- by looking closely at the vocabulary used in each part
- you are looking for: allusions to changes, evolutions, new phenomena // is it critical? Is it a warning? Reproach? Accusation? Call for change? Fear? Threat? Comparisons? Etc

Conclusion: what is the key idea or question in the text? What does it demonstrate?

Remember: the text needs to be seen as "an organic whole"

How to present a press article – ENS Reports

Your presentation will fold into three DISTINCT parts (for a 20-minute long presentation in total):

- 1/ an introduction
- 2/ a “résumé-synthèse” of the text
- 3/ a personal commentary on the text

“Les trois temps doivent être distincts. La formule “résumé-commentaire” choisie par certains candidats n’est pas satisfaisante » (En italique = extraits des rapports ENS Lyon sur l’épreuve orale hors programme)

1. The introduction

>> Short, clear, punchy and catchy. 1’20’’ maximum

>> Falls into three steps

Quick introduction of the **topic** with general remark or anecdote or reference to one event

Contextualisation of the article and identification of the **issue** it raises (Specific aspect of the topic)

Quick reference to **the main point** made by the author of the text on this issue and then the main arguments used (if time > plan of synthèse announced, but not indispensable at all !)

>> You have to **read a passage** of your choice. You can read it at the end of the introduction or at any other moment in the course of your presentation. I advise you to do it in the course of the synthèse.. You have to justify briefly your choice.

La lecture d’un passage du texte (entre 5 ou 10 lignes maximum) peut se faire dans cette partie de l’épreuve mais elle pourra très bien être faite plus tard si le candidat le juge pertinent. Le passage choisi peut servir comme illustration d’un point soulevé dans la synthèse ou le commentaire. C’est au candidat de justifier son choix de passage et le moment de sa lecture.

2. The “résumé- synthèse” (about 7 min)

>> It should NOT be a simple summary NOR a linear paraphrase.

>> It should NOT be a patchwork made up of different sentences extracted from the text.

>> You should NOT write it down entirely.

>> Although this part has to be as objective as possible, it is expected to be a relevant and organised synthesis of the text: the presentation has to be structured, logical and a clear “hierarchy” in the different elements of the text has to be outlined

“Le compte rendu vise à apporter la preuve d’une compréhension globale du texte, de sa problématique, de l’articulation des idées qu’il met en jeu, et il doit lui-même être structuré selon sa propre logique, qui n’est pas identique à celle de l’article. Il est demandé dans le compte rendu de dégager le fonctionnement interne de l’article, sa ligne éditoriale, les différents types d’arguments utilisés, et éventuellement son ton. Trop de candidats se contentent de reprendre l’article, paragraphe par paragraphe, ou cherchent maladroitement à le découper en trois parties même lorsque cela ne se justifie pas ».

>> You will also be tested on your ability to REPHRASE the key ideas in your own words.

3. Commentary (about 12 min)

>> It needs to have an introduction: transition from the text and clear announcement of the question YOU want to raise and the main points you are going to consider / what the different steps of your commentary are going to be

>> It also needs to be clearly structured

>> You need to show you are able to use your personal knowledge on current events, specific cultures, history and civilisations in a relevant way. This should not be recited in an artificial way but only in relation to the text.

>> You need to have identified clearly the tone and viewpoint of the article to look at it with a critical eye and discuss it.

Les candidats doivent veiller à ce que la transition entre la première et la deuxième partie de l'épreuve soit claire. Certains candidats ont choisi d'annoncer la problématique et le plan de leur commentaire au début de leur prestation, avant la synthèse. Le jury déconseille cette pratique car elle amène à semer la confusion entre ce qui relève de la synthèse, d'un côté, et ce qui relève du commentaire, de l'autre. Il faut rappeler qu'il s'agit de deux parties distinctes au sein de la même épreuve.

Après avoir fait une transition claire et concise entre les deux parties, les candidats doivent annoncer leur problématique. Celle-ci doit être formulée de façon très claire et doit permettre au candidat de faire le lien entre le texte/le point de vue de l'auteur et le contexte plus large dans lequel le débat se situe. La problématique doit être pertinente, ni trop large (« What does the article say about political ideology and culture ? »), ni trop précise (« How does the author endorse Gove's revolution ? »). Dans le premier cas de figure, le candidat risque de perdre de vue le texte ; dans le deuxième, il risque de s'y perdre. Il ne s'agit pas de dupliquer le travail de synthèse mais de prendre du recul et de faire un vrai commentaire en s'appuyant sur ses propres connaissances.

Le plan doit également être très clair et permettre aux candidats de donner une réponse directe à la problématique. Le plan ne doit pas correspondre au plan de l'article étudié mais permettre au candidat de situer la thématique de l'article dans un débat plus large. Le plan peut être organisé en deux ou trois parties mais il doit être bien équilibré. Le candidat doit prendre son temps lorsqu'il/elle annonce la problématique et le plan de son commentaire afin de s'assurer que le jury les a bien compris et pris en notes.

L'exercice ne peut être fait correctement sans faire des allers-retours constants entre le texte et ses propres connaissances, afin de faire une vraie analyse politique. Il faut veiller à ne tomber ni dans le piège d'une (seconde) synthèse, ni dans le piège d'un placage des cours.

Tout comme pour la synthèse, il est impossible de réussir cet exercice sans une bonne maîtrise des connaissances civilisationnelles. Bien que les candidats ne disposent pas de programme spécifique, il est attendu d'eux qu'ils soient au fait non seulement de l'actualité politique, sociale et économique des États-Unis et du Royaume-Uni, mais aussi du contexte historique plus large qui a pu influencer cette actualité

Extraits du Rapport ENS Lyon 2016

Voir aussi rapport 2019

http://www.ens-lyon.fr/sites/default/files/2019-10/Anglais_2019.pdf

LES EPREUVES ORALES DES ECOLES DE MANAGEMENT ET AUTRES

- Sont détaillées dans document à part (voir Cahier de Prépa)
- Le document de départ est soit un texte de 500 à 600 mots (la plupart des écoles) soit une video (Ecoles Ecricome) soit un document audio (St Cyr = texte, audio ou video)
- La **préparation** est de **20 minutes** (sauf qq écoles, dont St Cyr 30 min sur documents un peu plus longs)
- L'épreuve consiste toujours en :
 - Un **compte-rendu** structuré du document
 - Suivi d'un **commentaire** du document (entre 7 et 10 minutes au total pour ces deux exercices)
 - Un **entretien** avec le jury (10 min maximum)

Straight reporting – News Analysis – Opinion pieces – Op-eds – Editorials

How to understand the difference

To understand the difference between editorials and op-eds, it helps first to understand a thing or two about a newspaper's "voice," and where it comes from.

Is it that of the publisher and/or what is called an editorial board - which might include the publisher, one or more editors, and even people from the community at large. They formulate the newspaper's "voice" by agreeing to take **particular stands on particular issues**. Columnists, guest columnists or guest editors may vary and they usually express more personal, diverging views. They may share their expertise (say on history, foreign affairs, science, the economy or demographics) or relate their personal experience etc.

Editorials (leaders, leading articles) are written by people on the paper's payroll, make a persuasive case supporting the stand taken, and are typically grounded in moral, ethical, and/or other concerns raised by issue at hand. The best editorials explore the potential ramifications of the issue for their readership, and offer ideas for remedying particularly egregious or dangerous outcomes likely to result if the issue goes unaddressed or is inadequately addressed (the opioid crisis, the separation of families at the border, the threat to the freedom of the press, misinformation, the threat to institutions for example). In the case of The Economist, they are called "**Leaders**".

In addition to voicing its own stands on the editorial page, many newspapers accept submissions from people with particular training or expertise for consideration as **op-eds** on given topics.

An op-ed piece derives its name from originally having appeared opposite the editorial page in a newspaper. Today, the term is used more widely to represent a column that represents the strong, informed, and focused opinion of the writer on an issue of relevance to a targeted audience.

Partly, a **column** is defined by where it appears, but it shares some common characteristics

- Typically, it is short, between 750 and 900 words.
- It has a clearly defined point.
- It has a clearly defined point of view.
- It represents clarity of thinking.
- It contains the strong, unique voice of the writer.

While columns and op-ed pieces allow writers to include their own voice and express an opinion, to be successful the columns must be grounded in solid research. (Research involves acquiring facts, quotations, citations, or data from sources and personal observation).

News analyses are typically written by a newsroom editor or a pair or team senior writers. They attempt to connect the dots—to put all the facts uncovered by "**straight news**" reporting on a particular topic in one place—and to reach some potential conclusions about what, taken together, they might mean, and/or where the story might be going. While news analysis pieces often appear alongside the "straight" reporting in the paper's news columns, they should always be prominently marked as "**Analysis**" or "**News Analysis**."

The best such pieces, while more subjective than straight reporting since they attempt to draw conclusions, should *not* reflect the writer's personal politics, let alone include accusations or conclusions that cannot be supported by confirmed facts. The only place for that kind of conjecture (in any newspaper worth its salt) is on the Opinion page, whether in an **editorial** or - more often - the work of a columnist.

Reviews are opinions about the aesthetics and sensory effects of various diversions; books, art, music, movies, food, wine—written by a reviewer or critic, paid specifically to produce such work, and usually with specialized training in and/or years of experience with the subject.

THE MEDIA IN THE UK

	Political leaning	www
Quality dailies <i>The Times (475000)</i> <i>The Guardian (149000)</i> <i>The Daily Telegraph (478000)</i> <i>The Independent (online only)</i> <i>The Financial Times (186000)</i>	Centre/centre right Centre left Conservative Centre/centre left Libertarian	www.guardian.co.uk www.independent.co.uk
Quality Sunday papers <i>The Observer</i> <i>The Sunday Times</i> <i>The Sunday Telegraph</i> <i>The Independent on Sunday</i>	Left-wing Centre/centre right Conservative Centre/centre left	
Magazines <i>The Economist</i> <i>The New Statesman</i> <i>The Spectator</i> <i>New Scientist</i>	Independent/liberal Center left Conservative / Center right	www.economist.com
TV and Radio •BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) •ITV (Independent TV) •Channel 4		http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio/ http://www.bbc.com/news/video_and_audio/

THE MEDIA IN THE US

	Political leaning (not so relevant)	www
Dailies <i>The New York Times</i> <i>The Wall Street Journal</i> <i>USA Today</i> <i>The Washington Post</i> <i>The Boston Globe</i> <i>The Los Angeles Times</i> <i>The Chicago Tribune</i>	Rather liberal	www.nytimes.com www.wsj.com
<i>The National Review</i> <i>The Washington Examiner</i>	Conservative	www.washingtonpost.com www.bostonglobe.com www.latimes.com www.nationalreview.com
Weekly news magazines <i>Time</i> <i>Newsweek</i> <i>US News and World Report</i> <i>Christian Science Monitor</i>		http://time.com http://www.newsweek.com/en
TV and Radio •NPR (National Public Radio) •ABC (American Broadcasting Company) •CBS (Columbia Broadcasting System) •NBC (National Broadcasting Company) •CNN (Cable News Network) •Fox News	Said to be rather liberal	http://www.npr.org/ http://abcnews.go.com/ http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/
	Liberal conservative	http://edition.cnn.com/video/ http://video.foxnews.com

Online publications : Slate, Politico, The Conversation, Project Syndicate, The Hill etc

Analysing a press article – Useful words and phrases

The tone of the article

When reading articles for analysis, and particularly opinion pieces, you are expected to identify the viewpoint, the rhetoric and the tone of each piece of writing. In many instances the tone of the writing may change within the text of the article. You will be expected to justify your remarks about any of these aspects. The vocabulary below is meant to help you.

Often **editorials** will make an effort to retain a calm, logical and measured tone. They like to sound intelligent, knowledgeable and reasonable. Editorials mostly retain the same tone throughout, but some editors can falter into a more personal and emotional tone on occasion, and you need to be able to pick up on subtle changes if they happen in the piece of writing.

Opinion pieces, columns or feature articles are pieces written by professional journalists who usually have a regular column in the paper. They often have their photograph included in the piece. Some journalists are newspaper 'celebrities' in their own right, and are known for having particular political views. Such writing is lengthier and includes a combination of research and opinion. These pieces are often written in the first person sometimes using anecdotes to provide readers with a 'personal' angle, yet they also attempt to seem reasonable and popular with the public in order to encourage regular readership of their column. To some extent, they are out to entertain their audience also.

Words and phrases to assess the tone

moderate
calm but firm
level-headed
accurate
analytical
penetrating
precise.
compelling
convincing
dynamic

effective
persuasive,
pithy,
potent
powerful
telling
vigorous

critical
reproachful
censorious,
derogatory,
disapproving,
disparaging,
fault-finding,
nagging,
scathing.

bitter
cynical
satirical
sarcastic
ironical
embittered

hopeful
cheerful
optimistic
confident
buoyant
enthusiastic

amused
humorous
jocular
witty
entertaining
frivolous

anxious
resentful
disappointed
despondent
disconsolate
pessimistic
appalled
alarming

appreciative
admiring
ardent
fervent
passionate
energetic
ebullient
vehement

Commenting on reader impact

Besides explaining why the writer has chosen a specific persuasive device, part of defining how it works includes considering how the reader is meant to react to it. Does it provoke shock, anger or sadness? Does it make the reader laugh, wince or groan? Are we being rallied into action or expected to act in any particular way? When a writer is being persuasive, you must ask the question: **How is the reader meant to feel about this?**

Consider using some of the following phrases:

It reads rather like
The power in this text stems from...
For the reader, the text produces...
The general pattern of language provokes....
A mood of... prevails in this article.
A reader's response might well be to. ..
The influence of this text lies in...
The dominant trend in these texts is. ..
The writer has tailored the text in order to...
This article generates feelings of...
Leaves the reader with a sense of...
This text increases the momentum of the debate over...

This text intensifies the discussion by...
This accentuates / exacerbates the controversy by...
Incites/invites readers to...
Seeks to divide readers' opinions
Arouses deep concern in...
Presents the reader with an ultimatum...
Encourages the public to...
Calls on reader to ...
Manipulates the reader by doing ...
Diverts responsibility away from. ...
Oversimplifies the issue by...

Interpreting purpose and intention

The text gives prominence to...
The text attempts to mobilise support by.
This language is designed to provoke.
The clearest illustration of the writer's purpose...
The writer has concentrated his / her effort on...
The article is clearly focused on...
The article pinpoints / stresses / emphasizes / lays the stress on / lays the emphasis on
The text provides a map of...
The writer probes / scrutinizes / attempts to / opts for
The writers questions / calls sth into question
The writer's purpose emerges...

The text constructs an image of...
The writer tends to ...
The argument advanced in the text is designed to....
The writer intends to fuel the debate on. / aims at doING
The position the reader is asked to share is...
The article attempts to enlist the support of...
This text provides a view that contradicts. ..
The appealing imagery of the text is aimed at...
The writer questions....
This text clearly reveals the writer's stance on...

Other analytical / rhetorical aspects of the article to consider may be:

- use of evocative and/or emotional imagery...
- A sustained attack...
- to use cold, hard, statistics...
- to resort to a barrage of facts and statistics...
- to pepper the text with sinister connotations of.
- to lay emphatic and/or convincing arguments.
- to voice a powerfully emotional plea.
- a belligerent opening paragraph
- to make use of clever and/or imaginative use of metaphor
- a poetic turn of phrase
- a clear and logically framed argument.

- an unusual angle or perspective

A strongly opinionated article

- advocates the view that.
- refutes the notion that...
- rebuts / debunks allegations that...
- provides an assessment of...
- endorses the position that ...
- is sympathetic towards..
- raises questions about...
- casts doubts on...
- makes a vociferous protest against...
- shows partiality towards.
- expresses unease at the fact that

- dismisses as irrelevant and untrue / Ideologically nonsense.
- vigorously condemns.
- is diametrically opposed to / opposes / takes the (exact) opposite position

