Descriptive Outline (Says/Does)

The descriptive outline involves a careful examination of the **meaning** and **function** of each paragraph in a text. Here are the steps:

1. For the entire text, write
   1. A “says sentence: a 1 sentence summary of what the whole piece is **saying** – its main point.
   2. A “does sentence: a f1 sentence summary of what the entire piece is **doing** or trying to do/accomplish.
2. For each section, write
   1. A “says” sentence
   2. A “does” sentence that explains how the paragraph or sections functions in the overall strategy of the essay. In other words, what is it trying to do?

**Verbs for Summary – What is the writer saying?**

Strong summaries utilize attributive tags, but the tags go beyond merely using “says.” An ***effective, rhetorically accurate verb*** in the speaker tag helps you situate the writer and/or explain the relationship between says/does.

**Ineffective:** “Sartwell talks about how…”

**Effective:** “Sartwell illustrates his point …”

**Claiming:** claims, argues, contends, submits, asserts, declares, proclaims, advocates, alleges, holds, thinks, believes, reasons, maintains, insists, demands, requests

**Criticizing:** criticizes, challenges, opposes, contests, denies, repudiates, renounces, rejects, accuses, charges, attacks, protests, doubts, denies

**Praising:** praises, commends, compliments, worships, exalts

**Suggesting:** suggests, recommends, proposes, hypothesizes, guesses, speculates, posits

**Implying**: implies, hints, intimates, insinuates, hints

**Questioning:** questions, asks, wonders

**Demonstrating:** demonstrates, illustrates, reveals

**Conceding:** concedes, admits, acknowledges, grants

**Emphasizing:** emphasizes, underscores, stresses,highlights, encourages, promotes, fosters

**Deemphasizing:** underplays, downplays, minimizes

**Warning:** warns, cautions

**Does Words and Phrases – How does the writer support her claim?**

Strong summaries explain not only what the author is doing (the *says*) but also how the author is doing it (the *does*). When summarizing the function(s) of the essay, try some of these active constructions:

This paragraph/evidence/author \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* Gives an example
* Introduces a new issue or argument
* Reveals personal information about the author
* Compares two ideas
* Contrasts two ideas
* Summarizes or paraphrases an outside source
* Desccribes
* Uses emotional language/appeals to the reader’s emotions
* Admits a possible counterargument
* Restates or summarizes
* Points out problems with the opposition
* Demonstrates personal knowledge of the issue
* Offers an initial hypothesis/makes a guess
* States a position
* Explains the logic of an argument
* Cites an authority
* Employs an analogy
* Provides reason/evidence/support