

MODES, FORMS, AND GENRES OF WRITING

(The following lists are meant to be illustrative, not exhaustive.)

It should be noted that several of these types of writing appear in more than one mode. Depending on the writer's purpose it is very possible that a report, for example, could be expository, persuasive, or technical in nature. Additionally, it should also be noted that an individual piece of writing often times blends several modes or moves back and forth among modes—a research paper might begin by relating an anecdote in the narrative mode, then move into the expository mode to explain information, and then shift again into the persuasive mode to argue for a solution. Very few pieces of writing are “pure” examples of a single mode.

Narrative Mode

stories
poems
songs
personal narratives
reflective writings
skits
autobiographies
essay of experiences
recounts
cartoons
comic strips
graphic novels
fantasy/science fiction
legends
myths
memories
memoirs
stage plays
screen plays
monologues
diaries
journals
letters

Expository Mode

labels
lists
observations
journals
summaries
paraphrases
notes
magazine articles
newspaper articles
reflective papers
logs
explanatory essays
process essays
compare/contrast essays
cause/effect essays
problem/solution essays
extended definition essays
personal narratives
biographies
reports
brochures
letters
speeches

Persuasive Mode

advertisements
editorials
brochures
position papers
essays of argumentation
process essays
letters
proposals
speeches
public service announcements
debates
reviews
literary response essays
compare/contrast essays
cause/effect essays
problem/solution essays
extended definition essays
literary analysis essays
college application essays
essays of opposing ideas
personal commentaries

Technical Mode

letters
memos
emails
schedules
menus
directories
signs
manuals
forms
recipes
reports
proposals
graphs/tables
captions
directions
rules
posters
experiments
procedures
rubrics
minutes
resumes
brochure