1.1: Types of Writing Styles

There are four main types of writing: expository, descriptive, persuasive, and narrative. Each of these writing styles is used for a specific purpose. A single text may include more than one writing style.

EXPOSITORY

Expository writing is one of the most common types of writing. When an author writes in an expository style, all they are trying to do is explain a concept, imparting information from themselves to a wider audience. Expository writing does not include the author’s opinions, but focuses on accepted facts about a topic, including statistics or other evidence.

Example \(\PageIndex{1}\):

Examples of Expository Writing

- Textbooks
- How-to articles
- Recipes
- News stories (not editorials or Op-Eds)
- Business, technical, or scientific writing

DESCRIPTIVE

Descriptive writing is often found in fiction, though it can make an appearance in nonfiction as well (for example, memoirs, first-hand accounts of events, or travel guides). When an author writes in a descriptive style, they are painting
a picture in words of a person, place, or thing for their audience. The author might employ metaphor or other literary devices in order to describe the author’s impressions via their five senses (what they hear, see, smell, taste, or touch). But the author is not trying to convince the audience of anything or explain the scene – merely describe things as they are.

Example \(\PageIndex{2}\): 

Examples of Descriptive Writing

- Poetry
- Journal/diary writing
- Descriptions of Nature
- Fictional novels or plays

---

**PERSUASIVE**

Persuasive writing is the main style of writing you will use in academic papers. When an author writes in a persuasive style, they are trying to convince the audience of a position or belief. Persuasive writing contains the author’s opinions and biases, as well as justifications and reasons given by the author as evidence of the correctness of their position. Any “argumentative” essay you write in school should be in the persuasive style of writing.

Example \(\PageIndex{3}\): 

Examples of Persuasive Writing

- Cover letters
- Op-Eds and Editorial newspaper articles
- Reviews of items
- Letters of complaint
- Advertisements
- Letters of recommendation

---

**NARRATIVE**

Narrative writing is used in almost every longer piece of writing, whether fiction or nonfiction. When an author writes in a narrative style, they are not just trying to impart information, they are trying to construct and communicate a story, complete with characters, conflict, and settings.

Example \(\PageIndex{4}\): 

Examples of Narrative Writing
• Oral histories
• Novels/Novellas
• Poetry (especially epic sagas or poems)
• Short Stories
• Anecdotes