2.5: Modes of Organization

About the Modes of Organization

The first part of this book is about the stages of the writing process. Now it's time to shift gears and start thinking about the kinds of assignments you're likely to encounter in college. Each "writing mode" requires a different mode of thinking, and that's why teachers and professors often ask for different kinds of writing (they want you to think about a subject in a variety of ways). But generally, assignments will require you to apply several modes, simultaneously, to accomplish a well-rounded body of writing. Few professors beyond the first-year level of coursework require an assignment that merely focuses on description or narration; other modes are required to generate a well-rounded piece of writing that entertains, informs, and persuades (i.e., narrative, explication, argument).

Most of the time, you'll find yourself switching among all of these modes as you write. You would have a hard time, for instance, reviewing a car without spending any time describing it, and the strength of an argument depends on how well you've evaluated its evidence. What's important is that you recognize the difference between them. Many students lose points each year when they offer their teacher a description instead of the evaluation or argument called for by the assignment. Below, we break down some common writing modes, telling you their characteristics and what makes them unique, then offer examples of informal and formal writing that show them in action.

Description

1. What is Description?
2. Why Write a Descriptive Essay?
3. Abstract Descriptions Versus Concrete Descriptions
1. Abstract Descriptions
2. Concrete Descriptions
4. Similes and Metaphors
5. How to Write Description
   1. Thesis
6. Examples of Sensory Words
   1. Examples of Sound Imagery
   2. Examples of Smell Imagery
   3. Examples of Touch Imagery
   4. Example of Visual Imagery
   5. Examples of Taste Imagery
7. Order of Presentation
   1. Audience
   2. Introduction
   3. Body
   4. Conclusion
8. A Second Sample Descriptive Essay
   1. First Draft
   2. Second Draft
9. External Links

Narration

1. What is Narration?
2. What is Narrative?
3. Elements
4. Classical Arrangement
5. Modern Practice
6. Student Essay
7. Revision Hints
8. External Links

Argumentation

Argumentation does not mean getting into a fight! See below for an explanation of argumentation (writing to persuade) in college:

1. What is An Argument?
2. Basic Argument Essay Structure
   1. Introduction
3. Body
   1. Background Information
   2. Developing Your Argument
      1. Position Method
      2. Proposal Method
   3. Dealing With the Opposition
4. Conclusion
5. Strengthening Your Argument
   1. Phrasing
   2. Objective Language
6. Sample Essay
7. The Fallacies of Argument
8. A Side Note
9. Further Reading
10. External Links

Exposition

1. What is Exposition Writing?
   1. Types of Exposition
   2. Where Do I Begin?
      1. Find a Topic and Research
      2. Thesis
      3. Create a Sketchy Outline
      3. Start Writing
2. Structure
   1. Introduction
   2. Body
   3. Conclusion
3. Sample Exposition Assignments
4. Sample Exposition Essay
   1. Why Is This Good?
5. External links
References

- From Rhetoric and Composition/Writing Applications
- From Rhetoric and Composition/Description
- Rhetoric and Composition/Narration
- From Rhetoric and Composition/Argument
- From Rhetoric and Composition/Exposition