

Academic texts

Lecture provided by me ;-)

Main types of academic writing

- Descriptive
- Analytical
- Persuasive
- Critical

Descriptive

- The simplest type of academic writing is descriptive. Its purpose is to provide facts or information. An example would be a summary of an article or a report of the results of an experiment.
- The kinds of instructions for a purely descriptive assignment include: 'identify', 'report', 'record', 'summarize' and 'define'.

Analytical

- It's rare for a university-level text to be purely descriptive. Most academic writing is also analytical. Analytical writing includes descriptive writing, but also requires you to re-organize the facts and information you describe into categories, groups, parts, types or relationships.
- Sometimes, these categories or relationships are already part of the discipline, while in other cases you will create them specifically for your text. If you're comparing two theories, you might break your comparison into several parts, for example: how each theory deals with social context, how each theory deals with language learning, and how each theory can be used in practice.
- The kinds of instructions for an analytical assignment include: 'analyze', 'compare', 'contrast', 'relate', and 'examine'.

Persuasive

- In most academic writing, you are required to go at least one step further than analytical writing, to persuasive writing. Persuasive writing has all the features of analytical writing (that is, information plus re-organizing the information), with the addition of your own point of view. Most essays are persuasive, and there is a persuasive element in at least the discussion and conclusion of a research article.
- Points of view in academic writing can include an argument, recommendation, interpretation of findings or evaluation of the work of others. In persuasive writing, each claim you make needs to be supported by some evidence, for example a reference to research findings or published sources.
- The kinds of instructions for a persuasive assignment include: 'argue', 'evaluate', 'discuss', and 'take a position'.

Critical

- Critical writing is common for research, postgraduate and advanced undergraduate writing. It has all the features of persuasive writing, with the added feature of at least one other point of view. While persuasive writing requires you to have your own point of view on an issue or topic, critical writing requires you to consider at least two points of view, including your own.
- For example, you may explain a researcher's interpretation or argument and then evaluate the merits of the argument, or give your own alternative interpretation.
- Examples of critical writing assignments include a critique of a journal article, or a literature review that identifies the strengths and weaknesses of existing research. The kinds of instructions for critical writing include: 'critique', 'debate', 'disagree' and 'evaluate'.

Five types not four

- Descriptive
- Analytical
- Persuasive
- Critical
- Personal or Reflective Writing

Materials from University of Seattle, USA:

<https://www.seattleu.edu/education/graduate-writing-center/academic-writing--communication/types-of-academic-writing/>

Personal or Reflective Writing

- Reflective writing is evidence of reflective thinking. In an academic context, reflective thinking usually involves:
- Looking back at something (often an event, i.e. something that happened, but it could also be an idea or object). Analyzing the event or idea (thinking in depth and from different perspectives, and trying to explain, often with reference to a model or theory from your subject). Thinking carefully about what the event or idea means for you and your ongoing progress as a learner and/or practicing professional.
- Reflective writing is thus more personal than other kinds of academic writing. The focus is on your thoughts and experiences. This is where you present your thoughts on a reading, discuss a personal experience, apply a theory to a real-life example, or some other focus that asks you to think about and explain your thoughts and experiences. In this type of writing, one should use the first person voice (I, me, my) and writing is usually less formal than a standard research paper

Free online sources

The classic book *Elements of Style* by William J. Strunk, Jr (Humphrey, New York, 1918) is now published by Bartleby.com (New York, 1999) and is freely available on the web in searchable format.

<https://www.bartleby.com/141/>

Types of the most popular academic texts

- Articles
- Thesis/dissertations/monographs
- Conference papers
- Proposals
- Essays
- Reports
- Popularizations texts

There might be a confusion between:

types of writing and types of texts

Popularizations texts

- Non-academic purposes (e.g. blog, news magazine, etc.)
- No systematic references (if any)
- Wide audience – avoid disciplinary slang
- Sometimes collaborative editing and revision (e.g. Wikipedia)
- Independent of a publisher
- Lacks authorization of an institution
- Very often web-based

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Motor_learning

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2010.00209/full>

NYT Web page - <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/11/opinion/11schmidt.html>

Reports

Statement of:

- Work in progress
 - Final results and outcomes: demos
 - Academic or non-academic
-
- <https://templatelab.com/technical-reports/>

Essays

- Small scale articles
- Sometimes like a newspaper column
- Often argues for a concept, standpoint or opinion
- Related to study foci (Focus)
- Personal, sometimes diary-like

James Cook University, Australia

https://www.jcu.edu.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0019/202663/How-to-write-a-Science-Essay.pdf

Proposals

- Half-academic or academic
 - Propose a research or development project
 - Sets premises, starting points, brands and concepts
 - Establishes partnerships or consortiums
 - Frame resources: human, technology, facilities, budget
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- <https://project-proposal.casual.pm/>

Conference papers

- A conference paper is often both a written document and an oral presentation.
- Are typically published in collections called "proceedings": sometimes these are printed by university presses, by professional organizations, by big-name publishers, or simply online. Journal papers refer to an article that's published in an issue of the journal.
- Often – preliminary stage of an journal article
- Edited further for journal publication – takin an advantage of feedback for peers

Book of abstracts:

<https://journals.humankinetics.com/view/journals/jpah/15/s1/article-pS1.xml>

Proceedings:

<https://dl.acm.org/doi/proceedings/10.1145/3277139>

Thesis / dissertations / monographs

- Master and or doctoral
- Docent – habilitation (Germany/Poland/Austria, etc.)
- Senior contributions
- Textbooks

Thesis vs. dissertations

- <https://www.postgrad.com/advice/exams/dissertation-and-theses/difference-between-a-dissertation-and-a-thesis/>

Thesis and dissertations structure

A traditional thesis/dissertation is organized like this:

- • **Title page** – One page with the title, date, degree the project was submitted for and your full name.
- **Abstract** – A brief summary of the project, no more than a single page in length, summarizing the aims, background, methods and findings. This should be the last part of the work that you write!
- **Contents** – Tables listing the chapters, the figures and the diagrams.
- **Chapter 1: Background and context** – A discussion of the background to the study and the reasons for its importance and interest as a research project.
- **Chapter 2: Literature review** – A summary of the findings of the literature review.
- **Chapter 3: Research methodology** – A description and justification of the methodology you have used.
- **Chapters 4–6: Data presentation and analysis** – Chapters presenting, interpreting and analyzing the results.
- **Chapter 7: Discussion and conclusions** – The ‘big picture’ chapter, presenting the overall findings, the ‘answer’ to the research question and a critique of the research.
- **Bibliography** – A list of the references and wider reading that you have done.
- **Appendices** – Additional information you want to include. This could be some of the detailed data, or samples of some of the ‘raw’ results such as computer printouts or interview notes or a sample questionnaire.

Thesis and dissertations structure

An article-based thesis/dissertation

- an example from my students

Articles

- Means of publishing results of research or development to the community
- Claims, proves, argues, implies
- Aims at impact on the academic community (offers concepts, methods, explanations, etc.)
- Main type of academic writing

Articles

- original research articles
- short communications (*Research notes*)
- reviews: narrative and systematic reviews
- case reports/case series
- technical notes
- letters to the editor, correspondences
- editorials, commentaries
- pictorial essays
- grey literature - ???

Examples

- Science (Science Magazine):

<https://www.sciencemag.org/authors/science-information-authors>

- Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology:

https://journals.humankinetics.com/view/journals/jsep/jsep-overview.xml?tab_body=null-7643

- PlosOne:

<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/s/criteria-for-publication>

<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/s/other-article-types>

Letters:

- Explain what is the letter's purpose and main point
- <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40519-020-01011-5>
- <https://journals.physiology.org/doi/full/10.1152/ajpgi.00080.2020>

Reviews:

- Cochrane:
- <https://www.cochranelibrary.com/about/about-cochrane-reviews>
- <https://www.cochranelibrary.com/about/releases>

Search: HIV + circumcision

- Other examples:
- https://journals.lww.com/acsm-msse/Fulltext/2019/06000/Physical_Activity_in_Cancer_Prevention_and_Prevention_of_Cardiovascular_Disease.aspx

Reviews:

- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3024725/>