Modes of Writing

For each mode, or form of writing, our purpose for writing changes slightly. For each mode you will see:
A general description of that mode, based on purpose, a list of typical samples of this mode common in everyday writing, and
key traits that help make a writer successful within that mode.

**Descriptive Writing**

**Definition:** Descriptive writing paints a word picture in the readers mind, often using sensory details—what the writer sees, hears, smells, and feels.

**Common examples:** menus, catalogs, travel brochures, poetry

**Key Traits:** word choice, ideas

**Narrative Writing**

**Definition:** Narrative writing tells a story. Creative narrative writing has a plot, a setting, and characters who have motives for what they do. It has tension—a problem to be solved; there is a point to the story. Non-fictional narrative writing is used to recount a person’s life story, important historical events, or news stories

**Common examples:** novels, short stories, plays, diaries, news stories, biographies

**Key Traits:** ideas, organization

**Expository/Informative Writing**

**Definition:** Effective expository writing answers a key question. Informational pieces are sometimes based on formal research, and sometimes based on personal information and observation. Good informational writing is well supported by facts, comparisons, quotations from reputable sources, or relevant anecdotes. Successful expository writing can be very compelling and may have strong voice-indicating the writer's commitment to the topic.

**Common examples:** journal/newspaper articles, research summaries, textbooks, Non-fiction picture books, How-to-manuals, cookbooks

**Key Traits:** ideas, organization, voice

**Persuasive Writing**

**Definition:** It is intended to convince the reader that a certain point of view is the right one to hold, or that some action should be taken. Successful persuasive writing is based on a topic that is highly focused- the issue needs to be clearly explained. The writer needs to take a clear stand showing why the reader should agree. At the end, the reader should feel he/she has enough information to make a good decision.

**Common examples:** film/book/restaurant reviews, editorial articles, government proposals, legislation, advertisements

**Key Traits:** ideas, organization, voice