

Modes of Composition

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WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn about the four different modes of writing and the particular purpose and features of each. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. **Narrative Mode**
2. **Descriptive Mode**
3. **Informative Mode**
4. **Argumentative Mode**

1. Narrative Mode

A **mode** is a way of describing an approach to writing that has a specific **purpose**, or goal. The **narrative mode** is a mode of writing that is driven by a story; it tells what has happened, whether the story is fictional or true. This might be an opportunity for reflecting upon an event, or maybe just a way to tell an entertaining story about something interesting that happened.

When would you use this mode? You would definitely use narration to tell the story of a recent vacation, but you might also use it academically or professionally.

⇒ **EXAMPLE** If you're writing a paper for a political science class and want to imagine how a potential policy change might influence the country, you might use the narrative mode.



HINT

Description provides details concerning a specific person, place, or thing, so it's used to add in details and really draw a clear and vivid picture. For that reason, it's likely that you would also use the descriptive mode while telling a story in the narrative mode.



TERMS TO KNOW

Mode

The manner in which a text is written.

Purpose

The intended goal or value of a text.

Narrative Mode

A mode of writing that is driven by a story.

2. Descriptive Mode

Description provides details that zero in on a specific person, place, or thing. It's used to draw a clear and vivid picture.

As seen in the example above, it can be used along with narration for an academic paper, or in your professional career.

How else might you use the **descriptive mode**?

⇒ **EXAMPLE** In a business setting, you may want to pitch a new product. Using the descriptive mode, you can clearly describe its features and uses.



TERM TO KNOW

Descriptive Mode

A mode of writing that focuses on details about a specific person, place, or thing.

3. Informative Mode

The **informative mode** is a mode of writing designed to inform, describe, or explain. It is thus similar in some ways to narration and description and may use those modes. It's also specifically used for informing, which involves giving the reader facts without offering an opinion about them.

This mode is written with as little bias as possible. Your feelings about the facts cannot change whether or not they're true.

⇒ **EXAMPLE** When writing a history paper, you would likely use the informative mode to inform your readers about past events. You cannot pick and choose which elements of the truth you'll include.



TERM TO KNOW

Informative Mode

A mode of writing designed to inform, describe, or explain.

4. Argumentative Mode

The **argumentative mode** takes a clear position on a debatable question and backs up claims with evidence and reasoning. This is where you present a thesis statement, or a clearly stated main point, which takes a side in a debate and presents supporting evidence, logical arguments, and reasoning to back up that position.

Obviously, you'll use this mode if you're assigned an opinion or argumentative paper, but you likely already use this mode often in your daily life.

⇒ **EXAMPLE** Your friends want to go out for Chinese food, but you'd rather have a burger, so you try to convince them to head out for burgers instead. When you do this, you're using the argumentative mode.



TERM TO KNOW

Argumentative Mode

A mode of writing that takes a clear position on a debatable question and backs up claims with evidence and reasoning.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned about the four modes of writing, which each serve a particular purpose that the author needs to assess. The **informative mode** offers objective information, while the **argumentative mode** uses opinion and reasoning to convince readers of something. The **narrative mode** is more of a storytelling approach, and the **descriptive mode** zeroes in on details about a person, place, or thing.

Best of luck in your learning!

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TERMS TO KNOW

Argumentative Mode

A mode of writing that takes a clear position on a debatable question and backs up claims with evidence and reasoning.

Descriptive Mode

A mode of writing that focuses on details about a specific person, place, or thing.

Informative Mode

A mode of writing designed to inform, describe, or explain.

Mode

The manner in which a text is written.

Narrative Mode

A mode of writing that is driven by a story.

Purpose

The intended goal or value of a text.