

Modes of Writing

by Sophia



WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn about the four different modes of writing, and the particular purpose and features of each. You will also discover how these modes of writing further enhance your communication skill. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. Narrative Mode
2. Descriptive Mode
3. Informative Mode
4. Persuasive 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 communications class and want to imagine how a conflict between a manager and a team member could influence office productivity, you might use the narrative mode.

Because the narrative mode is frequently used in professional and casual social situations, understanding this approach will strengthen your **communication skills** across all aspects of your life.

⇒ **EXAMPLE** In the scenario where you are writing about conflict between a manager and team member, you could use words and descriptions that lead people to take sides. You might make the manager seem mean or petty, or the employee seem careless and irresponsible, based on the words and phrases you use. Throughout this challenge we will consider how the power of writing can be used or abused, how you can intentionally build empathy, or unintentionally turn readers off of your message.



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.



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.

Similar to the narrative mode, the descriptive mode is also used in a variety of situations, both professional and nonprofessional, strengthening your **communication skill**. Another similarity to narrative mode is how descriptive writing can use words and phrases to great emotional effect.



Real estate agents are masters at creating favorable descriptions for the properties they are trying to sell. A small house becomes “cozy.” A house in poor condition is “a handyman’s delight.” A house that is out of style is “quaint.” Imagine you are tasked with selling a house that is in a remote location and rumored to be haunted.

What words or phrases would you use to make people feel more positively about the property?



A remote house can be described as an “oasis” with “lots of privacy.” As for haunted, a realtor might say the house is “unique” or “full of character.” What terms did you come up with?

While you won't be practicing the narrative and descriptive modes specifically in this course, it's important to understand how these modes work, as they are often incorporated into other modes of writing. Narrative writing usually includes description, and telling stories is a good way to get your message across.



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

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4. Persuasive Mode

The **persuasive mode** aims to convince the audience to take a specific course of action. This is where you present a thesis statement, or a clearly-stated main point, which takes a position on a topic and uses reasoning to support that position.

Obviously, you'll use this mode if you're assigned an opinion or persuasive 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 persuasive mode.

The persuasive mode is very similar to the **argumentative mode**, which takes a clear position on a debatable question, and backs up claims with evidence and reasoning. In fact, these terms are often used interchangeably because of how much they overlap in technique. For the purpose of this course, we will most often be using the term "persuasive," as you will ultimately be trying to convince your audience to take a specific action as a result of your argument.



Imagine that Lucia owns a small jewelry-making business and is negotiating with stores to sell her jewelry. She'll need to use strong persuasive writing skills that incorporate logical and accurate evidence. She will also need these skills to purchase supplies, setting legal policies for her organization, and many other facts for her business to be successful.



TERMS TO KNOW

Persuasive Mode

A mode of writing that aims to convince the audience to take a specific course of action.

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 **persuasive 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. Finally, you strengthened your communication skill by exploring these four modes of writing.

Best of luck in your learning!

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