TEXT TYPES

DEFINITION

Depending upon their purpose, different texts have specific styles and structures. The categories of styles and structures are called **text types**. Depending on what your purpose is, you need to be able to select an appropriate text type and follow its genre conventions.

EXAMPLES

- **Narrative:** A form of writing that tells a story or recounts events.

- **Expository:** Provides detailed information or explanation about a particular topic.

- **Persuasive:** Aims to convince the reader or listener of a particular viewpoint or action.

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Texts types, also known as genres or text forms, refer to categories of texts with different purposes. Depending on the purpose, each type of text will have have a different convention of style and structure.

It is essential to understand text types and their conventions because:

- **Interpretation:** It helps us understand the text's intentions, trustworthiness, and bias
- **Text Creation:** It helps us to create texts that are most effective, depending upon the purpose

Below is a list of the most common text types and their key conventions, style, structure, and purpose.

TEXT TYPES EXAMPLES

1. **Narrative**

Purpose: A narrative text aims to tell a story to the reader. It isn't always just about telling a story for entertainment, though. The purpose of narrative text also lies in its capacity to engage the reader's imagination, impart a moral lesson, or just simply pass on a tale through generations. For example, narrative stories are used in folklore and folktales to pass-on cultural values and stories.

Style: The style of a narrative text is distinctive. It employs a chronological sequencing of events. Coherent, right-branching sentences, varying in length, create rhythm and draw the reader into the unfolding story. Active voice is favored to maintain directness and immediacy, bringing scenes alive.

Structure: Beginning with an orientation, it introduces characters, setting, and time. Short initial sentences establish the context. The complication, the next part, presents problems or conflicts. A series of sentences, varying in length and complexity, takes the reader through ups and downs. Ultimately, the story reaches a resolution, where the achievement or solution is laid out.

2. Descriptive

Purpose: A descriptive text is designed to describe something in a detailed manner. The writer attempts to paint a vivid image in the reader's mind, often by intricately describing an object, person, place, experience, or situation.

Style: Adjectives play a significant role in a descriptive text. They enrich the text, adding depth to the description. Similes, metaphors, and other figurative language might also be used for more creative descriptions. The sentences can be diverse, ranging from concise statement of facts to long, detailed *depictions*.

Structure: A descriptive text often starts with a short, general overview of what is being described. Then, it delves into details, exploring appearance, characteristics, functions, and other aspects. It closes with a brief summary or a final remark on the described subject.

3. Expository

Purpose: The main goal of an expository text is to inform or explain. It aims to provide the reader with comprehensive information about a specific topic. This type of text gives out facts and provides deep insights, explaining complex concepts or procedures in a manner that the reader can understand.

Style: The style of an expository text is systematic and straightforward. It has an emphasis on clarity. It avoids ambiguity and confusion.

Structure: Beginning with an introduction that briefly outlines the topic, an expository text then offers a well-structured exploration of distinct aspects of the topic. Each paragraph introduces a different point related to the topic. The conclusion summarizes the main points and offers final insights.

4. Argumentative / Persuasive

Purpose: An argumentative or persuasive text is structured to persuade the readers by presenting a point of view. It defends a position regarding an issue or topic, using reasoned arguments, facts, statistics, and real-life examples to convince readers and lure them into adopting this point of view.

Style: These texts should be precise, logical, and grounded in evidence. The use of rhetorical devices like ethos, logos, and pathos can help persuade and appeal to the reader's sense of ethics, logic, or emotions.

Structure: Key here is to map out a clear and structured argument, often presenting the most compelling points at the beginning and end of the piece. Consider using an essay plan. Your piece may start with a clear statement of the thesis or position. Then, provide supporting evidence and arguments, section by section. Each paragraph can offer a different reason or piece of evidence supporting the thesis.
A conclusion is then needed to sum up the argument, restate the thesis, and call the reader to action.

5. Instructional
Purpose: An instructional text serves to provide instructions or directions on how to do something. It aims to guide the reader through a sequence of steps to achieve a certain goal or complete a task efficiently.

Style: Unlike persuasive texts, instructional texts should not try to convince anyone of anything. Your job is to strictly provide facts. The language is direct, to-the-point, and unambiguous.

Structure: Instructional texts usually start with an overview of the task or goal, and possibly, what the end result should look like. Following that, a list of materials or requirements would come next. After this, a step-by-step guide detailing how to accomplish the task is written.

6. Procedural

Purpose: Procedural texts are designed to guide the reader through a sequence of actions or steps necessary to accomplish a specific task. These tasks might be related to cooking, science experiments, emergency procedures, or machinery operation, among others.

Style: Procedural texts are characterized by precise and unambiguous language. It is critical that the wording is exact to ensure clear communication of instructions.

Structure: Procedural texts should be written with the same goal in mind as instructional ones: begin with an overview of the task, followed by any necessary materials or preparation steps. Next, a detailed, step-by-step procedure is included. It often concludes with any necessary follow-up instructions or warnings.

7. Recount

Purpose: The purpose of a recount text is to retell past events, usually in chronological order. It serves to provide a detailed account of an event, experience, or historical occurrence.

Style: A recount is usually descriptive and personal, involving a chronological presentation of events, with expressive language to convey emotions or impressions that the writer felt during the events.

Structure: A typical recount text starts with the introduction, setting the scene, and often specifying the time, place, and participants involved. The series of events then unrolls in the order they occurred. Finally, it concludes with a personal comment, reflection, or evaluation of the event.

8. Report

Purpose: Report texts are written to present information about a subject. The subject could range from real-world entities like animals, humans, or natural phenomena to abstract concepts like principles, theories, or ideas.

Style: Reports are communicated objectively without the use of personal pronouns or subjective language. They contain facts, statistics, and specific information related to the subject, presented in a clear, systematic manner.

Structure: A report usually begins with an introduction, defining the topic and offering a brief overview. A series of sections or subheadings then 'chunk' the content to make it easy to navigate, each covering different aspects of the topic. A conclusion or summary often ends the report.

9. Discussion

Purpose: A discussion text is intended to present multiple perspectives on a specific issue, allowing the reader to consider all angles before forming their own viewpoint. It aims to deepen understanding and foster a broader perspective by objectively exploring diverse opinions and arguments related to a topic.

Style: Discussion texts use neutral, unbiased language. The writer presents all sides of the argument fairly and objectively, without leaning towards supporting one over another.

Structure: The text begins with an introduction of the issue at hand. This is followed by presenting point and counterpoint for each aspect of the issue, examining arguments in favor and against it. An effective discussion text ends with a conclusion or summary that encapsulates the multiple perspectives without indicating a personal preference.

10. Response

Purpose: A response text serves to provide a personal interpretation or reaction to a piece of content, such as a book, film, article, or speech. It aims to deepen the understanding of the original content, examine its components, and express personal thoughts, feelings, and reactions to it.

Style: Response writing is subjective, reflecting the opinion and personality of the writer. Despite the writer's personal voice being apparent, a good response should maintain an even-handed and critical approach.

Structure: Commence with an overview of the content being responded to, including its title and creator. Next, give a brief summary or description of the content. Following this, present your personal reactions,

impressions, and points of critique. Lastly, conclude by summarizing your views and stating your final thoughts.

11. Poetic

Purpose: The purpose of a poetic text is to convey emotions, experiences, concepts, and ideas using creative and imaginative language. It's a form of verbal art that uses aesthetics and rhythmic qualities to charm and engage readers.

Style: Poetic language heavily incorporates figurative and connotative language. It frequently uses devices such as similes, metaphors, rhyme, rhythm, assonance, and alliteration to create a specific mood or emotion.

Structure: The structure of a poem can vary vastly – it may adhere to a specific form (like sonnets, haikus, or limericks) complete with rules regarding rhyme, meter, and stanza length, or it may be free verse, with no such rules.

12. Journalistic

Purpose: Journalistic texts aim to report news stories to inform readers, viewers, or listeners about events happening locally or globally. These texts provide factual information about real-world event in a balanced, fair, accurate, and comprehensive manner.

Style: Journalistic writing requires use of clear, concise, and direct language. The language is primarily factual and explanatory, striving to be impartial and unbiased.

Structure: Journalistic texts usually adopt the "inverted pyramid" structure. The most crucial information is presented first – summarizing the 'who, what, where, when, why, and how' of the story. Following paragraphs provide further details and context, with the least important information towards the end.

13. Transactional

Purpose: Transactional texts serve to communicate an intended message between individuals or organizations. Common examples include emails, reports, proposals, business letters and memos.

Style: The tone and style of transactional texts depend on their intended audience and purpose. Formality levels may vary – generally, they are written in clear, straightforward language.

Structure: Transactional texts usually start with a salutation or an introduction, followed by the body containing the key message or information. They end with a closing, which may include a call-to-action, a closing remark or a sign-off.

14. Exemplification

Purpose: Exemplification texts are those which use examples to make a point, stress a point, or clearly present a pattern or form. These texts aim to make abstract ideas concrete, clarify concepts, or provide evidence supporting statements or theories.

Style: The language of exemplification texts is straightforward and facts-based, leveraging detailed examples to make concepts clearer and more understandable.

Structure: They start with a thesis statement or main idea. Next, they introduce and elaborate various specific examples to exemplify and prove the thesis statement. Finally, a conclusion wraps up the discussion and reiterates how the examples support the main idea.

15. Compare and Contrast

Purpose: The purpose of a compare and contrast text is to examine the similarities and differences between two or more subjects, such as concepts, items, people, or events. It aids in understanding and scrutinizing the association between the subjects.

Style: This kind of writing is analytical and requires a balanced and objective presentation of facts, making sure to avoid bias or favoritism.

Structure: Such texts generally follow one of two structures: block or alternating. In the block method, all about the first subject is described, followed by all about the second. In the alternating method, corresponding points about the first and second subjects are alternated for comparison.

16. Cause and Effect

Purpose: Cause and effect text is written to identify and explain the reasons or causes for an event or behavior and the resulting effects or outcomes. It establishes a relationship between variables and events.

Style: Clarity is particularly important in cause and effect writing because it should aim to lucidly explain causal chains where one thing leads to another.

Structure: Generally, the text starts with an introduction to the event. This is followed by the 'cause' section explaining its origins or reasons. Then comes the 'effect' section detailing the outcomes, consequences, or results. Lastly, a conclusion synthesizes the major points and may contain author's opinion on the event.

17. Diary/Journal Entry

Purpose: A diary or journal entry is written to express personal thoughts, feelings, and experiences, making them a form of autobiographical writing. The objective is self-reflection, documentation of life events or ideas, and emotional exploration.

Style: Being highly personal, these texts don't normally adhere to strict stylistic protocols. Language is informal and conversational, representing the writer's voice.

Structure: Diary or journal entries do not follow a strict format. They often start with the date and proceed with the entries. Entries can range from brief notes to detailed narratives.

18. Critical Review

Purpose: A critical review analyses, interprets, and appraises a text or other work (like a film or play). It's meant to provide an evaluation of the item's merit, significance, value, or relevance, based on careful examination and evidence-based claims.

Style: Even though a critical review presents the writer's opinion, it should be a balanced, logical, and professional examination of the work.

Structure: A traditional critical review includes an introduction summarizing the key details of the work being reviewed, the body containing the evaluation, and a conclusion summarizing the review.

FULL LIST OF TEXT TYPES AND GENRES

- Narrative
- Descriptive
- Expository
- Argumentative / Persuasive
- Instructional
- Procedural
- Recount
- Report
- Discussion
- Response
- Poetic
- Journalistic
- Transactional

- Exemplification
- Compare and Contrast
- Cause and Effect
- Diary/Journal Entry
- Critical Review

Conclusion

Understanding text types allows you to effectively communicate ideas and information to your target audience. It provides a structured framework that guides the writing process, enhancing clarity and coherence. Additionally, it aids in comprehension, helping readers navigate and understand the text in its intended way. Lastly, knowledge of text types helps improve critical reading skills, enabling readers to discern the underlying purpose and structure of various texts.

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