

Whether genre is specified or implied in your assignment, you are being asked to demonstrate your ability to write competently in that genre. The descriptions below and on the following pages discuss genres commonly assigned in college courses and point out examples that appear elsewhere in this book. In addition, Chapter 12 explains the special requirements of essay exams, and Chapter 14 contains examples of genres used in public writing: application letter and résumé, memo, report, proposal, social-media post, and newsletter.

1 Responses to texts or visuals

Responses to texts or visuals involve close reading, summary, and analysis. For more on analyzing and responding to texts and visuals, see Chapter 10.

Personal response to a reading: Use your own experiences, observations, and opinions to explain how and why you agree or disagree (or both) with the author's argument. A personal response essay usually includes a thesis statement that conveys the essence of your response, a brief summary of the author's main points, and your own main points of agreement or disagreement. (See 1 pp. 38–39 for a response to a reading.)

Critical analysis (critique) of a text or a visual: Closely examine a text or visual, identifying and describing important elements of the work and analyzing how the elements contribute to the whole. Often a critical analysis, or critique, also includes evaluation of the quality and significance of the work. The genre contains an arguable thesis stating your interpretation, a brief summary or description of the work, and examples from the text or visual as support for your thesis and main points. (See pp. 97–99 for a critique of an essay.)

Literary analysis: Argue for an interpretation of a work based on careful reading, giving particular attention to the work's language, structure, meaning, and themes. In a literary analysis, you state your interpretation in a thesis and then support your thesis with examples from the work. Some literary analyses draw on others' views and information, such as a scholar's interpretation of the work or facts about the author's life. (See 8 pp. 420–22 for a literary analysis that draws on such secondary sources.)

2 Arguments

Argument seeks to persuade readers, moving them to action or convincing them to think as you do. Written arguments contain an arguable thesis statement—a claim reasonable people can disagree over—usually with support for its main points and acknowledgment of opposing views. Arguments often involve research, but

Sentence Parts and Patterns

4

Clarity and Style

3

Spelling and Mechanics

6

Punctuation

5