

personal essay interesting is the insight the writer provides, showing why the subject is significant to the writer and to readers. A literacy narrative is a particular kind of personal story: your experience with learning to read and/or write. (See 1 p. 66 for a student's literacy narrative.)

5 Research papers and reports

Most research projects involve reporting information or results, interpreting a range of views on a topic, or analyzing a problem and arguing for a solution.

Research paper: Develop an informative or argumentative thesis statement, draw on and cite multiple sources to support the thesis, and emphasize synthesis of your sources' views and data from your own perspective. (See 7 pp. 482-90 for a sample research paper.)

Research report: Explain your own original research or your attempt to replicate someone else's research. A research report generally includes an abstract (or summary), an introduction describing your research and reviewing prior research on the subject, a description of methods, the results, discussion of the results, and a list of any sources you have cited. (See 8 pp. 516-20 for a research report.)

9c Choosing structure and content

Academic writing assignments vary widely, of course, but they tend to share the following key goals. Each goal is discussed in more detail on the pages cited.

- **Develop a main point in your writing.** Most academic papers center on a main point, or thesis, and support that thesis with evidence. Depending on the genre you are writing in, the main point may be an opinion, a summary of findings, or a conclusion based on primary research you have conducted, such as an experiment or a survey. (For more on thesis statements, see 1 pp. 14-17.)
- **Support the main point with evidence, drawn usually from your reading, personal experience, or primary research.** The kinds of evidence you use will depend on the discipline you're writing in and the type of paper you're doing. For more on evidence, see p. 102 (argument) and 8 pp. 418 (literature) and 423, 425, and 428 (other disciplines).
- **Synthesize your own and others' ideas.** College writing often involves researching and interacting with the works of other writers—being open to their ideas, responding to them, questioning them, comparing them, and using them to answer