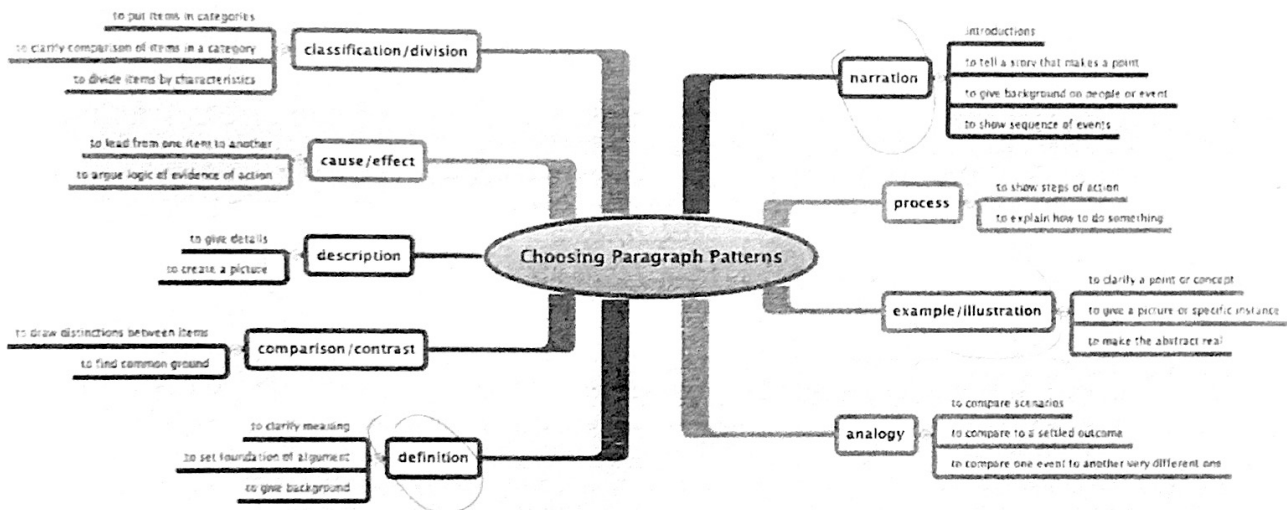


Rhetorical Modes (Strategies)

Since most of the reading (and writing!) you'll do throughout your college career falls into the "academic writing" category, this is a good point to slow down and examine the building blocks of academic writing more closely.

Rhetoric is the study of writing, and the basic types of academic writing are referred to as **rhetorical modes**.



As you can see in the chart above, different styles of non-fiction writing serve different purposes. It's quite possible that a single text—or even a single paragraph—will contain multiple rhetorical modes, each used to serve a distinct purpose in support of the article's thesis.

Consider nine of the most common types of rhetorical modes. What might lead an author to select one type of writing over another? How might each be used differently to serve the purpose of a text?

1. Narration The purpose of **narration** is to tell a story or relate an event. Narration is an especially useful tool for sequencing or putting details and information into some kind of logical order, usually chronological. Literature uses narration heavily, but it also can be useful in non-fiction, academic writing for strong impact.

2. Description The purpose of description is to recreate, invent, or visually present a person, place, event, or action so that the reader can picture that which is being described. It is heavily based on **sensory details**: what we experience through our five senses.

3. Example It's common to see examples used in all kinds of situations—an idea can be considered too general or abstract until we see it in action. An **exemplification essay** extends this idea even further: it carries one or more examples into great detail, in order to show the details of a complex problem in a way that's easy for readers to understand.

4. Definition In the vocabulary section we talked about word definitions in depth. A **definition essay** takes the concept of "definition" more broadly, moving beyond a dictionary definition to deeply examine a word or concept as we actually use and understand it.

5. Process Analysis Analyzing a process can also be thought of as "how-to" instruction. Technical writing includes a lot of process analysis, for instance. Academic writing can incorporate process analysis to show how an existing problem came to be, or how it might be solved, by following a clear series of steps.

6. Division/Classification **Classification** takes one large concept and divides it into individual pieces. A nice result from this type of writing is that it helps the reader to understand a complex topic by focusing on its smaller parts. This is particularly useful when an author has a unique way of dividing up the concepts, to provide new insight into the ways it might be viewed.

7. Comparison/Contrast Comparison focuses on **similarities** between things, and contrast focuses on their **differences**. We innately make comparisons all the time, and they appear in many kinds of writings. The goal of comparison and contrast in academic essays is generally to show that one item is superior to another, based on a set of evaluations included as part of the writing.

8. Cause/Effect If narration offers a sequence of events, cause/effect essays offer an explanation about why that sequence matters. Cause/effect writing is particularly powerful when the author can provide a cause/effect relationship that the reader wasn't expecting, and as a result see the situation in a new light.

9. Problem/Solution This type of academic writing has two equally important tasks: clearly identifying a problem, and then providing a logical, practical solution for that problem. Establishing that a particular situation IS a problem can sometimes be a challenge—many readers might assume that a given situation is "just the way it is," for instance.

LICENSES AND ATTRIBUTIONS

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/wm-englishcomposition1/chapter/text-rhetorical-modes/> Retrieved 1/10/2020

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Sample Rhetorical Analysis Paragraphs with Evidence

Definitions

The authors define a couple of terms in the introduction of the research paper. They do this just in case the audience might not be so familiar with the term or the audience might be a bit confused as to what kind of tumor the authors are referring to. One example is on page 1129, "Neuroblastoma is a neural crest-derived malignancy tumor and the second most common solid tumor in children." In the same page, the authors define another term, the "parathyroid hormone-related peptide" with its function as "stimulates the expression of the receptor activator of NFkB ligand (RANKL) in osteoclast." This definition only provides the hormone's function. This is a different type of definition compared to the other one, but both with the same purpose to offer the audience a better understanding of the terms.

Define & purpose

Process Analysis

In this research paper, the authors have to describe how they conduct the experiment, what kind of materials were used, and what were the results. (For example, on page 1130 in the second paragraph “Bone resorptive activity was measured using a modified assay” and “Osteoclasts were obtained from bone marrow of 2-day-old rat neonates and plated on thin slices of sperm whale dentine.”) The authors use process analysis in order to give the audience a picture of how the procedure of the experiment was done. They also provide this piece of information just in case other experts want to follow a similar study. By using process analysis, the authors are also creating a trustworthy connection with the audience since they have proof of the results they have gotten.]