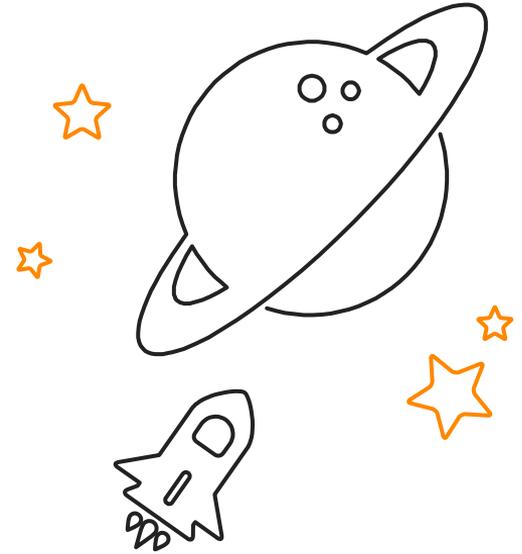




ACADEMIC WRITING: FOUR CATEGORIES

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DISCOURSE COMMUNITY



Groups of individuals who share a common goal, a common terminology, and talk or write to one another about a specific set of topics.

Four Broad Categories of Academic Writing

1. The Humanities
2. The Social Sciences
3. The Natural Sciences
4. The Applied Fields

The Humanities

- ▶ Interested in:
 - ▷ Human thought, and
 - ▷ Creativity
- ▶ Guiding Questions
 - ▷ How do we make sense of the world through various forms of expression?
 - ▷ How do we interpret what we experience, or make meaning for ourselves and others?

The Humanities

- ▶ Humanistic writing explores the meaning of an artifact of human culture.
- ▶ These artifacts include:
 - ▷ Films, historical documents, comic strips, paintings, poems, religious artifacts, video games, essays, photographs, songs, graffiti, social media content, and more.
 - ▷ Anything created by humans.

The Humanities

- ▶ Humanistic writing involves responding to other scholars' ideas.
- ▶ Also frequently “thesis-driven”
 - ▷ Writers make a claim about an artifact,
 - ▷ Support that claim with specific evidence from the artifact, and
 - ▷ Draw upon the work of other scholars who have studied that artifact.

- ▶ **Uses the active voice in writing**
 - ▷ **Active:** The girl chased the dog.
 - ▷ The subject, “the girl” takes action.
 - ▷ **Passive:** The dog was chased by the girl.
 - ▷ The subject, “girl” is obscured by being placed at the end of the sentence.
 - ▷ **Passive:** The dog was chased.
 - ▷ The subject is omitted from the sentence.

- ▶ Two common kinds of writing you might encounter as a student in the humanities
 - ▷ Textual Interpretation
 - ▷ Makes a claim and support the claim
 - ▷ Artistic Texts
 - ▷ Paintings, sculptures, songs, poems, stories, video games, short films
 - ▷ Can be used as artifacts for further textual interpretation

The Social Sciences

- ▶ Interested in:
 - ▷ Human behavior
 - ▷ Social structures
- ▶ Guiding Question
 - ▷ Why do we do what we do?
- ▶ Includes:
 - ▷ Psychology, sociology, anthropology, communication studies, political science

- ▶ **Broad Examples of Social Science Research Questions:**
 - ▶ What therapy options are available for individuals with autism?
 - ▶ What are the effects of drug abuse on families?
 - ▶ What do the communication practices of certain communities tell us about those communities?

- ▶ Conventions differ across fields, but one commonality is the structure of writing:
 - ▷ Introduction
 - ▷ Methods
 - ▷ Results
 - ▷ Discussion
- ▶ Recently published research is valued more than older research

- ▶ **Two Kinds of Writing You May Encounter:**
 - ▷ Literature Reviews
 - ▷ Provide a detailed look a prior research that has been published on a topic
 - ▷ Theory Response Essays
 - ▷ Ask students to apply a social science theory to their own experiences

The Natural Sciences

- ▶ Interested in:
 - ▷ Natural Phenomena
 - ▷ Laws of Nature
- ▶ Guiding Question
 - ▷ Why does that occur?
- ▶ Example:
 - ▷ Why do the stars appear to “twinkle” in the night sky?

The Natural Sciences

- ▶ **Fields of Natural Science**
 - ▷ Biology
 - ▷ Chemistry
 - ▷ Geology
 - ▷ Physics
- ▶ **Often blended together**
 - ▷ Biochemistry
 - ▷ Biophysics
 - ▷ Geophysics

- ▶ Research is guided by scientific method:
 - ▷ Observe a phenomenon
 - ▷ Ask a research question
 - ▷ Develop a hypothesis (a possible reason for the phenomenon).
 - ▷ Test the hypothesis through experimentation
 - ▷ Explain the results of the experiment

- ▶ **Important Conventions:**
 - ▶ Objectivity
 - ▶ Replicability
 - ▶ Recency
 - ▶ Cooperation
 - ▶ Collaboration

- ▶ **Kinds of Writing in the Natural Sciences:**
 - ▷ The Observation Logbook
 - ▷ Writing the catalogues observations and questions
 - ▷ The Research Proposal
 - ▷ Used to gather thoughts, design complex studies, acquire funding
 - ▷ The Lab Report
 - ▷ Shares the findings of an experiment

The Applied Fields

- ▶ Broader than previous groups
- ▶ Includes fields such as:
 - ▷ Sports psychology, business, law, education, counseling, public administration, **many** others.
- ▶ Research typically used to solve specific problems.

The Applied Fields

- ▶ **Professionals often:**
 - ▷ Identify a problem
 - ▷ Ask why problem exists
 - ▷ Consider reasons behind the problem
 - ▷ Explore solutions to the problem
- ▶ Audience is usually mix of academic and non-academic individuals.

The Applied Fields

- ▶ Kinds of writing directly connected with specific jobs or fields.
 - ▷ Nursing
 - ▷ Patient release forms
 - ▷ Teacher
 - ▷ Lesson plans
 - ▷ Lawyer
 - ▷ Legal briefs

The Applied Fields

- ▶ The one major commonality across the Applied Fields are the reliance on solving problems and using knowledge for practical purposes.

In Conclusion

- ▶ The kinds of writing you encounter will be shaped by your academic field.
- ▶ There is not a single universal form or structure for academic writing.
- ▶ These videos aim to provide you with adaptable strategies that you can change to fit your chosen discipline.

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For an extra assignment, take 15 minutes to explore your academic field. Make a list of the kinds of writing you think you may perform in your future career. Which general group that we discussed is most similar to your field?

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