



Exercise – Identifying different types of writing

Introduction

This exercise requires you to identify different styles of writing.

On the following pages there are a series of short paragraphs. For each, identify whether the style of writing is:

- **Descriptive**
- **Analytical and evaluative**
- **Reflective**

You should also write down why you believe that a specific style of writing has been used.

Check your answers on pages 6 – 11.

Exercise

For each paragraph:

- a) Identify the style of writing that has been used
- b) Indicate what features of the paragraph support your selection

As an example, Part A and some of Part B has been completed for para. 1.

- 1) The University of Bedfordshire's Professional and Academic Development (PAD) team (2012) outline that they can help students to enhance their academic study skills in three ways. Specifically, students can book a 1:1 appointment with a tutor, attend general study skills workshop and access peer adviser drop-in support. These services are based in Luton and Bedford although drop-ins are also provided at Aylesbury. All university students can benefit from accessing PAD.

Style of writing: Descriptive

Why?

- Only provides overview information
- No analysis or evaluation as to what the information means

- 2) Begum (2009) reported that students who attended academic skills workshops were found to be awarded higher grades than those who did not attend. Interestingly, students were also found to report higher satisfaction rates with their institution. This might be because there is a link between academic attainment and satisfaction with studies. This assertion is supported by other authors (Cooke, 2009; Randall, 2008) who have researched this area. Consequently, providing more academic skills learning opportunities might be an effective means of improving university student satisfaction.

Style of writing:

Why?

- 3) In line with Hughes (2009) I initially tried to establish how much my group knew about the topic through a 'quick quiz'. I was initially confident that this would prove to be a good ice breaker activity. However, this proved to be very ineffective because nobody in the group was willing to answer any of the questions. In my opinion, this was because the students were worried about getting questions wrong in front of their friends. It therefore seemed that a spoken quiz is not necessarily an effective means of establishing what a group already knows. In the future, I could overcome this barrier by using an anonymous online voting system.

Style of writing:

Why?

- 4) Since the mid 1980s Olympics games have made a profit (Sweeney, 2009). This is in stark contrast to earlier games which were run on a loss. Change has been attributed to increased tourism during the games, projection of a positive image of the host country via the media and improved delivery of legacy initiatives after events have concluded. Recent financial projections related to the London 2012 games suggest that a profit will also ultimately be made (Thomas, 2012). This

suggests that if good planning and marketing is in place the Brazil 2016 games will also result in a profit.

Style of writing:

Why?

- 5) There were lots of arguments amongst the students in my group because everybody wanted to approach the problem in different ways. I found this situation to be very frustrating as it meant that we did not make any progress for four hours. Eventually, one group member changed their mind which allowed us to move forward. In my opinion, this situation occurred because we failed to establish any ground rules related to how the first group meeting should operate (for instance, we did not have a chair person) (as recommended by Smith, 2012). It is therefore now clear to me that clear rules must be in place in order for groups to effectively function. I definitely intend to make sure that this happens in the future.

Style of writing:

Why?

6) Jones (2008) explored how satisfied semi-professional footballers were with local sporting facilities. This author found that footballers most valued outside designated spaces where they could train without charge. A number of the interviewees also reported that they believed that gym facilities in their local area could be improved in terms of offering cardiovascular training opportunities. This research was based in the London area.

Style of writing:

Why?

Answers

1) Descriptive writing

Why:

- Provided overview information
- No analysis or evaluation as to what the information means
- Written in the third person (not associated with reflective writing)

The following table demonstrates how features that are typically associated with descriptive writing were apparent in the paragraph.

Writing style	Focuses on	Paragraph writer's intention	Original sentences
Descriptive writing	What? When? Where? Who?	Brief overview of <u>where</u> the service is based and <u>what</u> is offered	The University of Bedfordshire's Professional and Academic Development (PAD) team (2012) outline that they can help students to enhance their academic study skills in three ways.
		Outline in more detail <u>what</u> support is offered	Specifically, students can book a 1:1 appointment with a tutor, attend general study skills workshop and access peer adviser drop-in support.
		Outlines in more detail <u>where</u> the service is based	These services are based in Luton and Bedford although drop-ins are also provided at Aylesbury.
		Outline <u>who</u> can access the service	All university students can benefit from accessing PAD.

2) Analytical and evaluative writing

Why:

- Provides overview information
- Goes on to analyse and evaluate what the information means
- Written in the third person (not associated with reflective writing)
- Multiple references were contrasted

The following table demonstrates how features that are typically associated with analytical and evaluative writing were apparent in the paragraph.

Writing style	Focuses on	Paragraph writer's intention	Original sentences
Descriptive writing	What? When? Where? Who?	Outline <u>what</u> has already been found	Begum (2009) reported that students who attended academic skills workshops were found to be awarded higher grades than those who did not attend.
		Elaborate on <u>what</u> the author did	Interestingly, students were also found to report higher satisfaction rates with their institution.
Analytical writing	How? Why?	Consider <u>why</u> this finding emerged	This might be because there is a link between academic attainment and satisfaction with studies.
		Consider evidence related to own assertion	This assertion is supported by other authors (Cooke, 2009; Randall, 2008) who have researched this area.
Evaluation	So what? What next?	Based on the descriptive and analytical information the author answers ' <u>so what</u> '	Consequently, providing more academic skills learning opportunities might be an effective means of improving university student satisfaction.

3) Reflective writing

Why:

- Writing addresses stages commonly found in reflective cycles (please note: you would normally develop your discussion of stages beyond a single paragraph)
- Written in the first person – use of 'I' and 'my'

The following outlines how key features of reflective writing were present in this text:

Stages of reflection	Example of usage in the paragraph
Described what happened	In line with Hughes (2009) I initially tried to establish how much my group knew about the topic through a 'quick quiz'.
Discussion of feelings about the situation	I was initially confident that this would prove to be a good ice breaker activity.
Discussion of what went well /didn't go well (evaluation of experience)	However, this proved to be very ineffective because nobody in the group was willing to answer any of the questions.
Analysis of performance	In my opinion, this was because the students were worried about getting questions wrong in front of their friends.
Conclusion is drawn	It therefore seemed that a spoken quiz is not necessarily an effective means of establishing what a group already knows.
Discussion of how performance could be enhanced in the future	In the future, I could overcome this barrier by using an anonymous online voting system.

4) Analytical writing

Why:

- Provides overview information
- Goes on to analyse and evaluate what the information means
- Written in the third person (not associated with reflective writing)
- Multiple references were contrasted

The following table demonstrates how features that are typically associated with analytical and evaluative writing were apparent in the paragraph.

Writing style	Focuses on	Paragraph writer's intention	Original sentences
Descriptive writing	What? When?	Outline <u>when</u> things changed	Since the mid 1980s Olympics games have made a profit (Sweeney, 2009).
	Where? Who?	Outline <u>what</u> happened in the past	This is in stark contrast to earlier games which were run on a loss.
Analytical writing	How? Why?	Consider <u>why</u> this finding emerged	Change has been attributed to increased tourism during games, projection of a positive image of the host country via media and improved delivery of legacy after events have concluded.
		Consider evidence related to own assertion of <u>why</u> there was a change	Recent financial projections related to the London 2012 games suggest that a profit will ultimately be made (Thomas, 2012).

Evaluation	So what? What next?	Based on the analytical information the author answers <u>'what next?'</u> and predicts what will happen in Brazil	This suggests that if good planning and marketing is in place the Brazil 2016 games will also result in a profit.
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5) Reflective writing

Why:

- Writing addresses stages commonly found in reflective cycles (please note: you would normally develop your discussion of stages beyond a single paragraph)
- Written in the first person – use of 'I' and 'my'

Stages of reflection	Example of usage in the paragraph
Described what happened	There were lots of arguments amongst the students in my group because everybody wanted to approach the problem in different ways.
Discussion of feelings about the situation	I found this situation very frustrating as it meant that we did not make any progress for 4 hours.
Discussion of what went well/didn't go well	Eventually, one group member changed their mind which allowed us to move forward.
Analysis of performance	In my opinion, this situation occurred because we failed to establish any ground rules related to how the first group meeting should operate (for instance, we did not have a chair person) (as recommended by Smith, 2012).
Conclusion is drawn	It is now clear to me that clear rules must be in place in order for groups to effectively function.
Discussion of how performance could be enhanced in the future	I definitely intend to make sure that this happens in the future.

6) Descriptive writing

Why:

- Provided overview information
- No analysis or evaluation as to what the information means
- Written in the third person (not associated with reflective writing)

The following table demonstrates how features that are typically associated with descriptive writing were apparent in the paragraph.

Writing style	Focuses on	Paragraph writer's intention	Original sentences
Descriptive writing	What? When? Where? Who?	Outlines <u>what</u> an author has researched	Jones (2008) explored how satisfied semi-professional footballers were with local sporting facilities.
		Provides further detail of <u>what</u> the author found	This author found that footballers most valued outside designated spaces where they could train without charge.
		Provides further detail of <u>what</u> the author found	A number of the interviewees also reported that they believed that gym facilities in their local area could be improved in terms of offering cardiovascular training opportunities.
		Outlines in more detail <u>where</u> the research took place	This research was based in the London area.

Further information

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