

## Informational or Explanatory Writing

### What is informational/explanatory writing?

Informational writing (sometimes referred to as explanatory or expository) is a form of non-fiction writing. The purpose of this mode of writing is to report, explain, examine and analyze ideas, concepts, events and processes. The writing is based on well-chosen factual information gathered from reliable sources (i.e. observations, books, maps, graphs, charts, photographs, captions, web sites, newspaper articles, etc.).

### What are some key features of informational/explanatory writing?

An informational piece has a formal and objective style. The author provides facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations and examples rather than his/her opinion. This mode of writing has a controlling idea or thesis. The introduction begins with a hook that captures the reader's interest and engages the audience in the topic. The introduction states the topic clearly and previews the content of the piece. This introduces the organizational structure for the main points of each body paragraph.

The body paragraphs of informational writing provide additional details directly connected to the topic. The topic is fully developed with relevant, carefully selected information from credible sources. Facts and details from these sources are either paraphrased or directly quoted. All sources and direct quotes must be appropriately cited. The author explains the topic with the use of precise language and vocabulary.

In this mode of writing, both text and visual features are used to provide information about the

topic. Formatting of text (such as titles, subheadings, etc.), graphics (such as charts, graphs, labeled diagrams, etc.) and multimedia are carefully chosen to provide the reader with a clear understanding of the topic. Additional common elements of informational writing include paragraphs, subtitles, bulleted information, photographs, captions, maps, and drawings. Transitions are varied and provide the connection between ideas and concepts.

The concluding paragraph restates the thesis, summarizes the major points and leaves the reader thinking about the topic. A bibliography or standard format for citations is included.

### What are some points to remember when writing an informational/explanatory piece?

This mode of writing includes factual information through text and visual features from reliable sources. Authors of informational text use a formal style which may include relevant academic vocabulary. All sources and direct quotes must be cited. Text structures (such as definition, classification, comparison and cause/effect) are often utilized. The author is careful to create cohesion with the use of a variety of transitions to establish the connection among ideas and concepts.

As with any published writing, the author creates a legible piece. The author proofreads his/her writing to check for clarity, word choice, style and cohesion. Editing is done as a final step to check for format, capitalization, punctuation, grammar and spelling.

### Sources:

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