**English 10H**

**Rhetorical Modes**

Rhetorical modes (also known as modes of discourse) describe the variety, conventions, and purposes of the major kinds of language-based communication, particularly writing and speaking. Four of the most common rhetorical modes and their purpose are **narration, description, exposition, and argumentation**.

1. NARRATION: The purpose of narration is to tell a story or narrate an event or series of events. This writing mode frequently uses the tools of descriptive writing. Narration is an especially useful tool for sequencing or putting details and information into some kind of logical order, usually chronological. Working with narration helps us see clear sequences separate from all other mental functions. Examples include:

* Anecdotes
* Autobiography
* Biography
* [Novels](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Novel)
* [Oral history](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oral_history)
* [Short story](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Short_story)

2. DESCRIPTION: The purpose of description is to re-create, invent, or visually present a person, place, event, or action so that the reader can picture that which is being described. Descriptive writing can be found in the other rhetorical modes. Examples include:

* [Journal writing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Personal_journal)
* [Poetry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poetry)

*Subjective description*: emphasizes the emotional impact of scenes, as in a personal essay. *Objective description*: sticks to the physical details, as in a scientific or technical report

3. EXPOSITION: Expository writing is a type of [writing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Writing) where the purpose is to explain, inform, or even describe. It is considered to be one of the four most common rhetorical modes.

The purpose of expository writing is to explain and analyze information by presenting an idea, relevant evidence, and appropriate discussion. In [narrative](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narrative) contexts (such as [history](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History) and [fiction](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fiction)), [exposition](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exposition_(narrative)) provides background information to teach or entertain. In other [nonfiction](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonfiction) contexts (such as [technical communication](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technical_communication)), the purpose is to teach and inform. Examples include:

* Business
  + [Business letters](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_letter)
  + [Reports](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Report)
  + [Press releases](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/News_release)
* Journalism
  + [How-to essays, such as recipes and other instructions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/How-to)
  + [News article](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Article_(publishing))
* Personal
  + [Personal letters](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Personal_letter)
  + [Wills](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Will_(law))
* Academic and [technical communication](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technical_communication)
  + [Scientific writing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scientific_writing)
    - [Scientific reports](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scientific_report)
    - [Scientific journal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scientific_journal) articles
  + [Academic writing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academic_writing)
    - [Term papers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Term_paper)
    - [Textbooks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Textbook)
    - General [reference works](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reference_work)
      * [Encyclopedia articles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Encyclopedia)
  + [Technical writing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technical_writing)
    - [User guides](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/User_guide)
    - [Technical standards](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technical_standard)

4. ARGUMENT: The purpose of argumentation (also called [*persuasive writing*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persuasive_writing)) is to prove the validity of an idea, or point of view, by presenting sound reasoning, discussion, and argument to thoroughly convince the reader. Persuasive writing/Persuasion is a type of argumentation with the additional aim to urge the reader to take some form of action. Examples include:

* [Advertising copy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Copywriting)
* [Critical review](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Review)
* [Editorials](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Editorial)
* [Job evaluation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_evaluation)
* [Job application](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_application) letter
* [Letter of recommendation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Letter_of_recommendation)
* [Letters to the editor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Letter_to_the_editor)
* [Résumés](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/R%C3%A9sum%C3%A9)

Another form of persuasive rhetoric is satirical rhetoric, or using humor in order to make a point about some aspect of life or society.