

ACPS Writing Genres

Introduction: This anchor chart is designed to support teachers in using a common language for written products and performance tasks across content areas. It promotes the achievement of English Language Learners when engaged in the writing process and provides a common language for writing instruction in content courses as well as ELD (English Language Development) at the elementary level and EAP (English for Academic Purposes) at the middle and high school levels. By ensuring these areas are aligned, all students (especially ELL Level 3 and 4 learners) will improve their understanding of writing structures, processes, and related academic vocabulary. ***Check out the “Introduction to the ACPS Writing Genres Chart” how-to video on the Office of Professional Learning’s new website!**

	Description of Genre	Organization	Transitional Expressions	Other Language Features
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describing a person, place, or thing using vivid details so that a reader can experience it. Examples include personal reflection and memories of a significant person, place, or thing. Examples can also use historical descriptions (e.g., a region, location, event). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating a controlling impression (i.e., a unifying feeling or reaction from the reader). Using sensory details (imagery involving sight, touch, sound, smell, taste). Using a coherent organizational pattern (sequential, spatial, order of importance, comparison/contrast). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sequential with time transition—e.g., first, second, next, finally. Spatial with space transitions—e.g., first, second, then, on one side, on the other side, finally. Order of importance (usually climactic order)—first, next, most importantly. Comparison/contrast—similarly, both, in contrast. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vivid descriptive words and phrases. Appropriate and consistent tense. Point of view (first, second, third, limited v. omniscient). Varied sentence structure. Consistent tone and voice (e.g., serious objective, critical, subjective, sarcastic, empathetic.)
Narrative Nonfiction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Telling a story (with a clear beginning, middle, and ending) about real-life events and characters to help the reader experience what happened. Examples include biographies, autobiographies, memoirs, and research-based retellings of historical events or historical figures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presenting a sequentially organized series of events extending from a conflict or problem. Organization should include: exposition (background details); complication (introduction of the conflict); rising action (the bulk of the narrative); turning point (the event or events leading to the climax); climax (high point); and resolution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expressions of time passing—first, next, finally, one day, once upon a time, later, in the end. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usually written in first (I, we) or third person (she, he, it, they) point of view. Uses past and present tense. Consistent use of action verbs—e.g., exclaimed, shouted, cried, ran, charged. Ongoing use of descriptive words and phrases. Varied sentence structure. Use of dialogue (with appropriate punctuation).

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Narrative Fiction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing a story (about characters created by the author) with a clear beginning, middle, and ending. Engaging and entertaining the reader with experiences centered on a theme or themes. Presenting and developing the narrative around one or more conflicts experienced by the main character(s). Examples can include short stories, novellas, fables, fairy tales, myths, legends, realistic fiction, and tales of fantasy and science fiction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presenting a sequentially organized series of events extending from a conflict or problem. Organization should include: exposition (background details); complication (introduction of the conflict); rising action (the bulk of the narrative); turning point (the event or events leading to the climax); climax (high point); and resolution (tying up of loose ends). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expressions of time passing—first, next, finally, one day, once upon a time, later, in the end. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usually written in first (I, we) or third person (she, he, it, they) point of view. Uses past and present tense. Consistent use of action verbs—e.g., exclaimed, shouted, cried, ran, charged. Ongoing use of descriptive words and phrases. Varied sentence structure. Use of dialogue (with appropriate punctuation).
Expository/ Informative: Supporting a Thesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting a thesis (the main idea to be proven) or a claim (an argument to be proven or disproven with empirical evidence). Examples include a multi-paragraph essay supporting a thesis, an essay of literary analysis, or a research paper. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction (with thesis statement). Body paragraphs with topic sentences that relate back to and support the thesis statement. Supporting evidence used throughout the essay (e.g., facts, examples, explanations, illustrations, quotes, statistics, tables, graphs, models). A concluding paragraph that recaps or synthesizes the essay's thesis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expository organizing words and phrases—also, and, another example, similarly, therefore, however, finally, in conclusion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tone and voice should be objective and factual in approach. Extensive use of factual evidence (including textual references) to defend and support the thesis. Extensive use of technical vocabulary, as appropriate.

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Expository/Informative: Explaining a Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain how to do something (including expanding on steps in how to solve a problem, make a decision, or complete a process). Examples include explaining how to complete a procedure, how you completed a math problem, how you used a lab to support or negate a hypothesis, how to complete a significant procedure or process, or how a political process works. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statement of purpose (goal for the essay), including reinforcing the value or reason for learning to complete the sequence. Steps in the sequence (with accompanying explanations for each step). Conclusion revisiting the goal or central purpose of the essay. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sequencing words and phrases that reinforce the steps in the procedure—first, second, third, finally, in conclusion, perhaps most importantly. If-then structures (especially useful for math and science). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed factual descriptions with clear technical language (to help the reader visualize and experience the sequence). Uses verbs to give instructions to the reader—e.g., take, add, mix, chop, simplify. Modals (auxiliary verbs that show likelihood, probability, permission, or obligation) should be used to show the importance of following the recommended sequence)—e.g., should, must, have to, ought to.
Argument/Persuasion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assert an opinion, present a recommendation, or support an argument. Providing detailed evidence to support the claim you are attempting to persuade the reader to accept. Examples include editorials, problem-solution essays, suggestions for making a decision concerning a significant issue, or an opinion paper dealing with a controversial or debatable topic. Considers the background knowledge, experiences, and predispositions of the intended audience(s), modifying language and approach to address these issues to enhance the power of the argument or proposal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State your position (claim). Provide arguments and supporting evidence (facts, examples, explanations, illustrations, statistics, quotes, related data). Anticipate possible counter-arguments or positions (and debate or negate them). Recap or summarize your position at the end, leaving your reader with a call to action or recommendation for next steps. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time/sequence transitional expressions—e.g., first, second, third, finally. Counter-argument transitional expressions—e.g., even though, if-only, on the other hand. Imperative expressions—e.g., while, however, most importantly. Concluding expressions—e.g., therefore, in conclusion, in summary, perhaps most importantly, it is essential that... Appeal to Logic: therefore, as a result, consequently. Appeal to Emotion and Feeling: should, must ought to, deplorably. Appeal to Ethics or Morality: in all good conscience, for the sake of humanity, as a question of ethics, ethically, morally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modals (auxiliary verbs that show likelihood, probability, permission, or obligation) should be used to reinforce the importance of supporting the claim or recommendation being presented—e.g., should, must, ought, can, might, will, would, shall, should. Can use a range of stances to make your case persuasive: (1) Appeal to Logic (making the case with logical arguments and objective voice); (2) Appeal to Emotion and Feeling (triggering emotional responses in the reader to build empathy and agreement); and/or (3) Appeal to Ethics or Morality (appealing to the reader's sense of a greater good or a sense of fairness and equity).

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Other: Multimedia Presentations or Publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Selects a specific format to reach an intended audience for a specific purpose or goal. ▪ Frequently uses a wider range of sensory modalities than those encountered in written text alone (e.g., visual imagery, sounds, touch sensations). ▪ Formats can include visual, written, and/or auditory. ▪ Examples include brochures, pamphlets, advertisements, PowerPoints, web pages, blogs, magazine articles, visual representations with accompanying text. Podcast, radio show, musical performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The organization depends upon the format and intended purpose. ▪ Visual: Combines text with visuals such as photos, pictures, and other non-linguistic representations to convey an idea or message. ▪ Written: Combines text with appropriate formatting to express a powerful and audience-accessible message or idea. ▪ Auditory: A medium that is heard (e.g., music, radio show, Podcast), with ideas and emotions manipulated to achieve the goal or purpose of the communication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The transitional words and phrases should align with and be tailored to the format and purpose(s) intended for the communication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Again, the language features of the “other” category will depend upon the purpose, goals, and audience of the intended communication.