

Forms of Knowledge

Purpose

Students will begin to learn how to select an organizational structure based upon purpose, audience, and format requirements for a piece of writing.

Materials

For the teacher: chalk, chalkboard

For the students: paper, pencils, copies of excerpt from newspaper article, copies of an example of informational material, copies of a political cartoon, copies of an excerpt from a travel brochure, copies of an excerpt from a tall tale

Activity

A. Pre-Activity Preparation

Find examples of the different forms of writing listed in the Materials section, and prepare copies for student reference.

B. Pre-Activity Discussion

1. Make a chart on the chalkboard with column headings "Expository," "Narrative," "Persuasive," and "Descriptive."
2. Explain to students that these are all forms of writing. Give students a brief definition of each form and write one example of that form, such as the following, on the chalkboard:
 - Expository provides information – *How To* book
 - Persuasive tries to convince audience to believe or do something – Political Cartoon
 - Descriptive makes audience see or feel something – Travelogue
 - Narrative tells a story – Tall Tale

C. Finding a Purpose

1. Give students other examples of writing forms (e.g., speeches, summaries, commentaries, poems, science fiction, plays, anecdotes, cartoons, editorials, parodies, petitions, historical fiction, travel narratives, notes, memos, letters).
2. Have students discuss which category each type of writing belongs in. Notice that there are several examples that could go in more than one category and allow students to discuss which categories are most appropriate to the example.

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INCORPORATING TECHNOLOGY

Show students examples of e-mail messages that stated information in their subject line about the topic of the message. If students have access to an e-mail program, point out the subject line function. Provide them with sample messages and allow them to practice writing appropriate subject lines that summarize the message's purpose or assist the recipient of the message.



connecting across the curriculum

Social Studies

Have students find political cartoons illustrating various American presidents and compare how they have been portrayed.

Standards Links 4.2.1, 4.5.7

Activity (continued)

3. Have students explain why each form of writing belongs in the selected category.
4. Read a short piece from a newspaper article. Ask students to identify parts of the article's structure.
5. Discuss how the aspects of the piece might suit its purpose. Discuss structure, tone, and intended audience.


D. Apply What Students Have Learned


Repeat with a piece of imagist poetry, a part of a narrative, a memo, or another type of writing.

Questions for Review


Basic Concepts and Processes

Assess students' understanding about organizational structure by asking the following questions:

 What does a *memo* do?

 What is a *commentary*?

 What does a *newspaper article* look like?

 When you begin to write a newspaper article, what do you need to think about?
