

## **Genre Analysis**

### **APSU Writing Center Handout**

Genre analysis is the study of a text to understand how a specific type of writing works. It involves examining:

- How the text is organized
- How it uses evidence
- The vocabulary and style it relies on
- The expectations readers in that field have

You then analyze what the author is doing to make the text recognizable as part of a particular discipline or profession.

Understanding these patterns helps you:

- Read more effectively in your major
- Recognize disciplinary expectations
- Write more confidently within your field

### **How to Perform a Genre Analysis**

Choose a professional or academic text from your major or intended field.

Read the text carefully while analyzing it at rhetorical and sentence-level.

### **Rhetorical (Global) Level Questions**

Focus on the overall structure and purpose of the text.

## **Structure**

How is the text organized?

Are there clearly labeled sections (e.g., Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion)?

Where is the thesis or main claim located?

How does the structure guide readers through the argument?

When and how are key terms defined?

## **Rhetorical (Global) Level Questions**

### **Purpose**

What is the overall goal of the text?

Where and how is that purpose indicated?

Does the introduction identify a research problem or gap?

How does the author position their work within existing research?

### **Audience**

Who is the intended audience?

What background knowledge does the author assume?

Are specialized terms explained, or are they treated as common knowledge?

How does the text address or engage readers in the field?

### **Support (Evidence & Research)**

How are claims supported?

What types of evidence are used (data, experiments, surveys, textual analysis, case studies)?

Are charts, graphs, or tables included?

How much context or background is provided?

How is credibility established?

### **Sentence-Level Questions**

Focus on writing patterns, grammar, and language.

### **Formatting & Citations**

What citation style is used (APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.)?

How are sources integrated (signal phrases, parenthetical citations, footnotes)?

Are direct quotations common, or is paraphrasing preferred?

### **Sentence Structure**

How long are most sentences?

Are they simple, compound, or complex?

Does sentence structure vary by section (e.g., more technical in Methods)?

What transitions or signpost phrases are used?

### **Vocabulary & Language**

What field-specific terminology appears frequently?

Are abbreviations used? Are they defined first?

Are key terms repeated consistently rather than replaced with synonyms?

What verb tenses are used in different sections?

Is passive or active voice more common?

### **Looking at Research in Your Field**

Analyze how researchers gather and present data.

Determine whether collaboration is common (multiple authors).

Examine how recent the sources typically are.

Identify what counts as strong evidence in discipline.

### **Examples by Field:**

Engineering articles may emphasize experimental data and visuals.

Psychology articles often foreground research design and statistical analysis.

Literary study articles may emphasize theoretical frameworks and textual interpretation.

## References

Cervantes, E. (n.d.). *How to: Genre analysis*. University Writing Center, The Writing Mine, The University of Texas at El Paso. <https://www.utep.edu/uwc/the-writing-mine/articles/how-to-genre-analysis.html>

Purdue Online Writing Lab. (n.d.). *Genre analysis & reverse outlining*. Purdue Online Writing Lab. [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/graduate\\_writing/thesis\\_and\\_dissertation/genre\\_analysis\\_reverse\\_outline.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/graduate_writing/thesis_and_dissertation/genre_analysis_reverse_outline.html)