

Form: Autobiography

An autobiography is a narrative in which an individual tells his or her life story. The word comes from the Greek autos, 'self', bios, 'life' and graphein, 'write'. The term was first used in 1809, but the form begins to appear only in the 15th century. Most times an autobiography on a sentence level has the use of first person, past tense and a clearly signal time sequence. A telling of an event may end with a closing statement to reflect.

Purpose: To inform readers by retelling events, experiences, and thoughts of one's own life.

Types.

- **Autobiography:** An individual's life story written by themselves.
- **Memoir:** An individual's narrative concentrating on particular moments, topics or themes from their own life.

Context.

- **Subject matter:** experiences, thoughts, observations, achievements of a person.
- **Roles and relationships:** The writer states facts and is generally not known to the readers or the reader does not know a great deal about the writer's life.
- **Medium:** book, magazine, article digest, Internet.

How to write an autobiography.

- **Orientation:** name yourself, tell when and where you live/d and state some common facts about yourself.
- **Series of events:** List the important events in chronological order
- **Mention people or experiences** that may have influenced your experiences.
- **Explain the causes and effects** of events.
- **Re-Orientation:** restate why your autobiography should be written.
- **Visual content:** Photographs, pictures or illustrations about you and your experiences.

Vocabulary.

- **Personal language** for descriptions. i.e. use I, my, we.
- **Descriptive but not exaggerated language**
- **Emotive expressions.** E.g. I worked hard to make money to buy the expensive shoes.
- **Classifying language** i.e. put the person in the context of time, place and group e.g. I was one of the best dancers in my 2010 classes of Mitchell High school.
- **Time sequencing:** In 2007, when I was sixteen.

Grammar.

- **Verbs:** active verbs rather than passive verbs. E.g. I fought with the others, I became the leader, my success was great.
- **Verb Form:** past tense; I laughed, we ran all day, present tense; I'm asking myself why am I smiling now.
- **Cause and effect language:** This led to; as a result, because of this I.
- **Contrasting ideas or statements** linked by appropriate connectives. E.g. although, however, but, therefore.

Form: Interview

Purpose.

The purpose of an interview is to gather information from and about a person.

Types.

Personal and political interviews for a private or educational research or for publication in the media i.e. radio, television, magazines and newspapers, internet.

Context.

- Subject matter: questions to a person about a particular subject
- Roles and relationships: the interviewee who is the authority and has the knowledge on the subject is educating the interviewer.
- Medium: face-to-face, telephone, webcam.

How to conduct an interview.

- Introduce yourself and state your background and purpose.
- Ask a variety of well-deigned questions about the subject.
- Some questions will be spontaneous, as the interviewer needs to clarify answers.
- Review the answers with the interviewee.
- Thank the interviewee and explain how the answers are to be used.

Vocabulary.

Words are related to subject. At the start, questions are simple and move on to more complex. Ask open-ended questions which gain the maximum amount of useful information i.e. ask who, what, where, when and why questions. Limit closed questions requiring a yes no answer e.g. Do you like being famous?

Grammar.

Questions may require the past present or future tense. Interviewer speaks in the second person i.e. you and your. Interviewee speaks in the first person i.e. I, me.

Example.

Hello Miss Nesrin Chambers, my name is Sally Barden and I am from Seer College. I would like to interview you about your experiences of your time in Mexico City. The results are for a school task about the affect of industrial pollution on the environment.

Can you tell me about any pollution you may have witnessed during you time in Mexico City?

Form: Explanation

Purpose.

The purpose of an explanation is to give reasons why, or outline how, events occur; how things work or tasks are done.

Types.

- Giving reasons for events
- Outlining the way events occur; how things work

Context.

- Subject matter: the focus is on natural occurrences, historical and political events; objects like machines; tasks or behaviours e.g. how to play a game.
- Roles and relationships: the writer is the authority; readers are being educated.
- Medium: text books and encyclopedias; newspapers and magazines such as science and sports magazines; internet
- Mode: written

How to write an explanation.

Structure:

- General statement about topic.
- Explanation or description of the stages/steps in the process in a logical sequence.
- Diagrams often support explanation.

Vocabulary.

- Unbiased, exact language
- Impersonal language
- 'Time' words to indicate stages of an event e.g. first, then and finally
- Adverbs: descriptive words to indicate how something occurred e.g. the army moved slowly.
- Adjectives: descriptive words to explain the process e.g. the climb is long and dangerous.

Grammar.

- Simple present tense e.g. simple past e.g. this was the first boat.
- Passive verbs e.g. First the coin is tossed.
- Action verbs e.g. One side fields and the other side bats.

Form: Description [Factual]

Purpose.

The purpose of a description is to inform using factual text. The focus is to describe with accuracy and sufficient depth, the particular characteristics of specific people, animals, events and process.

Types.

- Descriptive paragraph e.g. describing a character in a novel
- Descriptive chapter in a non-fiction book e.g. The Inuit as an example of an ethnic group

Context.

- Subject matter: the characteristics of a specific people, animals, events and processes
- Roles and relationships: the writer knows the facts and writes for unknown readers.
- Medium: textbooks, encyclopedia, novels, Internet
- Mode: written, oral

How to write a Description.

Structure.

- A description is often written in reply to a question and so the sequence depends on the question.
- Initial sentence is a classification of the topic e.g. name of plant, animal, river etc.
- Subtopics: written in order of the question
- Paragraphing: one paragraph per broad heading
- Illustrations: photographs, diagrams, video if the internet, maps

Vocabulary.

- Adjectives and adverbs used to increase effectiveness of description
- Impersonal language e.g. do not use *I* or *we*; do not give personal opinions.

Grammar.

- Simple present tense verbs to describe what people or animals do or how they live e.g. hunt, live, grow.
- Passive verbs to describe habitual events in the present time e.g. sleds are used, dogs are kept.
- Active verbs to describe actions done by people, animals or machines e.g. the men go hunting and the woman make clothes out of animal skins.

Form: Brochure

Purpose.

The purpose of a brochure is to inform the public about the availability of goods and services.

Types.

- Travel
- Advertising goods and services for sale e.g. fun parks; shopping

Context.

- Subject matter: variety of subjects; the focus is on providing information to attract people to the activity or goods described
- Roles and relationships: the writer writes for unknown readers.
- Medium: pamphlet
- Mode: written

How to write the text for a brochure.

Structure.

- Title
- General Introduction
- Details outlined in paragraphs
- Headings for paragraphs
- Facts and persuasive language
- Clear layout to locate information easily e.g. address, opening times, cost
- Conclusion: 'grab' the reader's attention.

Vocabulary.

- Language to appeal to the target group e.g. if written for children us simple, easy to understand language.
- Factual and persuasive words and phrases
- Focus on the participants or readers; language may appear quite personal e.g. *You've never been on to a park like this before or if you are feeling brave.* This could be followed with *Look at what we can do for you!*

Grammar.

- Verbs: action verbs; imperative (command) verbs e.g. ring now; contact us.
- Nouns: proper names with capitals e.g. *Space World.*
- Use of short sentences, phrases, list of words.
- Form:

Form: Discussion

Purpose.

The purpose of a discussion is to present a range of theories on an issue and come to a recommendation. This should be a reasonable conclusion based on the evidence given in the discussion.

Types.

- Reports
- Academics/ research essays.

Context.

- Subject matter: both sides of an issue are presented for discussion; issues usually have more than one point of view and may be controversial
- Roles and relationships: the writer may or may not know who will read their discussion.
- Medium: academic journals, publications by special interest groups wanting to put different perspectives on an issue
- Mode: written oral

How to write a discussion.

Structure.

- Beginning: statement of an issue.
- Development: statements of differing points of view often for and against
- Recommendations: a reasonable conclusion to the discussion
- After presenting the evidence, the writer usually states their point of view if they want their reader to accept the proposal

Vocabulary.

- Related to an issue e.g. vending machine, obesity, health and profit
- Emotive and unbiased: do not use *I*, *we*
- Examples to illustrate key ideas

Grammar.

- Relational verbs: the verbs 'to be' and 'to have' e.g. *was used*, *is criticised*.
- Tenses: present (giving views) and past (giving examples from past)
- Lists e.g. key terms, key ideas.

Form: Feature Article

Purpose.

Feature articles are nonfiction articles that intend to inform, teach or amuse the reader on a topic. The topic centres on human interests. Feature stories may include conventions found in fiction such as dialogue, plot and character.

Types.

- Newspaper Column —deals with a particular field of interest, or with an issue.
- Essay — A short, literary, nonfiction composition (usually prose), develops a theme or idea.
- Human interest story — An article that involves local people and events. Also called "true-life" stories.

Context.

- Subject Matter: personality sketches, essays, how-to's, interviews, general interest.
- Roles and relationships: The writer might or might not know their readers.
- Medium: Newspapers, magazines, internet.
- Mode: written.

How to write Feature Articles.

Structure.

- Beginning: headline, dramatic opening, introduces topic, overview
- Development; Examples/anecdotes, quotations

Vocabulary.

- Usually uses first person e.g. I, myself.
- Often uses persuasive language, though does not need to show bias.

Grammar.

- Greater use of adjectives, descriptive language than is used for a news report.
- Uses present tense e.g. *is*, *now*.
- Nouns: proper nouns, places, people, events.
- Active verbs to describe actions done by people e.g. she is *playing*, a player *pushes* a button
- Passive verbs e.g. it is *watched*, is *announced*.