



Text types vs text forms

Text types are general semantic-functional concepts and are not to be confused with text forms (advertisements, editorials, sermons, shopping lists, poems, telephone books, novels, etc.)

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Narrative texts

- Narrative texts have to do with real-world events and time.
- They may be fictional (fairy tales, novels) or non-fictional (newspaper report).
- They are characterised by a sequencing of events expressed by dynamic verbs and by adverbials such as “and then”, “first”, “second”, “third”
- Example: First we packed our bags and then we called a taxi. After that we... etc.

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Descriptive texts

- Descriptive texts are concerned with the location of persons and things in space.
- They will tell us what lies to the right or left, in the background or foreground, or they will provide background information which, perhaps, sets the stage for narration.
- It is immaterial whether a description is more technical-objective or more impressionistic-subjective.

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Descriptive texts

- State or positional verbs plus adverbial expressions are employed in descriptions
- Examples:
 - 1) The operation panel is located on the right-hand side at the rear;
 - 2) New Orleans lies on the Mississippi.

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Directive texts

- Directive texts are concerned with concrete future activity. Central to these texts are imperatives (Hand me the paper) or forms which substitute for them, such as polite questions (Would you hand me the paper?) or suggestive remarks (I wonder what the paper says about the weather).

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- Narrative, descriptive and directive texts have grammatical forms associated with them which may be expanded to form sequences of a textual nature
- They are all centred around real-world events and things. In contrast, expository and argumentative texts are cognitively oriented, as they are concerned with explanation and persuasion, which are both mental processes.

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Expository texts

- Expository texts identify and characterize phenomena.
- They include text forms such as definitions, explications, summaries and many types of essay.

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Expository texts

- may be subjective (essay) or objective (summary, explication, definition)
- may be analytical (starting from a concept and then characterizing its parts; e.g. definitions) or synthetic (recounting characteristics and ending with an appropriate concept or conclusion; e.g. summaries)
- are characterized by state verbs and epistemic modals (Pop music has a strong rhythmic beat; Texts may consist of one or more sentences) or by verbs indicating typical activities or qualities (fruitflies feed on yeast)

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Argumentative texts

- Argumentative texts depart from the assumption that the receiver's beliefs must be changed
- They often start with the negation of a statement which attributes a quality or characteristic activity to something or someone (esp. scholarly texts).
- They also include advertising texts, which try to persuade their readers that a product is somehow better, at least implicitly, than others.

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- Few texts are pure realizations of a single type:
- Advertisements may be both argumentative-persuasive (this is good because...) and directive (So buy now!)
- Expository texts can be neutral or contain evaluative elements (reviews, references, letters to the editor...)
- Laws regulate some aspects of society, directing the behaviour of its members, but also inform on these aspects (they are both directive and expository)

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Source: Gramley, S., Pätzold, K.M., *A Survey of Modern English*, London, Routledge, 1992

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Identify text types in the following passages:

1) Papers should not exceed 7000 words (including footnotes and Works Cited) and should follow the latest MLA Handbook. Papers should be submitted in double-spaced format (two hard copies and a disk) to the editors of the issue at the following addresses:

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2) Most artists are very nervous of scientific analysis. They feel it destroys something about the human aspect of creativity. [...] Some fear that too much analysis will only break the spell. Likewise, most scientists see the creative arts as an entirely subjective development that long ago left science to tread the long road to objective truth alone. Whole books have been written about this bifurcation, but here I want to talk about some interesting points of contact between art and science that are facilitated by the growth in our

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understanding of complex organization and pattern. I believe that the sciences of complexity have a lot to learn from the creative arts. The arts display some of the most intricate known examples of organised complexity. Likewise, the creative arts may have something to learn from an appreciation of what complexity is and how it comes about.

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3) Yes, I have returned to this arcaded city, unwisely, it may be. I rented a place in one of the little alleyways hard by the Duomo, I shall not say which one, for reasons that are not entirely clear to me, although I confess I worry intermittently about the possibility of a visit from the police. It is not much, my bolt-hole, a couple of rooms, low-ceilinged, dank; the windows are so narrow and dirty I have to keep a table lamp burning all day for fear of falling over something in the half dark.

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4) The geography of the Aran Islands is very simple, yet it may need a word to itself. There are three islands: Aranmor, the north island, about nine miles long; Inishmaan, the middle island, [...] nearly round in form; and the south island, Inishere – in Irish, east island, – like the middle island but slightly smaller. They lie about thirty miles from Galway, up the centre of the bay, but they are not far from the cliffs of County Clare, on the south, or the corner of Connemara on the north.

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5) Acanthus

A thistle-like plant (common to the warm Mediterranean region) whose narrow and pointed-lobed leaves, when stylized, form the characteristic decoration of the Corinthian and Composite Orders of columns.

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6) President George W. Bush has told us that the question of whether to withdraw from Iraq is one that his successors will have to deal with – not him. I don't think so. Bush is not going to have that luxury of passing Iraq along. You see, the insurgency in Iraq is in its "last throes" – just like Dick Cheney said. Unfortunately, it's being replaced by anarchy in many neighborhoods – not democracy. And I don't believe the American people will put up with two and half more years of babysitting anarchy instead of midwifing democracy.

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7) The dancers were trickling away on to the touchlines of the long-floor. The walls were decorated with scenes from the remoter past, portrayed in what no doubt an advanced style, so that in the one nearest Dixon, for example, some lack of perspective or similar commodity made a phalanx of dwarf infantrymen seem to be falling from the skies upon their much larger barbarian adversaries who, unaware of this danger overhead, gazed threateningly into the empty middle distance. Lowering his eyes from these memorials, he caught sight of Michie talking and laughing with his girl. She had the kind of water-gipsy face that affected him uncomfortably.

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