4.3: Overview- Types of Writing

Now that you have had the opportunity to develop your skills related to reading and comprehension and information literacy, it is time to shift to writing. In your post-secondary nursing program, you will be expected to engage in a variety of types of writing.

Early on in your academic trajectory, you may be asked to simply describe or summarize a text and/or construct an annotated bibliography. You might be asked to do some simple evaluation/critique/analysis of a text. Throughout your program, you will consistently be required to engage in reflective writing. As you progress in your program, you will be asked to engage in more challenging forms of writing including advanced synthesis and critique.

You will often be required to use a combination of types of writing within one assignment. For example, reflective writing will require you to reflect and sometimes analyze. See Table 4.1 for a brief description of common types of writing. Each type of writing is described in more detail in the next sections.

Table 4.1: Common types of writing

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<th>Type of writing</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>You write a summary about a text you’ve read. Descriptive writing includes a description of the main points and usually does not include your personal opinion or critique.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflective</td>
<td>You think deeply and write about an experience or an event or something you have read. In nursing, you are expected to engage in reflective writing related to your clinical practice.</td>
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Analytical  This genre of writing moves beyond description and involves examining the issue or text closely and looking at its parts to understand the whole.

Persuasive  Your job is to persuade, influence, convince, and inspire your audience to believe in your point of view on a topic that involves multiple viewpoints and opinions.

Critical  This genre of writing involves a detailed assessment or evaluation of a text. To some degree, this is the highest level of writing because it is both analytical and persuasive.

Editorial  This is sometimes referred to as an opinion or perspective piece in which you incorporate an educated opinion from a unique viewpoint on a particular issue.

Literature reviews  There are many types of writing associated with literature reviews. Overall, you will synthesize a body of literature on a particular topic.

Student Tip

Know what is expected of you

The most important starting point is that you understand what type of writing is expected for a course or an assignment. Start by closely reviewing and highlighting keywords in the assignment guidelines and if provided, the marking rubric. What verbs do the guidelines use? Reflect? Analyze? Critique? Or something else? These starting points will point you in the right direction.

Listen to the Audio Podcast 4.1 about various types of writing by Kerry McNamara, M.Ed., MFA, Composition Instructor, Tidewater Community College.
A SoundCloud element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: pb.libretexts.org/nursingwriting/?p=128

Audio Podcast 4.1: Various types of writing by Kerry McNama [6:18]

The following discussion provides more details about each type of writing for your assignments.