

A Guide to Academic Writing

Writing is required in **all** academic fields in college—history, sociology, psychology, science, mathematics, philosophy, business, engineering, criminal justice—not just English. Your professors expect you to communicate what you are learning, using a variety of genres, styles, and formats. Here are a few types of writing you may be asked to do in college.

Journals/field notes

Think of journals and field-notes as the clay for your future thoughts, observations, and ideas; these are **informal**.

Literature reviews

Categorize, conceptualize, or synthesize relevant opinions (i.e., scholarly articles) on a specific issue.

Analysis papers

Analyze any piece of literature or artifact, such as a painting or design, scientific experiment or literary criticism, etc., to promote your own interpretation of a particular theory or style.

Critiques

Analyze a journal article, website, or work of art (i.e., literary, musical, theatrical, visual), or work of any kind to assess relevance, performance, or credibility.

Evaluative essays

Analyze a particular artifact—literary, artistic, or scientific; a concept, theory, or experience—and discuss strengths and weaknesses.

Narratives

Present collected data through use of **informal** methods (e.g., sharing stories, writing imaginary letters to parents or diary entries of a person in history).

Case studies

Present a problem, discuss others' thoughts on the issue (see lit. review), describe and analyze data/evidence, and draw conclusions.

Research and lab reports

Identify research questions, contextualize the question in the research literature (see lit. review); identify hypotheses, methods of data collection and reduction and analysis; discuss findings.