

MODES OF WRITING

PERSUASIVE—This mode of writing is used to convince the reader of the truth or falseness of an idea. Writers typically attempt to appeal to the emotions of the reader in persuasive writing.

Example (adapted from Fearless Writing: Essay Guide by Danielle Denega, Spark Publishing 2007):

Imagine your child arriving home from practice at 7 pm. After cleaning up and shoveling food into his mouths at an alarming pace, he goes to his room in a futile attempt to complete his homework. When you go to check up on him, he is passed out on his uncompleted Math work—again. This routine could become a daily reality if the new proposal by the South Brunswick school board to lengthen the school day is passed. This suggestion should not be implemented because there would be less time for after-school activities, students would not be able to complete homework, and there would be less time to spend with loved ones.

Extending the length of the school day would mean that there would be less time for after-school activities. After-school activities such as woodworking club are important. They are fun and educational, and as the principal says, “They help keep kids out of trouble after school.” But, if the school day were made longer, clubs and organizations would suffer. Many kids wouldn’t be able to stay at school even later than they do now. Some parents might not want their children coming later. In addition, outdoor sports teams would suffer because they would not have enough time to practice before dark.

Another reason the school day should not be extended is that it would allow students less time to do assignments and study. Getting home later from school would mean that students have less time to do homework before bed. Students need this time to practice at home and reinforce what they learn at school. Math teachers always say, “Students who complete all their homework do much better on exams.”

Finally, the school day should continue to end a 3:05 so that students would have more time to spend with family and friends. Kids need time to interact with their friends to develop social skills. For most kids, it’s important to have time with friends to unwind after working hard in school all day, too. A parent of an eight grader says, “Children also need to have time to spend with their families to keep the family bond strong.” A longer school day would prohibit this.

The South Brunswick school district should not make the school day end later than it currently does. Lengthening the school day will negatively affect many things that are important in a child’s life: after-school programs, academics, and socialization. Parents and students should go to the upcoming school board meeting and encourage them not to lengthen the school day.

Interest Catcher

Bridge with background information

Thesis with opinion and three reasons

Topic Sentence

Supporting details and examples

Topic Sentence

Supporting details and examples

Topic Sentence

Supporting details and examples

Restate the opinion and reasons

Call to Action

EXPRESSIVE—This mode of writing is appropriate whenever a writer wishes to express feelings, ideas, and/or reactions to events or issues. Expressive writing uses precise, descriptive language to capture and express the writer's thoughts, ideas, and experiences.

Description-- This type of expressive writing is aimed at bringing something to life by telling how it looks, sounds, tastes, smells, feels or acts. The writer tries to convey a sensory impression, depict a particular mood, or both.

Example: (from *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee) The Radley Place jutted into a sharp curve beyond our house. Walking south, one faced its porch; the sidewalk turned and ran beside the lot. The house was low, was once white with a deep front porch and green shutters, but had long ago darkened to the color of the slate gray yard around it. Rain-rotted shingles drooped over the eaves of the veranda; oak trees kept the sun away. The remains of a picket drunkenly guarded the front yard—a “swept” yard that was never swept—where johnson grass and rabbit-tobacco grew in abundance.

Narration This mode of writing is used to recount an event or series of interrelated events. Fables, fairy tales, short stories, novels, and plays are all narrative in style if they tell a story.

Example: One afternoon a big wolf waited in a dark forest for a little girl to come along carrying a basket of food to her grandmother. Finally, a little girl did come along, and she was carrying a basket of food. “Are you carrying that basket to your grandmother?” asked the wolf. The little girl said yes, she was. So the wolf asked her where her grandmother lived, and the little girl told him, and he disappeared into the woods...

INFORMATIONAL—This mode of writing exposes information through explanation, definition, or interpretation of its subject. This is the mode of most research reports, critical analyses, reviews, and case histories. This type of writing can incorporate a variety of techniques, such as definition, illustration, classification, compare/contrast, analogy, or cause/effect reasoning. It is often blended with the other modes of writing described above and is sometimes referred to as expository writing.

Example: (From Barron's ACT Test Preparation, 15th Edition). Solar sails are a way of moving things around in space, from one orbit to another. They are beginning to look like the best means of transportation in an area as big as space. And space is big! It would take as many Earths to fill the solar system as elephants to fill the sea. The Earth's orbit around the Sun is 23,000 times the Earth's circumference. Driving to the Moon (1/400 of the distance to the Sun) would take six months, at 55mph. Driving to the nearest star would take 50,000,000 years... “