Students, professors, and researchers in every discipline use academic writing to convey ideas, make arguments, and engage in scholarly conversation. Academic writing is characterized by evidence-based arguments, precise word choice, logical organization, and an impersonal tone. Though sometimes thought of as long-winded or inaccessible, strong academic writing is quite the opposite: It informs, analyzes, and persuades in a straightforward manner and enables the reader to engage critically in a scholarly dialogue.

Examples of Academic Writing

Academic writing is, of course, any formal written work produced in an academic setting. While academic writing comes in many forms, the following are some of the most common.

**Literary analysis**: A literary analysis essay examines, evaluates, and makes an argument about a literary work. As its name suggests, a literary analysis essay goes beyond mere summarization. It requires careful [close reading](https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-close-reading-1689758) of one or multiple texts and often focuses on a specific characteristic, theme, or motif.

**Research paper**: A research paper uses outside information to support a thesis or make an argument. Research papers are written in all disciplines and may be evaluative, analytical, or critical in nature. Common research sources include data, primary sources (e.g., historical records), and secondary sources (e.g., peer-reviewed [scholarly articles](https://www.thoughtco.com/journal-articles-1857182)). Writing a research paper involves synthesizing this external information with your own ideas.

**Dissertation**: A [dissertation](https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-a-dissertation-1686550) (or thesis) is a document submitted at the conclusion of a Ph.D. program. The dissertation is a book-length summarization of the doctoral candidate’s research.

Academic papers may be done as a part of a class, in a program of study, or for publication in an academic journal or scholarly book of articles around a theme, by different authors.