

# Writing Essays!

# *Essays*

- From the French, **essayer**, which means “to try, to examine”
- **Definition of essay:** a brief examination of a subject in prose, usually expressing a personal or limited view of the topic.
- **Purposes of writing essays:**
  1. To entertain
  2. To inform
  3. To explain
  4. To persuade

# *Modes of Discourse*

- **Discourse:** how you express yourself. Your expression may be written, spoken, or conveyed non-verbally.
- Essays use all four major forms of discourse—
  1. Exposition
  2. Persuasion
  3. Description
  4. Narration

# *Exposition*

- Explains a subject
- Writer's main purpose is to inform
- Most objective type of nonfiction: facts are presented as neutrally as possible
- Author's opinion on subject DOESN'T intrude

EXAMPLES: Account of how something works (How to Change the Oil in Your Car); report on historical or scientific event; computer software manual

# *Persuasion*

- Attempts to influence reader's ideas or actions
- Major purpose is to convince reader to think, feel, or act in a certain way
- Writer selects and arranges facts so that reader will share the writer's opinion
- Successful only if the reader believes that the facts support the writer's opinion

EXAMPLES: Newspaper editorial, political speech, fundraising letter

# *Description*

- Presents a picture or an impression of a subject
- Recreates for reader a person, a place or an event, largely through language that **appeals to the senses**
- Tells us how something looks, smells, tastes, sounds and feels to the touch

EXAMPLES: Travelogue, journal, autobiographical description of someone's hometown

# *Narration*

- Author's purpose is to relate a series of events
- Events usually related in chronological order
- Has the form of a story, but the events are factual and accurately recorded
- Author depicts characters and may even use dialogue

EXAMPLES: Historical essay, most biographies, account of a sporting event, a personal narrative