

Understanding the nature of the assignment

Academic writing II/2

Types of assignments as a university student

- Essays
- Reports
- Literature reviews
- Presentations
- Posters
- Blogs
- Dissertation

IPACE model

- **I**ntity
 - **P**urpose
 - **A**udience
 - **C**ode
 - **E**xperience
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- What are you writing? Why are you writing? Who are you writing for?

Identity

- When we are writing academically, we are writing for particular kinds of people within that discipline
- We are writing for those people who will assess our writing
- Identity in this case is what we choose to show of ourselves in the assignment through our writing, and how we are seeking to engage with, the community of readers for whom we are writing
- There is a tension between expressing yourself as you wish and conforming to the community for whom you are writing
- Think about the behavior, attitude and values you wish to show

Examples of identity in a writing assignment

- Observer
- Reporter
- Explainer
- Attention to detail
- Impersonal
- Authoritative
- Easy to read

Excercise 1.

- For an assignment you are about to carry out (or have recently carried out)
 - a.) Write down the name and short description of the assignment
 - b.) Use 1-3 words to describe your identity
 - c.) What qualities would you expect someone with this identity to have?
 - d.) Which of these qualities do you consider to be well developed in yourself?
 - e.) Which of these qualities are, for you, the least developed? Give two examples of how you could strengthen these

Purpose

- What was your assessor's intention in having you complete the assignment? If you do not know then ask the teacher!
- What do you expect the reader to gain from reading your work?
- What is your own purpose? What do you expect to gain from the assignment? Even if the task is compulsory, it is more motivating to think about what you can gain from it, than just to think that I am doing this because I have to

Audience

- Imagine your reader. Who are you writing for?
- How are they assessing your work?
- The way your assessor is reading your work is not the same as they might read the work of an established researcher in their field
- You are trying to show that you have understood the assignment and that you understand what you are writing about

Code (format, structure and writing style)

- You have to find the right language/writing style for your identity, purpose and audience
- Also appropriate structure and format
- As a student, usually the format is chosen for you
- If you have a chance to choose the format think about your purpose, intended audience, and how they will engage with your communication

Structure

- Structure is crucial to developing your argument
 - You need to know the required structure for the assignment
 - You may have the opportunity to be creative – if you choose to defy convention, you need to be confident in your knowledge of the expectations you are choosing to challenge
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- **Structure of an essay:**
 - Introduction: 5-10% of the document
 - Body: 70-80%
 - Conclusion: 5-15%

Writing style

Formal? Informal?

Personal? Impersonal?

What viewpoint will you adopt?

What knowledge are you assuming from the reader?

Experience

- Your knowledge, skills, values and attitudes you are bringing to the writing task
- Thinking about content and process ahead of writing helps make sure that you have enough time to gather the information you need, carry out the writing and complete the assignment as expected
- At this early stage identifying gaps in your knowledge gives you enough time to seek help or to address any shortcomings

When to use this model?

- You do not need to use IPACE for every assignment.
- Use it for larger, more challenging projects or assignments with which you are not familiar with
- By using IPACE you can better prepare yourself for a writing task, completing it on time, with less chance of making mistakes

- Source: Trevor Day - Success in academic writing, Chapter 2.

