



Different Types of Writing

1. Writing to Explain: The author wants to inform, explain, describe or define an issue. This can take the form of a poem (Ingrid Jonker's *The Child who Was Shot Dead by Soldiers at Nyanga*), an online or newspaper article (*Free educations now affordable*), a non-fiction article, textbook or book (*African Lakes*) or teaching to do something (*How to Start an Online School Magazine*). This type of writing focuses on facts about the subject, and you may use numbers/statistics. Personal opinions are usually secondary, unless stated upfront. It is also called **expository writing**.

2. Writing that Describes: Words are used to describe not just the appearance, but atmosphere and feel of something. Rapper Tupac Shakur's song *Brenda's got a Baby* is a good example; the lyrics explain teenage parenthood as a downhill spiral. **Descriptive writing** is used in fiction or non-fiction, poetry, travel or fashion writing. The writing must make the reader feel as if they are experiencing the event, using symbols, representing or comparing it with something else. It can also be a personal journal describing your day and how you feel.

3. Narrative Writing: "My name is Nelson Mandela. When I was born, South Africa was ruled by white people only." (*Nelson Mandela. Long walk to Freedom*, Abridged by Chris van Wyk), is done in the first person, the character tells the story. The author puts herself in the shoes of another person. It can also be second person narrative, where the author is an observer who describes the characters' actions, feelings, conversation and thoughts: "Akimbo was very proud of his Uncle Peter, although he hardly ever saw him." (*Akimbo and the Snakes*, by Alexander McCall Smith). **Narrative writing** tells stories, with plots and storylines, characters, beginning and endings.

4. Writing to Persuade: This type of writing is based on the opinion of the author, to convince someone to give your ideas a chance. It reflects the bias and belief system of the author, like *We should all be Feminists* by Chimamande Ngozi Adiche. The writing is analytical and must make a case for your point of view, with facts and examples. It is also good to deal with other arguments on the issue, including those that disagree with your views, to make your case stronger. Writing a speech (*Vote for Lebo!*) when you stand for class representative/leader or SRC is one example of **persuasive writing**.

5. Creative writing: Using all of the above (or turning them upside down) is the best part of creative writing. Write whatever comes to mind, as long as it makes people think, explains how you feel, and entertains. Books, journals, poetry, plays, blogs, comedy, science fiction, comic strips, adventure tales are examples of different genres. Creative writing does not have to be factual, as long as it is well-written and interesting. Let your imagination go wild!