There are four main types of writing: expository, persuasive, narrative, and descriptive.

* Expository – Writing in which author’s purpose is to inform or explain the subject to the reader.
* Persuasive – Writing that states the opinion of the writer and attempts to influence the reader.
* Narrative – Writing in which the author tells a story. The story could be fact or fiction.
* Descriptive – A type of expository writing that uses the five senses to paint a picture for the reader. This writing incorporates imagery and specific details.

Identify which type of writing is being described.

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ A story about the time you got lost at Disneyland
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ A web page telling how to create a web page
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ The Harry Potter books
4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ A letter to the governor explaining why the tax increase is a bad idea
5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Writing in which you record details of a trip taken
6. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ An essay discussing a theme from Romeo and Juliet
7. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ An article attempting to convince readers to boycott a store chain
8. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ A poem about the sights and sounds of rainfall
9. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ A paper about the horrible treatment of the people in Darfur
10. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ The cover story in the morning newspaper
11. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ A brochure advertising a luxury hotel and resort
12. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ A paper discussing the after effects of a war

Example #1

An excerpt from *“The Pleasures of Imagination”* by Joseph Addison

The pleasures of the imagination, taken in their full extent, are not so gross as those of sense… A man of polite imagination is let into a great many pleasures… A man should endeavour, therefore, to make the sphere of his innocent pleasures as wide as possible, that he may retire into them with safety … Delightful scenes, whether in nature, painting, or poetry, have a kindly influence on the body, as well as the mind, and not only serve to clear and brighten the imagination, but are able to disperse grief and melancholy…

This is an example of expository writing style in which the author describes advantages of imagination with facts and logical sequence and tells his delight of imagination. Then, he discusses its benefits and finally gives opinions in its favor.

Example #2

Here is an excerpt from a poem.

A drop fell on the apple tree,  
Another on the roof,  
And made the gables laugh,  
The breezes brought dejected lutes,  
And bathed them in the glee;  
And signed the fete away.  
*(Summer Shower by Emily Dickinson)*

This poem is giving an example of descriptive style. Emily gives a description of a summer rainstorm in detail and visualizes with images so that the readers could visualize this storm in their own minds as if it is actually happening.

Example #3

It is an ancient Mariner,  
And he stoppeth one of three.’  
By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,  
Now wherefore stopp’st thou me?  
The bridegroom’s doors are opened wide,  
…  
The guests are met, the feast is set:  
Mayst hear the merry din.  
*(The Rime of the Ancient Mariner by Samuel Taylor Coleridge)*

In this poem, Coleridge uses narrative style and tells a story about the ancient mariner. He uses dialogues, disputes, actions and events in a sequence, thus provides a perfect example of the narrative style of writing.

Example #4

An excerpt from *Dorian Gray*by Oscar Wilde

“The studio was filled with the rich odor of roses, and when the light summer wind stirred amidst the trees of the garden… The sullen murmur of the bees shouldering their way through… or circling with monotonous insistence…”

This is a good example of descriptive writing style since the author gives visualizations, feelings, description of a location and details about bees that could be seen and heard.

**Function of Style**

A unique literary style can have great impact on the piece in which it is used and on the readers. When authors write and put their ideas into words, they meet with a large number of choices which include: words, sounds, logic, sentence structures. However, different authors use different literary styles that depend on their distinct expression and their utilization of these choices. And their choice creates their niche.