

Writing Genre Guidelines

*This document outlines typical characteristics of a range of written assignment types at The Seattle School.
Please consult your syllabus or assignment prompt for specific assignment expectations.*

<i>Purpose</i>	Genre	Formality	Distinguishing Factors	Sources	Key Words
<i>Explore/ Discover</i>	Journal	Very informal. 1 st person appropriate.	Author “free writes” about a particular idea or text in order to explore or generate ideas.	Personal ideas, reactions, or stories. Source text (that which the author is responding to).	Journal, free-write, brainstorm, respond, react
<i>Explore/ Discover</i>	Response	Varying. 1 st person may be appropriate.	Author is encouraged to explore thoughts, reactions, and responses to a text or idea. Paper is focused on one particular idea, theme, or thesis, and source text is integrated into response. Structured around a central thesis or claim.	Personal ideas, reactions, or stories. Source text.	Respond, react, engage, reflect, explore
<i>Explain/ Describe</i>	Reflective Essay	Formal. 1 st Person appropriate, though more formal than response paper or journal.	Purpose is to reflect on theory and practice, and to offer evidence of personal insight and engagement informed by course texts. Critical engagement with course texts is integrated with reflections on a personal or practical experience and is introduced with a thesis statement/claim.	Course readings, source texts, personal narrative, insight, and reflections on relevant experience.	Reflect, compare, respond, address, explain, integrate
<i>Explain/ Describe</i>	Book Review Summary	Varying. 1 st person probably not appropriate.	Focus is primarily on text; book review gives a summary of the major movements or ideas in the text and may or may not critique ideas.	Source text. Specific questions may come from instructor.	Summarize, review, highlight key points, survey
<i>Explain/ Describe</i>	Exploration Discussion Compare/contrast	Varying. 1 st person usually not appropriate.	Often essay exam questions. Purpose is to demonstrate competency of knowledge. Discussion might center around 2-4 characteristics of a concept;	Varying. Primary reliance on course texts.	Analyze, classify, compare, contrast, define, describe, discuss,

			comparison/contrast structure includes identifying similarities and differences between concepts.		explain, explore
<i>Explain/Explore/Describe</i>	Research Paper	Very formal. 1st person usually not appropriate, except perhaps in introduction and conclusion.	Can be exploratory or argumentative. Exploratory research papers or literature reviews summarize research, including a thesis statement that highlights or draws connections around a major theme. Argumentative research papers make a claim with a thesis statement that is supported by evidence and analysis throughout. Highly structured and organized.	Review of literature about a topic, typically from peer-reviewed journals and scholarly books. Many sources quoted. Paper is claim driven, focused on texts.	Research, argue, synthesize, persuade, evaluate, summarize, claim
<i>Describe/Evaluate</i>	Case Study	Formal. 1 st person may be appropriate.	Includes either verbatim or narrative content to present a case, which may integrate research, diagnostic criteria, and/or mental status exam (MSE) in order to reflect on student's theoretical orientation with attention to clinical modality and application. Generally includes an introduction, thesis, and conclusion reflecting the overall material.	Review of literature about theoretical models, peer-reviewed journals, in-class materials, given case material, personal ideas, reactions, or stories.	Evaluate, analyze, summarize, synthesize, diagnose
<i>Explain/Describe</i>	Critique or analysis	Varying. 1 st person probably not appropriate.	Focus primarily on text; other sources generally not used; purpose is to do a close-reading of a text. Structured around a central thesis or claim.	Source text. Secondary sources may be appropriate.	Critique, analyze