

## **Types of College Papers**

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Once you have picked a topic and written your thesis statement, it is a good idea to consider the method you will use to develop your paper. An effective thesis statement will often suggest what type of paper to write. It should suggest a logical way to proceed. Almost all college papers use one or more of the nine basic methods of writing papers. Knowing the nine types of college papers and the definition of each will help you plan and organize your writing.

### **Process**

A process paper involves writing that answers questions faced every day at home, in college or in the workplace. Process papers answer these questions by analyzing the process in which you are concerned, breaking it down into specific steps and showing the reader how the process works.

### **Narrative**

When you write a narrative paper, you are telling a story. Narrative papers are told from a defined point of view, often the author's. There is feeling, as well as specific and often sensory details, which get the reader involved in the elements and sequence of the story. It is told from a particular point of view, makes and supports a point, is filled with precise detail, uses vivid verbs and modifiers, uses conflict and sequence and may use dialogue.

### **Description**

The description paper is usually written from the author's point of view. It creates a key notion, an overall effect, a specific feeling or image about the topic. The paper gives tangible, exact details to support what the writer is trying to get across to the reader. The objective is for the reader to vividly sense the subject and develop an impression of the subject.

### **Comparison**

The comparison paper, sometimes called the comparison and contrast essay, sets two or more subjects side by side. It shows the reader how they are similar or different and draws conclusions or makes some point on what has been shown to the reader.

### **Cause and Effect**

In a cause and effect paper, you develop your thesis through reasoning. You give an explanation of the causes, an explanation of the effects or explain both the cause and effects of an incident, fact or circumstance. For example, knowing why your car overheated will help you to avoid the problem in the future.

### **Problem and Solution**

The goal with the problem and solution paper is to argue for a positive change and to convince readers to accept or contribute to that change. To accomplish this, the paper describes a problem, analyzes its cause and effects and argues for one solution among several options. The paper defends that solution against objections and proves the solution is both feasible and desirable.

**Classification**

A classification paper divides a group of people, places, things or concepts into sub-groups. The paper then helps readers understand each component, the sub-groups and the topic as a whole.

**Argument**

The argumentative paper gives you an opportunity to take a stand on an issue and to debate those who hold different positions. The paper aims to explain what you believe and why you believe it. It encourages readers to respect and even adopt your position.

**Explain and Analyze**

In the explain and analyze paper, the writer is giving a detailed description of the process or subject and then, by analyzing, offers the steps of how it works or how an effect is achieved. The objective of such analyses is not that the reader goes out and follows the steps presented in the paper, but rather that the reader understands how the process or subject works.

**References**

*Manual for Writers of Term Papers, 6th Ed.*; Kate L. Turabian; 1996  
*Purdue's Online Writing Lab (OWL)* [<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>]