

# Types of Reading Material

## Why should we analyze academic reading strategies?

Our society takes basic literacy skills for granted. Much of our culture relies on the ability to read (and write) and take part in the communication that reading allows.

Imagine for a few moments that this wasn't the case. The following video demonstrates what life is like, when half of adult society is excluded from the ability to read.

[Visit the TED website to view a full transcript of this video. \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

This video references how these women's lives changed, or were in the process of changing, because they gained the ability to read. Take a few moments and reflect on what *you're* able to do now, because you can read. What daily activities of yours rely on this skill?

Now, consider what you would like to be able to do, that your current reading ability doesn't allow for right now. What benefits will stronger reading habits bring you in the next few years?

## Analyzing various types of reading material

When major events happen, we expect to hear conversations about it in many different arenas around us. Take the 2016 U.S. Presidential campaign: discussions spawned from the very interesting candidates ripple through many parts of daily life.

Even when the subject is the same (everyone talking about Donald Trump's presidential bid, as an example), we expect the tone and the purpose of the conversation to shift, depending on who's talking. Conversations with family members might be quite different than those with local community or religious leaders. That's only natural.

The same is true with different written resources: even when the topic is the same, differences in genre result in texts that can have more differences than similarities. **Genre**, or categories of written text that share common features, help us form expectations before we start to read, and shape our reading experience.

Knowing what to expect about the purpose and form of a text you pick up to read, will help you be open to the specific content it contains. As your needs change, you also can change the type of genre you're reading to better suit your purposes. For instance, reference works like encyclopedias help us get a basic understanding of a topic, while news articles will help us understand the topic as it factors in current events.

## What You Will Learn to Do

- analyze various forms of writing, from various sources

- analyze distinguishing characteristics of journalism, literature, nonfiction, and academic texts