

# Types of Academic Papers

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**Reviewed and approved by MBM Pedagogy Committee 12/15/14**

Most academic papers required in MBM fall into one of several categories: exposition (reflection and research based), narration, description, persuasion, precis, critical review, literature review, and original empirical research report. The various types of papers may have subtypes. Regardless of the type of paper, all papers should follow APA (6th ed.) style and format.

**Exposition:** Beginning with the writer's original idea, position, or argument, this is a paper that attempts to inform the reader about something important, explain something to him/her (a process, a set of rules, the benefits of an activity, etc.), or present an argument based on evidence, concepts and logic. Common expository writings: business or technical writing, process writing, compare and/or contrast papers, reaction papers, response papers, and often research-based papers.

Most common types in MBM are reflection paper and research-based paper.

*Reflection paper:* A paper that relies on the writer's anecdotal experiences and personal reflections to convey an idea, an experience, or a concept. Although not dependent on externally derived evidence, such as scholarly literature, this paper still requires clarity, logical organization, and basic rhetorical skills for effective execution.

*Research-based paper:* A paper in which the writer uses library searches and identified and cited literature to support his/her original idea, position, or argument. This paper usually centers around an argument or idea that is developed through the body of the paper, supported by the evidence, and dependent on clear writing, organization, and logic to present an effective position or argument. Do not confuse this type of paper with a literature review (see below). Here is an example of an MBM research-based paper:

<https://tcsedsystem.sharepoint.com/:w/s/mbmadmin/EZYFeG1fKF9EqDKXIrQOcA8BypbGmzUoJ-XX5pCaw6ylMA?e=BSclgo>

**Narration:** Writing that tells the reader about a particular event(s) that took place. Common narration writings: personal essays (such as found in a blog post), practicum logs, case reports.

<http://examples.yourdictionary.com/narrative-essay-examples.html>

<http://grammar.about.com/od/mo/g/narrative2term.htm>

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/685/04/>

<http://grammar.about.com/od/mo/g/narrationterm.htm>

**Description:** Writing that uses vivid language to describe a person, place, or event so that the reader can picture the topic clearly in their mind. Some qualitative research methods call for data collection through such rich descriptions (e.g., phenomenological protocols, narrative re-storying).

<http://grammar.about.com/od/developingparagraphs/a/samdescpars.htm>

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/685/03/>

<http://grammar.about.com/od/d/g/description2ter.htm>

### **Difference between Description and Narration**

<http://classroom.synonym.com/narrative-vs-descriptive-writing-1043.html>

**Persuasion:** Writing that takes a stand on a principle (oftentimes a controversial issue) and attempts to persuade the reader to adopt a similar mindset. The most common persuasive paper is the argument paper which involves incorporating critical thinking and often the use of outside sources for evidence. Please refer to the links below for details on organization:

<http://researchpaperwriting.info/archives/persuasive-research-paper-writing-guide/>

<http://depts.washington.edu/owrc/Handouts/Argumentative%20Paper%20Format.pdf>

**Precis:** A recapitulation of the original work at 25-33% of the original size. It contains no interpretation or critique elements, and is intended not to include the voice of the precis writer. It should be a substitute for the original work, like an executive summary. The purpose is to report the core essence of the work that is clear and concise. When used to summarize a research article, the précis should include the topic or main thesis, the purpose of the research, what was studied, what methods were applied, the findings or results, and a conclusion or discussion.

<http://bid4papers.com/blog/critical-precis/>

<http://gdpi.hitbullseye.com/precise-writing.php>

<http://faculty.mc3.edu/RDGREENW/precis/presentation.html>

**Critical Review:** Usually focused on a writing by someone else, this describes and assesses a theoretical concept, article, or research report in a critical and analytical way. Examples include evaluations of research articles, book reviews, and critiques of published literature reviews and dissertations.

<http://groundedtheoryreview.com/2014/06/22/book-review-remodeling-gt-once-again/>

**Literature Review:** This is a comprehensive report on the existing literature available regarding a topic or question. A literature review describes, summarizes, evaluates and synthesizes scholarly articles, books, research reports, dissertations, conference proceedings and other sources of information relevant a specific question or topic. The writer critically analyzes the method, results, discussion, and/or conclusions of a number of research articles. A good literature review goes beyond simply reporting and summarizing related literature: it evaluates, organizes, and synthesizes what others have researched and written on the topic. Evaluating begins with identifying and reporting crucial elements in individual studies. It is equally important to organize the individual studies into categories or themes found in the literature, noting how strong or lacking the evidence appears. The final quality of synthesis allows the literature review author to repackage what is known

and adding their insights to the collective knowledge. Thus, a good literature review will not only report on studies and collective knowledge, but also compare different perspectives, identify inconsistencies and offer possible explanations, and comment on how knowledge has evolved over time.

Truant, T. L., Porcino, A. J., Ross, B. C., Wong, M. E., & Hilario, C. T. (2013). Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) use in advanced cancer: A systematic review. *Journal of Supportive Oncology*, 11: 105-113, Retrieved from [http://www.oncologypractice.com/fileadmin/content\\_images/jso/PDF/vol11\\_no3\\_CAM\\_in\\_Advanced\\_Cancer.pdf](http://www.oncologypractice.com/fileadmin/content_images/jso/PDF/vol11_no3_CAM_in_Advanced_Cancer.pdf)

**Original Empirical Research Report.** This reports original qualitative, quantitative or mixed method research project in which the student designed the study, conducted the fieldwork and data collection, analyzed the data, and created the report. Examples for graduate course work include the pilot study report, a thesis, and a dissertation. Published original research articles are also empirical research reports. Examples are:

Ulrich, A., Evron, L., & Ostenfled-Rosenthal, A. (2011). Patients' views of CAM as spiritual practice. *Complementary Therapies in Clinical Practice*, 17(4), 221-225. (available from the Saybrook library)

Tang, Y.-Y., Y. Ma, et al. (2007). Short-term meditation training improves attention and self-regulation. *PNAS* 104(43). Retrieved from <http://www.pnas.org/content/104/43/17152.full>

Ulrich A, Evron L, Ostenfled-Rosenthal A. Patients' views of CAM as spiritual practice. *Complement Ther Clin Pract*. 2011;17:221–5. [[PubMed](#)] [[Google Scholar](#)]