

a particular audience and for a particular purpose, texts represent and exemplify genres, and can be seen as more, or less, prototypical examples of their genre.

Defining genre

As Chapter 1 states, research into genre has had a great impact on EAP methodology and materials, particularly since the early 1990s. The EAP practitioner and researcher most closely associated with genre since the 1980s is John Swales, who in his seminal book *Genre Analysis* (1990) defines genre in the following way:

A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the **rationale** for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style. [...] In addition to purpose, exemplars of a genre exhibit various patterns of similarity in terms of structure, style, content and intended audience.

(Swales 1990: 58)

This influential definition of genre emphasizes the interrelatedness of genre, audience, and purpose. A text is not isolated and decontextualized, but connected to and informed by other related texts, its purpose, and the expectations of its audience with regard to the structure, style, and content of the text.

Genre, audience, and purpose

Swales positions 'audience' at the top of a hierarchical representation of considerations for the academic writer (Swales 2004b: 7). He emphasizes the primacy of audience, which writers need to consider even before they write (Swales 2004b: 8). In this representation, the following considerations are interrelated: audience – purpose – organization – style – flow – presentation.

Essentially, texts do not exist in isolation, but are related to other texts which have similarities in aspects including structure, purpose, formality, style, and audience. The audience, or expected readership, of a text approaches the text with definable knowledge and expectations relating to the topic of the text. In short, texts in general are normally written for a particular audience and for a particular purpose. Academic texts tend to be written following accepted conventions such as text structure and style (genre), for a clearly defined reader profile, such as students of sociology (audience) and for a specific purpose, for example to persuade through a convincing argument. These are all closely interrelated and mutually informing.

Academic texts, moreover, tend to be situated in their discipline, and typically have notable characteristics, such as carefully defined given and new knowledge: the writer of the text believes that their audience will be familiar with given information, while new or unfamiliar information needs to be explained, defined, and exemplified. This principle applies to different genres at different levels. For

example, a local newspaper published in a particular town can simply refer to the town (even if it is quite small) without needing to explain what it is or where it is, while a national newspaper would very likely add such information. This difference is explained by the audience's expected existing knowledge.

EAP students need to be familiar with the genre, audience, and purpose of a new text in order to understand how the text fits into its broader context. This information contributes to the student's understanding of important textual information, including the author's stance. Students' awareness of genre, audience, and purpose also informs how they evaluate texts, including assessing the value of a text to use in citation. These ideas are further developed in Chapters 5, 6, and 7.

Primary and secondary sources and non-academic genres

Well-established written academic genres that students are likely to encounter include textbook chapters, journal articles, reports (scientific, research, legal, review), lecture notes, critiques and reviews, summaries, essays, examination texts, case studies, dissertations, and theses. Students are more likely to read than write some of these, such as textbooks. With others, such as essays, students are more likely to write than read them.

Primary and secondary sources

In academic contexts, texts are widely used as sources. This means that the student or academic practitioner locates, reads, and selects material from source texts to use in their own work. Two main types of source text are widely recognized: **primary** and **secondary sources**. Primary sources refer mainly to those texts in which new research is first published and some other types of source; they include the following:

- research articles, i.e. journal articles in which new research is published
- original documents, such as historical documents, law reports, manuscripts and official texts, which represent the recording of knowledge at the time they were written
- works of literature, in the original language or in translation
- case studies
- non-written objects, such as artefacts and textiles.

Primary sources are highly valued as they are the closest (in time, place, and people) to the original events which they describe or express. A student's piece of work which mainly cites primary sources such as those above are likely to be assessed more favourably than one which draws only on secondary sources.

Secondary sources refer to publications which are one step removed from the original event. They include:

- textbooks, i.e. discipline-specific **expository** books which in effect select, synthesize, describe, explain, and discuss material relating to that discipline

- critical works, for example commentaries and reviews on specific work such as works of literature
- journal articles which review existing work rather than presenting new research.

A further category of source text is sometimes recognized: tertiary sources. These are texts in which the content is drawn from secondary sources, so that the material is in effect two or more steps removed from the original event. Examples include online encyclopaedias, such as Wikipedia (where many of the entries are based on information in the public domain, which is therefore likely to be secondary). In terms of reliability, primary sources are considered to be the most reliable, followed by secondary sources. Depending on the context, tertiary sources will probably not be appropriate for students to cite in their academic work, although such sources can be useful for initial information gathering.

Non-academic genres

Non-academic genres include a very wide range of texts. In some academic contexts, journalistic genres such as articles from newspapers and popular magazines can provide useful background information. However, these are not generally considered to be reliable sources in most disciplines. A journalistic text such as a newspaper article may cover the same topic as an academic article and contain some similar information, but is likely to be markedly different in terms of its rhetorical structure, depth of content, rigour, language, and ultimately its reliability as a source. Newspaper articles, for example, do not follow a conventional academic structure, i.e. moving from introduction and background through review of the topic, argument, discussion, and conclusion. In some respects, they represent the opposite, with the conclusion forming the basis of the newspaper headline. Further issues in journalistic texts include selectivity of information, any agendas of the publisher, and the prevalence of unsubstantiated opinion.

In a study tracing the development of a topic (DNA 'fingerprint' discovery) from its original presentation in the scientific journal *Nature*, through the popular science magazine *New Scientist*, to the non-specialist newspaper *The Economist*, Myers (1994) identifies important differences in organization, syntax, and vocabulary. The original scientific article is logically organized by argument, while the popular science magazine emphasizes the applications of the work and the activity of the scientists (*ibid.*). Finally, *The Economist* goes on to foreground the apparent problem of distinguishing between individuals. The research of the original report is presented as a solution to this problem. However, the original research actually reached its findings through 'pure' scientific research, and these results were subsequently seen as a solution to a problem (Myers, 1994). Myers' work underlines the great differences between academic writing, particularly the communication and construction of new knowledge in research articles, and journalistic writing. These differences lie not only in the audiences of the genres, but in the way the content is selected, presented, and communicated.

EAP teachers need to consider carefully the use of non-academic genres in their EAP programmes. There may be good reasons to use them as reading texts, for example with media students or for the purposes of comparing academic and journalistic texts. However, given the aims and constraints of EAP programmes, too much emphasis on such texts is unlikely to be appropriate and is ultimately unhelpful for students.

Student genres

Certain teaching contexts enable EAP teachers to determine which genres their students have to produce (i.e. write and speak) and process (i.e. read and listen to). In-session programmes are probably better suited to this endeavour than pre-session programmes because with in-session programmes students are simultaneously studying in their disciplines while learning EAP. In the context of in-session programmes, EAP teachers can ask the students and liaise with their department(s); also they can access published information, such as that on departmental websites and Learning Management Systems (LMSs). In other contexts such as pre-session and preparatory programmes, however, the students are likely to be less informed about which genres they will have to produce, and they may not yet know exactly what or where they are going to study. Although in theory EAP is a needs-driven endeavour, in practice it can be very difficult, and often infeasible, to build up a complete picture. Therefore some assumptions have to be made. These points are developed further in Chapter 10.

An added difficulty is that similar genres may be given different names in different contexts (e.g. academic departments), while different genres may be given the same name. For instance, a 'report' in the context of natural sciences typically refers to an account of research organized along conventional lines and may be significantly different from a 'report' in law, which might involve secondary rather than **primary research**, be based on cases, and be organized in a different way, and written for a different purpose, such as to challenge and critique previous legal judgments. In the latter context, there is likely to be more subjectivity.

Student written genres are discussed in more detail in Chapter 7, while Chapter 6 looks at genres which students may have to read.

Essential elements in texts

In order to enable students to produce and process the required genres, it is useful to approach texts in terms of their **essential elements**. The use of the term 'elements' reflects the physical world where a manufactured object may comprise a single element—for example copper—or more than one element—for example bronze, made of copper plus tin. Similarly, texts may be comprised partly or wholly of an essential element.

Essential elements are the major components of texts and are informed by the purpose of the text. The term 'essential element' was introduced in the *Oxford EAP*

coursebook series (de Chazal and McCarter 2012). It is intended as a broad term to account for the many different types of material in academic texts (and many other types of text). An argumentative or discursive essay, for instance, is likely to be made up largely of arguments, including the main argument and supporting arguments, plus other essential elements as necessary, such as definitions, citations, and evaluation. Argument is an essential element which occurs in a very wide range of academic genres.

Many of these essential elements have attracted different labels elsewhere, for example 'functions', 'rhetorical functions', and 'academic functions' which can cover certain essential elements like definition, explanation, and cause and effect. Essential elements also include notions (for example expressing movement), cognitive activities (for example stance) and academic practices (for example citation). Essential elements in the analysis here are grounded in texts (written and spoken), and so are encountered by the reader or listener and produced by the writer or speaker. Relations between essential elements and critical thinking are elaborated on in Chapter 5.

The most frequent examples of essential elements are given in Table 3.1. These are presented alphabetically, with two selected examples for each essential element, where appropriate: first, a genre; second, part of a genre.

Table 3.1 illustrates the breadth of essential elements that students are likely to encounter and produce in texts. EAP students need to produce many of these in their writing and speaking, and process them in their reading and listening. Clearly, some are more associated with certain disciplines; for example narrative is associated with case studies in disciplines such as anthropology, linguistics, and psychology. Most, however, occur across the disciplines, and are related to the genre, audience, and purpose. Some essential elements are so closely linked as to form familiar pairings: 'cause-effect'; 'problem-solution'. Others tend to go in cycles. For example, an 'argument' is widely supported by 'evidence' and 'exemplification', which typically takes the form of 'citation', which in turn may need 'explanation', leading to 'evaluation'. In another example, the presentation of a 'problem' may be followed by a discussion on the likely 'causes' of that problem, leading to proposed 'solutions', which are then 'discussed' and 'evaluated'. Cycles like these can form the basis of a paragraph in a text, although they should not be viewed as prescriptive models to replicate uncritically.

Perhaps the most familiar pairings of essential elements in texts are the following:

- Problem-solution: developed and codified by Hoey (1983: 31–106) and influenced by the work of Winter, who used the term 'instrument-achievement relation' (Hoey 1983: 39). Sometimes known as 'Situation-Problem-Solution-Evaluation', or 'SPSE', although this lengthy description and abbreviation seems unnecessary given that all text types are likely to include contextualization (i.e. the situation) and evaluation.

Essential elements	Examples of genres/parts of genres in which these elements can occur
Analysis	Examination essay on an analysis of a specific event or phenomenon Analysis or discussion section of a report
Argument	Argument essay Presentation of an argument in a report
Cause	Journal article speculating on causes of a specific condition
Citation/evidence	Citation presented as support for an argument Part of any academic text to support, define, exemplify, or evaluate an argument
Claim/claim of centrality, occupation of a niche or gap, rationalization/generalization	Outline and justification of the area(s) of focus in the introduction to an essay or report Statement of the writer's argument in a thesis statement
Classification	Classification of different types of entity/phenomena (e.g. species, behaviours) Classification as part of longer text, e.g. thesis
Comparison and contrast	Comparison essay Comparison and contrast of two systems/approaches in a report
Concession limitation	Limitations to findings and their applicability/scope in the conclusion to an essay or report
Connection of phenomena or ideas	Presentation of original or existing connections between phenomena or ideas in an argument
Contextualization/background information relating to time, place, and context	Background information in an introduction to a text
Critique/criticism/review	Review of a published work Literature review as part of a dissertation or thesis
Definition	Definitions in a subject-specific dictionary Discussion and proposal of definitions for the purposes of the text, e.g. dissertation
Description, e.g. of a physical or abstract entity or a natural phenomenon	Description of a site of special interest Description of an organization in a case study
Discussion	Discussion paper Discussion section of a research article
Effect	Examination essay on the effects/ associations of a specific event or medical condition
Evaluation	Exercise/short answer evaluating a proposal Integrated evaluation in a report, essay, or review
Exemplification	Example or series of examples to support an argument in an essay

Explanation/exposition	Essay explaining the characteristics of a specific policy or approach Explanation following a citation in an article
Expression of notional meanings such as movement, relations between entities, obligation, condition, concession, purpose	Description of a space or construction Section of essay expressing concessions to an argument or theory
Expression of functional meanings such as suggesting, advising, denying	Suggestions for solutions to a problem in a presentation
Hypothesis, prediction , speculation	Section of a report speculating on possible causes of a problem
Interpretation, inference	Discussion section of a report
Justification, e.g. of a position	Evidence and supporting arguments for an argument in a discussion
Narrative/narration	Narrative in an ethnographic study Narrative section in a case study
Perspective	Analysis of an issue from various perspectives
Presentation of information, data, statistics, findings	Data-based text Fact-based content in a textbook chapter
Problem	Problem–solution essay Presentation of possible problems arising from a specific approach in a research paper
Process/chronological sequence of events	Process description Description of a process to illustrate a cause–effect chain in an article
Proposal, e.g. of a new idea or theory	Research proposal Proposal of a new theory or approach in an article
Qualification: expression of certainty of the message through emphasis or caution	Part of a conclusion in which the findings are hedged Section of a report emphasizing the importance of a policy
Recommendation	Recommendations section of a report
Recount/report of an experiment, case study, or research	Case study Ethnographic study Account of the research methods in a lab report
Reflection/empathy	Reflective journal Section of a research project to offer reflection on the research and writing process
Solution	Proposal of solution(s) to stated problem(s)
Stance	Statement of the speaker's stance in the introduction to a presentation
Summary	Abstract to a research article Summary of a piece of research or school of thought, reported through a citation

Table 3.1 A taxonomy of essential elements in texts with examples of genres and parts of genres in which they can occur

- Cause-effect: again discussed by Hoey (1983: 41ff), who refers to it as the 'cause-consequence relation'. As noted in the point above, causes and effects are typically evaluated, for example by appraising their significance or seriousness.
- Comparison-contrast: a very well-established text organization pattern, typically driven by a rubric such as 'Compare and contrast X and Y.'

In addition, the discursive, or argumentative, essay is perhaps the longest-established, most widely used, and familiar genre.

The familiarity of these organizational patterns has led to the essential elements themselves becoming shorthand labels for such texts; for example, EAP teachers routinely refer to 'problem-solution' texts and 'cause-and-effect' essays.

In short, essential elements form the bedrock of texts; they inform the organization of a text, and are closely related to the genre and purpose of a text. As Table 3.1 shows, texts can be comprised mainly of one essential element, such as process and case study. Most texts, however, are likely to be made up of multiple essential elements. The students need to be able to understand essential elements in order to gain an understanding of a text. EAP teachers need to use materials that develop their students' familiarity with texts.

Essential elements are further discussed in Chapter 5 in relation to the role of critical thinking.