

Expression

Millersville University Writing Center

Expression

O V E R V I E W

Definition

Generating Expression

- Determine writer's ethos/voice
- Determine tone/pathos
- Determine the style/elocution

Practice

References

Expression

DEFINITION

What is Expression?

Expression is using language to communicate your beliefs and values, represent yourself in your text, and arouse emotions in your readers. **Expression consists of three major parts:**

- **Voice**, or ethos, is how you represent and articulate yourself in your writing.
- **Tone**, or pathos, is your attitude toward your topic and your audience.
- **Style**, or elocution is the effect you have on your audience using language.

Expression

GENERATE

Generating Expression

1. Determine Writer's Ethos/Voice

- **Constructed ethos** is how you portray yourself within your text. This is important because your reader forms opinions about you based on how you present yourself in your writing.
- **Situated ethos** is the relationship your audience has with you prior to reading your text. In other words, this is your reputation, and if your audience is already familiar with you, then they may already have an opinion about you as a writer before reading your text.

Expression

GENERATE

Generating Expression

2. Determine Your Beliefs, Opinions, and Emotions (Tone/Pathos)

- **What is your position on your topic?** Are you for or against it? Neutral?
- **How does the topic make you feel?** Happy? Sad? Angry?
- **How do you feel about your target audience?** Positive? Neutral? Compassionate?
- **What is the best tone to use for your audience and purpose?** Formal? Informal? Passionate?

Expression

GENERATE

Generating Expression

3. Determine the Style/Elocution to Use

Figurative Language

- Rhetorical tropes (e.g., similes, metaphors, irony, personification)
- Figures of speech (e.g., parallelism, antithesis, ellipsis, alliteration)

Sentence Structure

- Sentence complexity ranges from simple to complex
- Sentence length ranges from short to lengthy
- Sentence variety means switching up your sentence structure

Word Choice

- Standard vs. nonstandard (e.g., would have vs. would of)
- Denotative vs. connotative (dictionary definition vs. implied meaning)
- Concrete vs. abstract (e.g., apple vs. love)

Register

- When you know how formal or informal you want to write

Perspective and Viewpoint

- When you determine whether you want to use first, second, or third person in your text

Expression

PRACTICE

Generating Expression

1. Determine Writer's Ethos/Voice

Constructed ethos: How do you want to portray yourself within your text?

Situated ethos: What is the relationship your audience has with you prior to reading your text?

Expression

PRACTICE

Generating Expression

2. Determine Your Beliefs, Opinions, and Emotions (Tone/Pathos)

- **What is your position on your topic?**
- **How does the topic make you feel?**
- **How do you feel about your target audience?**
- **What is the best tone to use for your audience and purpose?**

Expression

PRACTICE

Generating Expression

3. Determine the Style/Elocution

On your worksheet, place a checkmark in the box (or jot down the element on a separate piece of paper) once you feel you have effectively determined or implemented each element of style. Use the notes section to list any ideas you want to remember.

☐ **Figurative Language**

- Rhetorical tropes
- Figures of speech

☐ **Register**

- When you know how formal or informal you want to write

☐ **Sentence Structure**

- Sentence complexity ranges from simple to complex
- Sentence length ranges from short to lengthy
- Sentence variety means switching up your sentence structure

☐ **Word Choice**

- Standard vs. nonstandard
- Denotative vs. connotative
- Concrete vs. abstract

☐ **Perspective and Viewpoint**

- When you determine whether you want to use first, second, or third person in your text

Expression

References

Farkas, Kerrie R. H. The Transportable Writing Tool: A Guide for Writing and Revising. 2nd ed. Kendall Hunt Publishing Company, 2020.