Main characteristics of different writing styles

Personal writing:

- Creates a sense of person/personality for the writer in the reader's mind.
- Establishes a relationship between the writer and the reader.
- Usually employs first and/or second person; subjective; informal, familiar style/register; often includes emotive language.
- Emphasises ideas, opinions, feelings and impressions, rather than factual, objective information.
- Uses the act of writing to help the author understand and unravel his/her own feelings or ideas.
- May, in certain contexts, use contracted language, such as is used in speech.

Imaginative writing:

- Uses the writer's creativity and imagination to entertain the reader.
- Usually creates a strong sense of context (physical surroundings and atmosphere) and   situation.
- Normally includes description (person, place, emotion, atmosphere), so careful selection of language such as adjectives and adverbs (or their equivalents) are important.
- Uses techniques such as variation in sentence length, juxtaposition of different sentence lengths, careful control of structure and sequencing, to add to the overall effect by creating the desired atmosphere or conveying the required emotion.
- May break normal sequencing for added impact, such as in a flashback or in a final disclosure which puts a different interpretation on preceding passages.

Persuasive writing:

- Aims to convince readers about an idea, opinion or a course of action in order to achieve a desired outcome.
- Persuasive techniques chosen are influenced by the nature of the target audience; that is, the language (vocabulary, sentence structures, style/register), structure and sequencing of the piece are framed with the particular audience and purpose in mind.
- Requires choice of the best word, so range of vocabulary and dictionary technique are important.
- Sometimes uses exaggeration, extravagant language, and humour to create a conspiratorial relationship between the writer and the reader.
- Often uses the second person for direct address and appeal.
- Sometimes employs direct speech and questions to intensify the relationship with the audience.
- May use techniques such as the use of technical or scientific language and superlatives or quantitative statements to lend authority to the content.

Informative writing:

- Aims to convey information from the writer to the reader as clearly, comprehensively and accurately as possible.
- Usually uses objective style and impersonal expressions.
- Normally has no particular point of view to convey; if a point of view is involved, the writing becomes either persuasive (aiming to convert the reader to a particular point of view or attitude in order to convince him or her to act or respond in a certain way) or evaluative (aiming to weigh two or more items/ideas in order to convince the reader rationally and objectively that a particular point of view is correct).
- Generally uses facts, examples, explanations, analogies and sometimes statistical information, quotations and references as evidence.
- Chooses language, structure and sequence to make the message clear and unambiguous, so the sequencing of information is usually logical and predictable.
- Probably uses few adjectives, adverbs and images, except as examples or analogies in explanation.

Evaluative writing:

- Aims to reach a conclusion through the logical presentation and discussion of facts and ideas.
- Presents two or more important aspects of an issue or sides of an argument and discusses these rationally and objectively; using evidence to support the contrasting sides or alternatives.
- Uses objective style; appeals to reason not emotion; creation of an impression of balance and impartiality is essential.
- Often includes expressions of cause, consequence, opposition and concession.