In class you often must analyse texts. The first step of the analysis is to identify the text type you are dealing with.

Texts can be classified into two main categories:

Fictional texts	Non-fictional texts
– The text describes a world that was created in the mind of its author. – Its setting, characters and events may or may not seem realistic.	– The text talks about the real world. – It was written to convey information, convince the reader or criticize something.

The 5 basic types of non-fictional texts

	Type	Explanation
1.	Descriptive texts	the author wants to inform in a relatively balanced and neutral way (e.g. description of a landscape, a place, a person, an object...)
2.	Narrative texts (e.g. travel report, report on the development of a situation...)	the author wants to inform the reader about a development or a sequence of events: the report (objectively or subjectively) gives answers to the questions who? what? where? when? why? and how? and often presents further details. Reports are often made livelier by fictional elements, e.g. a detailed description of people or the way people are affected by an event, etc.
3.	Expository texts (e.g. explanatory notes, scientific reports, factual texts, descriptions of historical events...)	complicated and difficult facts are presented and explained in a matter-of-fact-way, the structure/pattern of such texts is called **topical order** (= a sequence of points follows a statement of the topic at the beginning of the text)
4.	Argumentative texts (editorial, column, letter to the editor, review, speech, comment, etc)	the author tries to influence the reader directly; this text type tends to be more critical and appellative, using persuasive arguments (e.g. commentary, criticism, review, essay, sermon, pamphlet, political speech...); these texts usually deal with controversial topics; reasons are given for and/or against the matter and are arranger a well-planned order
5.	Instructive texts (instruction, manual etc.)	are intended to instruct the readers, tell them what to do or how to do it. They use imperatives and passive constructions.

(Possible) forms of argumentative texts

structure	type 1 [opinion]	type 2 [comment]	type 3 [discuss]
introduction	Presenting a topic and giving opinions on the problem	Presenting a topic and giving opinions on the problem	Presenting a topic and giving opinions on the problem
	⇩	⇩	⇩
main part	supporting facts	counter-arguments and refutation to stress the author's position	argument 1 →counter-argument argument 2→ counter-argument argument 3 → counter-argument [mainly used in disputes and debates]
	⇩	⇩	⇩
conclusion	conclusion	conclusion	conclusion

A non-fictional text that puts forth a personal view has a unity of thought, and usually follows a clear structure (line of thought)

Here are some of the most common compositional patterns for structuring texts:

	Type	Explanation
1.	listing structure	**method**: numerating, numbering of facts, ideas, arguments **effect**: clarity and coherence through parallel arrangement
2.	progressive structure	**method:** using a clearly-defined starting point; developing on a cause-to-effect or problem-solution arrangement **effect:** clarity through unity and logical coherence
3.	antithetical structure	**method:** contrasting and juxtaposing of facts, ideas and arguments **effect**: clarity and emphasis through comparison and contrast

Knowing what type of non-fictional text you are dealing with and what characteristic features this **text type** has will help you to anticipate what kind of information might be given and how it might be presented.

When you listen to or read texts, you will normally notice that they have some kind of effect on you – you might strongly agree or disagree or you might feel amused, entertained, informed or perhaps irritated. This effect is created through the way the text is written, and especially by the **stylistic devices** used. So, when analysing texts, you should try to find out how certain effects are created. Stylistic devices may relate to sound (e.g. alliteration), structure (e.g. repetition, parallelism) or meaning (e.g. imagery).

Step 1: Text type

1. **Skim the text and try to get a general idea of its content:**
   1.1. Sum up in one or two sentences what the text is about.
   1.2. If possible, find out when and where it was published (newspaper, book, journal, internet)
2. **Examine the text more closely. Look at:**
   2.1. its content and purpose: Is the text meant to inform, persuade, entertain, …?
   2.2. its style and tone: Is the language formal or informal, simple or complex?
3. **Identify the text type.**

Step 2: Stylistic devices

1. When reading the text pay attention to the effects that certain passages have on you.
2. Study the passages in question to find the stylistic devices that create these effects. In the table below there are some examples.
3. Consider why these effects may have been intended in this context.

> **Tip**
> If you cannot pinpoint any specific effects while listening or reading, you can try it the other way round: Study the text for the most common stylistic devices (cf. the table below) and see if you can find a reason why the author may have used them.

Example	Effect	Function
'I fear the day technology will surpass our human interaction. The world will have a generation of idiots.' (Anonymous)	– reader may be taken aback by this provocative statement – the reader's interest will be aroused	exaggeration (to stress a point)

Step 3: Write your analysis

Use **three-step-method** for your analysis:

Step 1: Spot/name the passage / quote	Step 2: Use the correct technical term	Step 3: Explain the function
Obama starts off by…	…**alluding** to the **independence** gained by the former colonies,…	… a step which included **self-determination.**

> **Language help**
>
> | The author | uses
employs
makes use of | a metaphor
a simile
enumeration
irony
personification | to illustrate …
to show …
to emphasize …
to underline …
to draw the reader's attention to … |