Objective

Students will distinguish the four writing genres.

Preparation

1. Plan for four sheets of chart paper with the titles, *Opinion/Argument: What Are my Features?*, *Informative/Explanatory: What Are my Features?*, *Narrative Nonfiction: What Are my Features?*, and *Narrative Fiction: What Are my Features?*

2. Select four books, one for each genre, such as

   - opinion/argument: *Kids' Letters to Harry Potter from Around the World* (Adler 2002)
   - informative/explanatory: *Sea Clocks: The Story of Longitude* (Borden 2004)
   - narrative nonfiction: *The Streak: How Joe DiMaggio Became America's Hero* (Rosenstock 2014)
   - narrative fiction: *Toads and Tessellations* (Morrisette 2012)

Have enough books for small groups to have one book for each genre per lesson described below. **Note:** Picture books are a perfect format as students can read them in a short amount of time and still complete the activity.

Procedure

1. Ask each group to read aloud the opinion/argument book on Day 1. One student can be the reader, or students can take turns reading.

2. Ask students to discuss what they notice about the book and the attributes of the genre (*an opinion*, *reasons for the opinion that are chosen with the audience in mind*, and *a conclusion*). Create a list of these attributes as a whole class on the opinion/argument sheet of paper. Ask students if they have written an opinion piece. If so, ask them to share.

Extend the lesson into independent work time by having students write their own opinion/argument pieces.

3. Ask each group to read aloud the informative/explanatory book on Day 2.

4. Ask students to discuss what they notice about the book and the attributes of the genre (*a topic sentence answers who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, and *why*, and *contains facts*). Create a list of these attributes as a whole class on the informative/explanatory sheet of paper.

Ask students if they have written an informational piece. If so, ask them to share. Extend the lesson into independent work time by having students write their own informative/explanatory pieces.

5. Ask each group to read aloud the narrative nonfiction book on Day 3.

6. Ask students to discuss what they notice about the book and the attributes of the genre (*includes informative/ explanatory elements* and *story elements found in narrative fiction*). Create a list of these attributes as a whole class on the narrative nonfiction sheet of paper. Ask students if they have written such a piece. If so, ask them to share. Extend the lesson into independent work time by having students write their own narrative nonfiction pieces.

7. Ask each group to read the narrative fiction book aloud on Day 4.

8. Ask students to discuss what they notice about the book and the attributes of the genre (*beginning/middle/ end*, *sequence of events*, and *a setting and characters*). Create a list of these attributes as a whole class on the narrative fiction sheet of paper. Ask students if they have written such a narrative. If so, ask them to share.

Extend the lesson into independent work time by having students write their own narrative fiction pieces.

Differentiation: For **below-level students**, turn the chart made together into a checklist they can use to guide their writing.

✔ **Assessment Check:** Note who needs additional assistance with the genres. Additional guided practice may be needed.

In narratives, authors often choose character names that have specific meanings. For example, in Charlotte's Web, *E.B. White (1952) named the family Arable, which means capable of producing crops suitable for farming. The Arable family are farmers. J.K. Rowling used Greek and Latin to help name her characters in* Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone *(1998). Harry means ruler of the house, Hermione means well born, Ronald means king's advisor, and Albus means white. Bring in a baby name book and discuss how students can use the meaning of a name to match their characters, such as Andrew, which means brave.*

3–5 Strategies

Writing