

ACADEMIC SKILLS REVIEW

Session I

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Introduction



- What kind of texts have you been writing during your past studies?
- What kind of obstacles have you been facing?

Structure of the lecture

- Academic genres
 - essay
 - review
 - position paper
 - policy paper
 - fact sheet

Subjectivity in social sciences

- Subjectivity – good or bad?
- Is subjectivity inevitable?
- When is subjectivity suitable? When it is not?

Normativity in social sciences

- Normativity - good or bad?
- When is normativity suitable? When it is not?

Division of genres in social sciences

□ **Normative & subjective**

- SWOT + recommendations
- Policy paper
- (Position paper – if recommendations are included)

□ **Non-normative**

a) Subjective

- Review
- Essay
- Position paper

b) Objective

- Factsheet
- Literature review

Important note: Some genres are ambiguous and cannot be subsumed under a single category (thesis, poster, research paper, position paper)

Essay

- „Development of a line of argument strongly supported by reference to a literature“
 - similar to a position paper (which is more normative) and (partly also) to literature review
- Usually shorter articles -> often need for arbitrary reduction of a broader topic
- **Subjective & usually non-normative**
- Essay is based on author's opinion
- **A plain literature/opinion review is NOT an essay!**
- Should include literature/opinion review
- Should be rather brief

Essay – typical structure

□ Introduction

- context
- important terms, concepts, opinion/literature review
- author's opinion/position/confrontation with other opinions (use references/provide evidence when building an argument)

□ Conclusion

- the most interesting/significant findings
- implications of findings
- should NOT include anything new (that has not been stated in the text) – **applies for conclusions in general!**

Essay

- Try to come up with an essay topic...
- Explain why it deserves readers' attention

Review

Assessing a text from a subjective point of view

Subjective & non-normative

- 1) Identification and introduction
 - presumed main aspects of the text
 - 2) Summary of a content
 - may be incorporated with the following point
 - 3) Author's opinion
 - critical analysis of the book and its main features/aspects
 - 4) Conclusion
 - addressing initial expectations
- If done 'ex post', recommendations are not required

Review

- **Special case of review: academic peer review**
- Emphasis on features of the text
- May include normative judgements and recommendations
- The reviewer is tasked to clearly state whether the writing is suitable for publication

Policy paper

Normative & subjective

- To suggest implementation of a certain approach
- To provide an alternative to a certain policy
- To supplement the targeted audience with enough data to make a decision
- To make a clear statement of how to change stg.
- Has to deal with **current** topics/policies
 - assessment of past policies/issues is NOT a policy paper

Policy paper

- 1) Overview of current situation/policies
- 2) Purpose statement (reasons for change)
- 3) Suggested options
- 4) Evaluation of suggested options (+/-)
- 5) Recommendation of a particular solution + reasoning
- 6) **Implementation plan**
- 7) Conclusion

Policy paper

- Try to come up with a topic for policy paper
- Purpose?
- Desired outcome?
- Targeted institution/audience?

Position paper

- **Subjective and usually non-normative**
- To outline your viewpoint on an issue
- Formally inform others of **your position**
- (To present a unique solution or view on a specific issue)
- To demonstrate your awareness of the issue to boast about your knowledge 😊 (used in courses)

Position paper

- 1) Introduction, review of the situation
 - 2) Presentation of your position
 - 3) Development your arguments
 - 4) Conclusion (recommendation)
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- Usually shorter in length (approx. 2 pages)
 - Includes literature/opinion review
 - Proves familiarity with the topic
 - Addresses existing literature/opinions critically

Fact Sheet

Non-normative & objective

- Presenting data in brief form using tables, bullet points, graphs, etc.
- Quite often one page in length
- Must be self-contained and easy to digest

Goal

- To present information & data
- To familiarize targeted audience with facts

Household Energy Use in Arizona

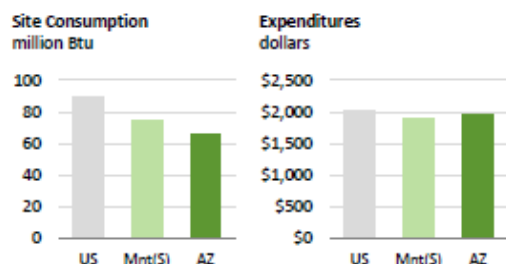
A closer look at residential energy consumption

All data from EIA's 2009 Residential Energy Consumption Survey
www.eia.gov/consumption/residential/

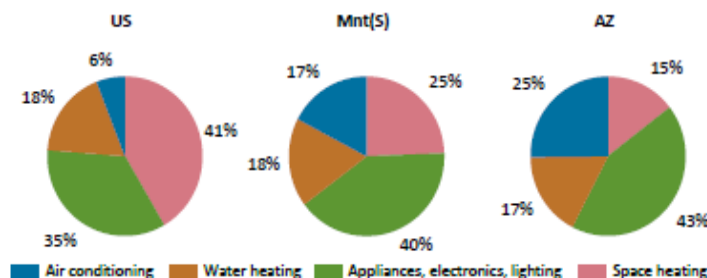
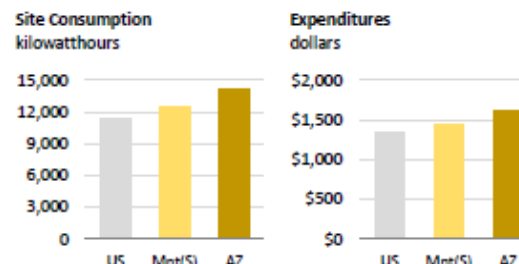
- Arizona households use 66 million Btu of energy per home, 26% less than the U.S. average.
- The combination of lower than average site consumption of all energy, but above average electricity which is relatively expensive, results in Arizona households spending 3% less for energy than the U.S. average.
- More reliance on air conditioning keeps average site electricity consumption in the state high relative to other parts of the U.S.



ALL ENERGY average per household (excl. transportation)



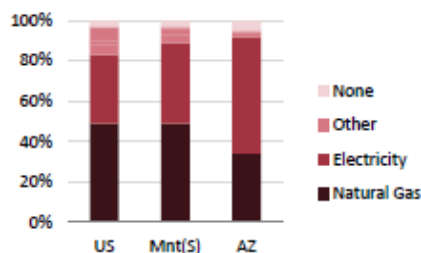
ELECTRICITY ONLY average per household



CONSUMPTION BY END USE

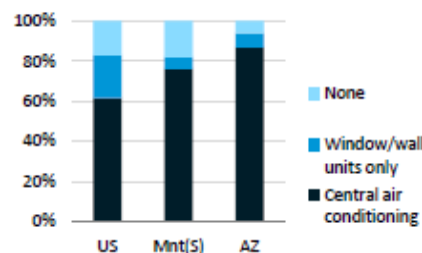
A quarter of the energy consumed in Arizona homes is for air conditioning, which is more than four times the national average. In Arizona homes, space heating accounts for just 15% of total energy use.

MAIN HEATING FUEL USED



Compared to the U.S. average, a greater share of Arizona residents (58%) use electricity for heating.

COOLING EQUIPMENT USED



More than 90% of Arizona households use air conditioning, and 86% of homes have central air conditioning for cooling.



Thank you for attention



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