Chapter 2

Report

**🖎 Description**

This chapter discusses the social function, the generic structure, and the linguistic features of a report text.

**🖎 Basic** **Competence**

You will be able to evaluate the genre of a text through its structure and features.

**🖎 Objectives**

After finishing this chapter, you will be able to analyze a report text.

**🖎 Indicators**

After finishing this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Analyze the social function of a report text
2. Analyze the generic structure of a report text
3. Analyze the language features of a report text

2.1 What Is Report?

Report is a genre which intends to classify and describe the natural, cultural and technological phenomena of our world (e.g. Computers) in contrast to a description which focuses on one specific thing (e.g. My Computer).

Information reports are essentially descriptions that classify and describe things in general and specific terms. They are particularly important in subject such as Science and Geography, which classify and describe the physical world and subjects such as Creative Arts and History.

Report texts are largely based around fact, not opinion. They help readers understand the item being described by categorizing information, for example under appearance, climate. They usually have a logical structure rather than being in a sequence. Reports are used to create precise and detailed information ‘pictures’. Most reports aim to be objective.

2.1.1 Social Function

Reports are written to describe or classify the way things are or seem to be.

2.1.2 Generic Structure

The generic structure of a report text usually consists of the following elements:

* General statement or classification:

This section of the text can do several things. It can classify the thing being described, locate it in time and space and/or preview the rest of the description to follow:

* Description:

This section of the text sets out the description in the report. Typically, it will consist of paragraphs each of which deal with a different aspect of the description.

Each paragraph usually contains a sentence which previews the information in the rest of the paragraph. This sentence can be called a topic sentence or paragraph preview. Sometimes there is a sentence which has a function of previewing a section of text which may include a number of paragraphs. The sentence which previews a section of text is known as a section preview.

The following is an example of a description text structure.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Title** | **Computers** |
| **General classification statement –**  **Introduces the topic of the report which may include a technical definition and indicate a particular aspect of the topic.** | Computers are machines which allow people to electronically work with and save complex information very efficiently. They are also becoming part of our social lives. |
| **Description**  ***Series of fact***  ***use of sub-headings***  ***use of diagrams, illustration figures and tables***  **Clipboard** | The basic computer system has two parts, the hardware including parts such as a monitor, keyboard, printer, scanner and mouse or touch pad, and the software which includes the Operating System (OS).  Hardware is the physical part of computers which means it can be seen and touched. It includes the Central Processing Unit (CPU), which does the actual work of computers, the circuit board or motherboard, and built in disk drives.  Information is entered into computers from a keyboard or from storage devices like USBs, DVDs or MP3 players. The monitor screen shows the information which has been put into the computer. The mouse or touch pad is used for navigation of the screen.  Software is the information that computers use to manage (e.g. open, run create, save, convert) other information. This information is referred to as a program or application and is stored on a disk which is a Storage device. The Disk drive is the mechanism that runs the disk. The Random Access Memory or RAM is where computers store the information which is currently being used. The operating system most commonly used on personal computers is “Windows” which is produced by Microsoft. |
| **Conclusion – reports do not always have a conclusion but can be rounded off by some**  **general statement about the topic.** | Business people regularly use computers to perform their work. Through the use of computers, they create professional looking documents that can be quickly shared with their peers and clients.  Students and people in the community use computers to learn and through the internet service providers, programs and platforms they create digital communities for social networking. |

2.1.3 Language Features

The following list is the common language features of a report text:

* The language of information reports often reflects the technicality of the subject being discussed, e.g. in meteorology, terms such as ‘average rainfall’ or ‘cold front’ would be the technical terms used rather the ‘how much it rains’ or ‘the bit where it gets cold’.
* They are often written in the present tense, giving the idea of timeless truth, e.g. ‘drought occur’ rather the ‘there was a drought last year’.
* Terms are generalized, that is, they refer to general things, e.g. ‘droughts’ rather than ‘that drought last year’ and evaluate, e.g. ‘layer of wood’ rather than ‘layer of beautiful wood’.
* Use of linking verbs and having verbs

Study the language features of the following report text.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Title** | **Computers** |
| **Technical vocabulary**  Simple present tense  *Linking verbs*  *Having verbs*  GENERALIZED PARTICIPANT | COMPUTERS are machines which allow people to electronically work with and save complex information very efficiently. They are also becoming part of our social lives. |
| The basic computer system *has* two parts, the **hardware** including parts such as a monitor, keyboard, printer, scanner and mouse or touch pad, and the **software** which includes the **Operating System** (OS).  Hardware *is* the physical part of computers which means it can be seen and touched. It includes the Central Processing Unit (CPU), which does the actual work of computers, the **circuit board** or **motherboard**, and built in **disk drives**.  Information is entered into computers from a keyboard or from storage devices like USBs, DVDs or MP3 players. The monitor screen shows the information which has been put into the computer. The mouse or touch pad is used for navigation of the screen.  Software *is* the information that computers use to manage (e.g. open, run, create, save, convert) other information. This information is referred to as a program or application and is stored on a disk which is a storage device. The **disk drive** *is* the mechanism that runs the disk. The **Random Access Memory or RAM** *is* where computers store the information which is currently being used. The operating system most commonly used on personal computers *is* “Windows” which is produced by Microsoft. |
| Business people regularly use computers to perform their work. Through the use of computers, they create professional looking documents that can be quickly shared with their peers and clients.  Students and people in the community use computers to learn and through the internet service providers, programs and platforms they create digital communities for social networking. |

2.2 Exercise

1. Read and study the text below. Then, answer the following questions.

1. What is the social function of the text?
2. Which part of paragraph belongs to general classification?
3. Which part of paragraph belongs to description?
4. Find the technical words dealing with the topic of the text.
5. What participant is involved?
6. What types of verbs can you find? Give examples.
7. What kind of tense is mostly used? Give examples.

**Rainforests of Australia**

Rainforests are the most diverse ecosystem found in Australia but cover less than 1% of the total area of the continent.

Rainforests extend from near the tip of Cape York in the north to Tasmania in the south. There are three types of rainforest along the east coast of Australia: tropical, subtropical, and temperate.

Rainforests get about 2 meters of rainfall a year. Tropical rainforests receive rain all year round but temperate rainforests have a wet and dry season. Temperatures are very mild in a rainforest, ranging between 24-27°C.

Rainforests are divided into three layers starting with emergents at the top, then the canopy, the understorey beneath the canopy and finally the forest floor. Without the shelter the canopy provides, the rainforest cannot survive.

Each layer supports a diverse range of plants and animals. Forty per cent of Australia’s plants exist in tropical rainforests. Animal species living in Australian rainforests include marsupial mammals, birds, bats, frogs, reptiles, spiders and a wide variety of insects.

In the 1700s, Australian rainforests covered over 1% of the continent but due to continued logging and land-clearing only tiny fragments of rainforest remain along the east coast today.

2. Read and study the following text. Then, analyze it in terms of its genre.

Domestic dogs and wolves are part of a large taxonomic family called Canidae, which also includes coyotes, foxes and jackals, according to the Integrated Taxonomic Information System (ITIS). Members of this family are called canids. Domestic dogs are a subspecies called Canis lupus familiaris.

**Size**

The Canidae family includes 14 genera and 34 species, according to the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology. With such variety, it is easy to see why there are so many different sizes of dogs. According to the University of Edinburgh, the smallest canid is the Fennec fox. It is only 9.4 inches (24 centimeters) high and weighs only 2.2 lbs. (1 kilogram). The largest canid is the gray wolf, at 6.5 feet (200 cm) high and 3 to 5 feet (1 to 1.5 meters) long. Their tails add an additional 1 to 2 feet. Females typically weigh 60 to 100 lbs., and males weigh 70 to 145 lbs., according to the National Wildlife Federation.

**Habitat**

Canids are found all over the world. Coyotes roam North America's forests and mountains. Red foxes live in grasslands, forests, mountains and deserts in the Northern Hemisphere, according to National Geographic. Jackals are found in the savannas, deserts, and arid grasslands of Africa. Wolves live on every continent in the Northern Hemisphere.

2.3 Summary

Information reports describe or classify the way things are or seem to be. The generic structure consists of general classification and description. A description text uses linking verbs and having verbs, technical vocabulary, is written in present tense, and focuses on general participants.