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### Chapter 3: Thinking Strategies and Writing Patterns

#### A Word about Style, Voice, and Tone

Style, voice, and tone in writing express the attitude of a writer at that moment and in relation to a particular subject and audience. Students often confuse writing style with some vague sense of personal style, or personality. But **style** is a technical term for the effect a writer can create through attitude, language, and the mechanics of writing. If the writing reflects a consistent choice of patterns, then it is perceived as coherent and harmonious, the style supporting the content. The writer's purpose and style clearly have a cause-and-effect relationship. Because style is distinct for each discipline, you should discuss with your teacher what is appropriate for your writing assignments.

Voice and tone reflect your attitude about your subject and your readers. **Voice** is **who** the readers hear talking in your paper, and **tone** is the way in which you are doing the writing. Voice can be institutional or academic—that is, objective and formal. Or voice can be personal—in fact, your distinct voice. You will need to decide whether you want your tone to be informative or affective. Do you want to inform your readers or to persuade them in some way? Your style and attitude toward your subject combine to create your voice and tone.

Your goal in college writing is to understand the material of your discipline and be able to discuss it effectively in writing. Your teachers want facts as well as opinions, and they want to be able to assess, through your writing, how well you synthesize your thinking and learning in the course. Your goal in most academic writing is to convey facts about a subject, integrate opinions based on facts, and synthesize what you have learned as you go along. You will discover, however, that some academic writing is persuasive and that your teachers will expect you to know the language of persuasion as well.

This discussion does not give you enough information for you to control voice, tone, style, and persuasion. It is intended to remind you that these are important considerations and should not be overlooked.