About the Genre: A FAQ for a Website

What is it?
FAQ stands for Frequently Asked Questions. FAQs most often use expository writing, which is writing that is factual, clear, and precise. FAQs are usually a part of a website that gives users helpful information they cannot find anywhere else on the website. It is written in the form of questions and answers. The questions may be organized under headings that give the main idea, such as “product information” or “returns.” This makes it easy for the user to find the information he or she needs. Each question focuses on one specific piece of information such as: How long will it take to get my purchases? Not every website has a FAQ. FAQs are also sometimes found on brochures or other short informational booklets.

What is the purpose?
The purpose of a FAQ is to provide the users of a website with clear and helpful information. The questions are usually questions that people really do ask often or frequently.

What is the structure?
FAQs are a list of questions, with an answer for each question. The questions are short and clearly written. The answers should also be clear and short. The words it uses should be simple. However, answers should also use precise words and specialized vocabulary when necessary. To help users, the answers often include examples. Instead of just telling the user how to do something, the FAQ can give an example and show what to do. An FAQ may also have links for more information on other websites that could be helpful to the reader.

Comprehension Questions
1. How is a FAQ structured?
   a. like a research paper
   b. in a paragraph with a main idea and many supporting details
   c. with questions and answers
2. FAQs might answer questions about which of the following topics? **Choose three.**
   a. product information
   b. customer reviews
   c. returns
   d. the amount of time to ship the product
3. The purpose of a FAQ is **NOT** which of the following?
   a. to answer customers’ most frequently asked questions
   b. to give customers clear and easy-to-understand answers
   c. to provide special offers to customers

© Oxford University Press 2014