

Genre-Based Research: Rhetorical Situation and Genre Conventions

An Essay Progression

ESSAY PROMPT

Write an essay that analyzes the rhetorical situation and genre conventions of 2-3 texts of your choice. The following options are flexible by design. I encourage you to write about topics and questions that you care about, and about genres that are new to you!

- OPTION 1. Analyze 2-3 texts from the same genre, each of which is about a different topic. For example, credible online scientific articles—one about muon particles and one about hiccups.
- OPTION 2. Analyze 2-3 texts from different genres, each of which is about the same topic. For example, a ten-minute podcast and a three-page news report—both about gender identity.

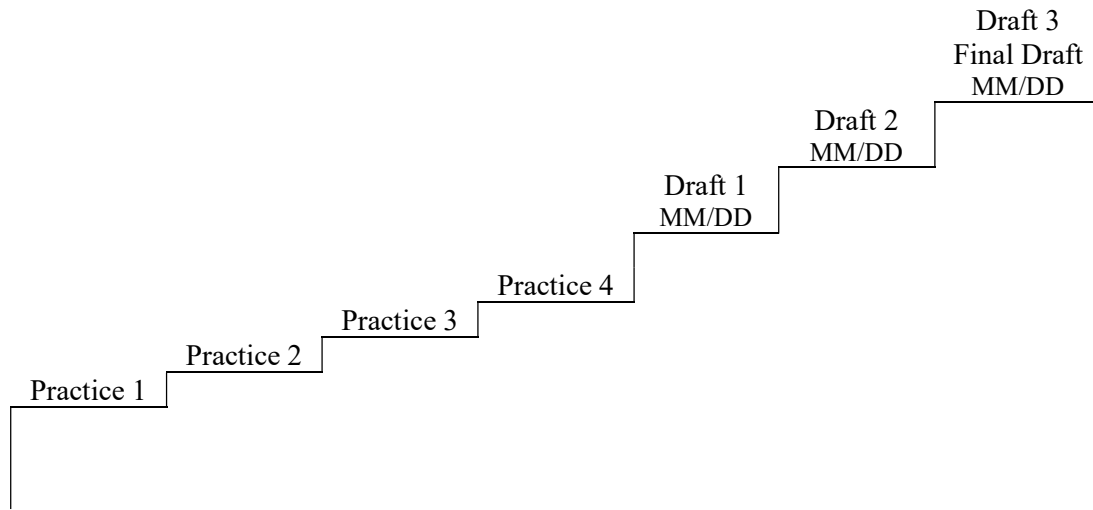
In the next few weeks, we will empower ourselves to write such an essay.

- We will build a common language for describing various genres, or “kinds of texts,” in extraordinary detail. In particular, we will practice identifying the *rhetorical situation* and *genre conventions* of various texts as defined by the *Bedford Book of Genres*. Here, I use the term *text* very broadly to include anything published with a purpose and for an audience. Texts may even include a combination of writing, visuals, sound, and other ways of communicating.
- You will do independent research to find, choose, and analyze several texts for your essay. You are free to choose any genre(s). To name just a few genres you can explore: a magazine article, a news article, an infographic, a set of memes, a series of announcements, a brochure, a movie review, a poster, a podcast, a recorded performance, a song, a music video, a photo essay, an academic article, an illustration, a comic, a short story, a television commercial, a news broadcast, a picture book, and beyond. Each of these may even include more specific genres—for example, a scientific paper, in contradistinction to a physics lab report, a history dissertation, a literary analysis, or a peer-reviewed fashion-studies journal article.

Write for someone who knows little to nothing about the texts you found during your research process. Your readers will be unfamiliar with the concepts of *genre*, *rhetorical situation*, and *genre conventions*. Include a brief introduction, a specific global statement that directly addresses the prompt, body paragraphs in APEC structure, a brief conclusion, and a title. In order to give your reader detailed evidence for your assertions, you will need to quote and vividly describe each text you choose. You can also quote and cite other textual evidence as needed. Include a word count at the end of each Draft. For Draft 1, submit 1000-1500 words (approximately 4-6 pages before Works Cited), which you will revise for Draft 2 and Draft 3. Overall, your final draft will be graded on specificity of detail, relevance to the prompt, organization, and sentence structure. Write in any varieties of English that you are familiar with.

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OVERVIEW

You will analyze the rhetorical situation and genre conventions of several texts, through a progression of practice assignments and drafts, leading to a final essay draft of 1000-1500 words (approximately 4-6 pages before Works Cited) in any varieties of English that you choose.

WHAT'S THE POINT OF A PRACTICE ASSIGNMENT?

Each Practice is a take-home writing assignment that builds toward and can be used to construct Draft 1. For example, Practice 1 asks you to write a few sentences that closely read a specific text, while Practice 4 asks you to expand your previous assignments into a few paragraphs. In this way, the Practice assignments are neither whole drafts nor isolated assignments. They begin a guided path through the writing process. Instead of simply telling you to submit an essay one month from now, I've broken down the writing process into smaller actionable steps so that you can exchange feedback with me and with your peers along the way.

WHAT'S THE POINT OF A DRAFT?

Each Draft is a writing assignment in which you make a full attempt at the essay. However, a single attempt will rarely be enough to create a strong piece of writing. The writing process, put simply, is an ongoing cycle of three modes: Generating New Writing, Revising, and Editing. Especially in the first two modes, you practice strategies for creativity, critical thinking, reading, writing, and discussing. A single Draft would provide you with a platform to engage intensely with these strategies. But each subsequent Draft offers you space to get some strategic distance from what you've written, workshop your draft with real readers, approach your ideas and writing with a fresh perspective, and then make major changes. From one Draft to the next, your goal is to continue generating new writing and to revise at least one-third of what you had written. In this sense, revision is *re-envisioning* what you had first submitted. As you approach the final Draft, you can then dramatically shift your focus from generating new writing and revising to editing.

To help you jumpstart revision and editing, I provide feedback as outlined below, I reserve office hours to discuss with you individually and in small groups, and I coordinate peer reviews for you to exchange feedback with peers, who themselves are in the middle of the writing process.

HOW TO SUBMIT ASSIGNMENTS

- Type ~~and print~~ all assignments in Times New Roman, 12pt black font, 2.0 spaced with 1” margins on 8.5”x11” white paper, ~~double sided if possible, stapled~~. Prepare in-line citations and Works Cited in MLA format for each assignment. Include your name and the assignment title.
- Consult the Course Schedule for related readings and due dates. ~~Submit all writing assignments by the beginning of class in person or in my mailbox~~. For each day (rounded up) that an assignment is late, the grade will be reduced by 20% of the maximum possible grade. Computer, printer, or file errors will not excuse lateness; back up, store, or synchronize your files with free cloud programs like Google Drive, Dropbox, Microsoft OneDrive, Box, or Amazon Drive.
- ~~If you are absent, you are responsible for (i) emailing relevant assignments by the start of class and (ii) submitting printed copies by the next class in person or in my mailbox. Otherwise, the assignment is late. To catch up on what you missed in class, (iii) consult the Course Schedule and visit me during office hours.~~

FEEDBACK

- PRACTICE 1 – DRAFT 2. I will grade your work based on completion, according to Rubric A.

RUBRIC A

Work	Complete the task and practice specific writing strategies as defined by the prompt and syllabus		
Grade	0	√-	√, √+
Credit	0	50%	100%
Feedback	Suggestions for next steps, questions, or resources as needed		

- DRAFT 1. You will use a guided worksheet to do a peer review, during which you will focus on generating new writing and brainstorming major revisions.
- DRAFT 2. Similarly, you will use a guided worksheet to do a peer review. However, for this peer review, you will focus on minor revisions, editing, and final polishing.
- DRAFT 3 (FINAL DRAFT). I will grade your essay according to Rubric C (attached). I will grade your multimodal text within that same rubric, under Task Fulfillment, based on completion and overall effort. If I do not receive Draft 3 within the lateness window, I will treat Draft 1 or Draft 2, if submitted, as Draft 3.
- MINI PORTFOLIO (OPTIONAL). For extra credit, you can submit a “mini-portfolio” by email. For our class, the mini-portfolio is a single Word, PDF, or similar file that contains all assignments that you did for the essay progression. Label and put the assignments in order, including the final draft. I will grade your progress based on completion, according to Rubric A.

DRAFT 4 (OPTIONAL). Near the end of the semester, you may submit Draft 4 for one essay progression of your choice. You must attach any feedback that you had received on Draft 3, and you must attach a three-paragraph reflection that guides me through how you revised and edited the paper. Between Draft 3 and Draft 4, lateness and length penalties will carry over, and the higher grade will entirely replace the lower grade. Requirements for Draft 4 will be finalized and announced later in the semester.

Genre Experiment: Translating from One Genre to Another

An Essay Progression

ESSAY PROMPT: BIGGER PICTURE

First, using the reading and writing that you have already done this semester, create a new text with a specific goal, audience, and genre of your choice. The genre should be different from the genres that you recently analyzed in your genre-based research essay. The following options are flexible by design, and I encourage you to write about topics that you care about and in genres that are new to you! You may change your overall project at any time before Draft 1.

- OPTION 1. Choose 1+ texts that you had analyzed in your genre-based research essay. Revise and reorganize the text into a completely different genre for a specific audience. For example, you could “translate” a scientific article into a three-minute recorded song, or three journalistic photo essays into a poem, or a movie review into a detailed photo essay.
- OPTION 2. Choose the Literacy Narrative progression or the Genre-Based Research progression. Revise and reorganize your final draft into a completely different genre for a specific audience. For example, you could communicate information from your literacy narrative into a Wikipedia-style article, or you could “translate” Draft 3 of your research essay into a five-minute vlog.

Second, write an essay that analyzes the rhetorical situation and genre conventions of your new text.

ESSAY PROMPT: GUIDANCE & COOL TIPS FROM PROFESSOR JOSH

In the next few weeks, we will empower ourselves to create and analyze our own new texts. The following overview will refer to (A) previous reading and writing, (B) mentor texts that help you create a new text, (C) your new text, (D) and your essay that analyzes your new text. Wow!

A. Previous Reading and Writing.

- We will apply our common language for analyzing rhetorical situation and genre conventions, as defined by the *Bedford Book of Genres*.
- So far, we have challenged ourselves to *read* in new genres, but now we will challenge ourselves to *compose* in new genres—starting with the content from our previous research assignments.

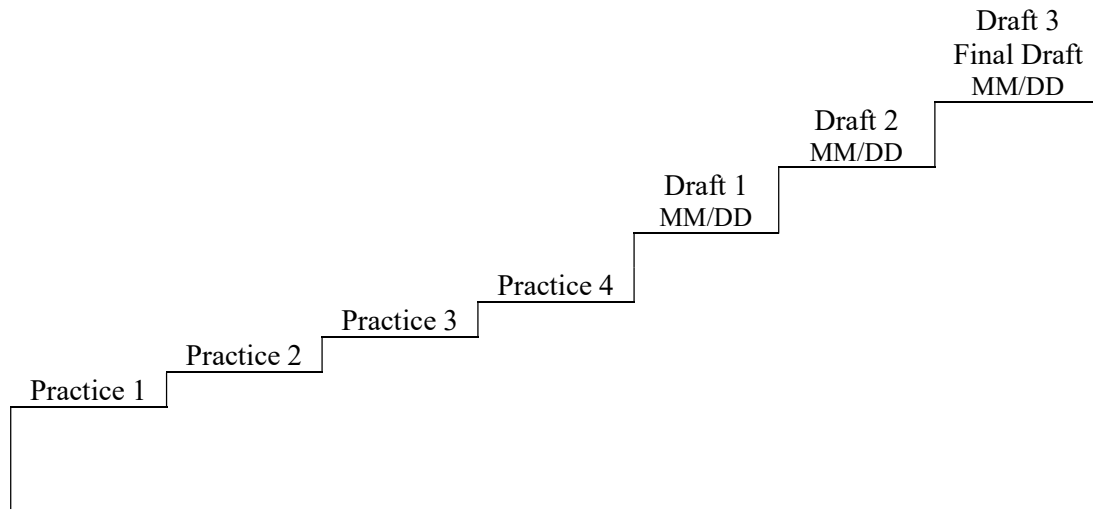
B. Mentor Texts.

- As you write in a new genre, you will research several texts in that genre and choose one as a so-called *mentor text*, some of whose organization and strategies you can selectively try out for yourself. So, instead of following a fixed rulebook, you will use an actual published text in that genre as just one of many possible models of what that genre can be. As there isn't just one genre—and no such thing as a perfect, ideal text—you will practice deciding for yourself what communication strategies may be effective for your goals, audience, genre, and context. In short, you will be reading these texts not only as a critical thinker but as a writer trying to create something new!
- To name just a few genres you can explore: a magazine article, a news article, an infographic, a set of memes, a series of announcements, a brochure, a movie review, a poster, a podcast, a recorded performance, a song, a music video, a photo essay, an academic article, an illustration, a comic, a short story, a television commercial, a news broadcast, a picture book, and beyond. Each of these may even include more specific genres—for example, a scientific paper, in contradistinction to a physics lab report, a history dissertation, a literary analysis, or a peer-reviewed fashion-studies journal article.

- C. **Your New Text.** You will create a new text in a specific genre. Overall, your new text is worth 10% of Draft 3, and will be graded on genre awareness, audience awareness, and overall effort.
- To create the content of your text, start with the reading and writing you have already done in this course. You are welcome to do more research, but that is not required. Decide whether your specific goal is to inform your audience, change their behavior, call them to act, invite them to ask questions, entertain them, or something else. Consider why or how your chosen genre will be effective for your specific goal and audience.
 - To design the text, you can use whatever programs you already know and have, or you can find a free easy-to-pick-up program online. If you want to make a brochure, for example, you could use Canva, Google Docs/Slides, Microsoft Word/PowerPoint, Adobe InDesign, or any other program you would like.
 - Research and follow the best citation practices for your chosen genre. This means, for example, that your new text might not use MLA citations but another style.
 - Imagine how you would publish and share the text, but you do not actually have to publish it. If you decide to share your text beyond our class, I recommend that you consult a Librarian about best practices for your specific text (library.citytech.cuny.edu/help/ask/index.php). Make sure you attribute, store, and share your new text in accordance with copyright and fair-use laws. Keep in mind that copyright laws and licenses might protect some of your sources from being used, shared, or commercialized as part of a new text.
 - Your new text can have little to no words. That is, you are welcome to create a text that does not use the linguistic mode and instead heavily uses visual, gestural, spatial, and/or audio modes. Your text needs to be detailed enough to analyze in a long essay.
 - Submit your new text in the same file as your essay—or as an email attachment or as a link. If your new text exists only in analog media, digitize it in some way so you can paste it, attach it, or link to it. Make a title for the text.
- D. **Essay.** You will write an essay that analyzes the rhetorical situation and genre conventions of your new text. This includes the purpose, audience, rhetorical appeals, modes, media, elements of the genre, design, style, and sources. Overall, your essay is worth 90% of Draft 3, and will be graded on specificity of detail, relevance to the prompt, organization, and sentence structure.
- Write for someone who is unfamiliar with the concepts of *rhetorical situation* and *genre conventions*. Include an introduction, a global statement that represents the goal of your new text, body paragraphs, a brief conclusion, in-line citations, a Works Cited, and a title. To support your assertions, you will need to quote, vividly describe, and cite your own new text. You can also quote and cite other textual evidence as needed. Include a word count at the end of each Draft. For Draft 1, submit 850-1250 words (approximately 3-5 pages before Works Cited), which you will revise for Draft 2 and Draft 3. Write in any varieties of English that you are familiar with.
 - Given the essay's goals, your specific global statement might look something like the following: Using information from _____, I created _____, and I will analyze _____.
 - Your essay can refer explicitly to your previous reading, writing, and mentor texts. That is, you are welcome to compare and contrast your new text with other texts. This is not required but may lead to some interesting insights, especially if you're feeling stuck!
 - See above for how to submit your new text.

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