

Unit 3 - Writing in a New Genre

At the end of Unit 2, we asked the question: What is the most important thing you learned and what audience do you think needs to know about it? **For Unit 3**, we ask ourselves: what is the best genre to tell that audience the information you learned in Unit 2?

In this unit, you will write about the subject you researched in Unit 2 in the genre of your choice (within reason!) Whatever you choose, the most important factor is that it is the genre that best reaches the audience you think needs to hear about your topic. It also needs to showcase your research!

How are you going to get your target audience to listen to your message? Will they listen to a political speech? Watch a video essay? Read a magazine article? Read/watch a scene from a play/film? Read the lyrics to a song? You can use pretty much any genre, **as long as it's one that's new to you and appropriate for the audience you choose**. No middle school kid is going to sit still for a 30-minute political speech even if it's about how to keep from being bullied. Wrong genre, poor analysis of your audience. All I ask is that you make sure it isn't offensive (racist, sexist, homophobic, religion-intolerant). Also, no Power Point.*

Once you've written your new genre text, you'll also write an Artist's Statement to go along with it, something that tells us what you intended to do, who your intended audience was, what you went through to get it done, how well you think it turned out, and where you think it might be published/shared with that audience. There will be a handout on the Artist's Statement when that time comes.

So, to recap, in Unit 3, you will:

- Write about the research you did in Unit 2
- Address the audience you think needs to know what you learned in Unit 2 (just the most important parts)
- Write in the genre that you think will best reach that audience
- Write a one-page Artist's Statement that explains your process

What you'll be graded on:

Genre: Whatever you choose must actually fit in that genre. A video that's just a single picture for two minutes isn't a video because it doesn't move; it doesn't engage us the way a video/film should. When you do your proposal, you'll have a chance to set up what the rules and conventions are for that genre.

Appropriateness for audience: If you're doing something for 4th grade students, it shouldn't be full of graduate school words. Appropriate means word choice, approach to topic/issue, use of

visuals if you use them – does the way you “wrote” your genre piece fit what would work best for this audience?

Effectiveness of message: We’ll share these in class so you’ll get a chance to see if you got your point across. Did it fulfill your purpose?

Length/Timeliness: The genre piece can be whatever length it needs to be based on the conventions of the genre, but it should be substantial. One meme is not really enough for 20% of your grade in a major English class.

Artist Statement: Did you thoughtfully reflect on your process, even if things didn’t turn out quite how you wanted?

**Why? Because first of all, Power Point isn’t a genre, it’s a tool. You use Power Point to do something, like make a presentation or give a talk. Second of all, you’ve probably done a Power Point before, and the purpose of this assignment is for you to learn to write something new. Third, there have been a lot of studies done on the most boring forms of delivery, and Power Point is consistently at the top!*

Helpful resources:

The New York Times on creating a Podcast:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/22/learning/making-a-podcast-that-matters-a-guide-with-examples-from-23-students.html>

The NYT has an entire list of “Mentor Texts” that help you write articles like a sports article and a personal health column. It’s quite useful. It can be found here:

<https://www.nytimes.com/column/learning-mentor-texts>

More resources for creating texts

Free music: <https://www.purple-planet.com/>

Free sound effects: <http://soundbible.com/free-sound-effects-1.html>

Copyright safe images (photos, clip art, etc): <https://search.creativecommons.org/>

Stock videos (and photos): <https://www.pexels.com>

Illustrations you can manipulate: <https://undraw.co/illustrations>

<https://www.canva.com/> is a mostly free (especially if you upload your own images) design program that does everything from posters and banners to storyboards and comic strips. A real go-to tool for a lot of people.

Posters, infographics, etc.:

- <https://www.canva.com/> The images with crowns on them are extra, but Canva is free if you use your own images.
- <https://piktochart.com/> The free version has a 40MB image upload limit.

Online comic maker: <https://www.makebeliefscomix.com/>

Audio creator/editor: <https://www.audacityteam.org/> [easy to use with a full range of tools, lots of videos about how to use it]

- Here’s a review about free audio editing software
<https://www.techradar.com/news/the-best-free-audio-editor>

Screencasting/video recording:

- <https://screencast-o-matic.com/> Screencast-o-matic is free if you want to do screen capture videos from your laptop. Word of warning: if you really want to do some close editing work, it will cost, but for the basics, it’s fine. You can upload the resulting video to YouTube. A lot of faculty use it.
- YouTube Studio will give you lots of tutorials about how to create videos.

ARTIST STATEMENT GUIDELINES

Explaining the rationale behind our actions and decisions is an important kind of reflective writing because it makes visible what is otherwise invisible. You can choose to write an e-mail in Comic Sans font, but unless you explain why, the choice may seem mysterious and odd to readers. Composers of all sorts often write an Artist's Statement for their audience that explains their inspirations, intentions, and choices in their creative and critical processes. It helps the reader understand the process that led to the final product by providing insight into what the author set out to do, how they did it, and what they might do to further improve the piece.

In an Artist's Statement, you step back and consider what you did and what you might have done differently and might do differently in the future. That's what you'll do in this reflection about the genre project you've just completed: the choices you made, why you made them, what happened, how you feel about it now. So for this 750-100 word document, you're going to create your own reflection about your project, and do it in a way that tells us what happened and when — the chronology of thought and actions that took you from your first ideas about it all the way to the completed project.

There are three sections in your Artist's Statement:

1. Before I began: Think back through everything you did – every choice you made and why – before you actually got to work on the genre project. Here are the things you need to talk about:
 - Context: Give us the background for this project. Remind us how you became interested in the topic.
 - Rhetorical Situation and Related Choices: Tell us the “why” of your project. What was your purpose for making this project? What audience did you want to direct this information to? Why that audience specifically? Where did you see your piece being shown or distributed to your audience? What appeals did you decide to use (which, of course, may have changed later): facts (logos), emotion (pathos), the credibility of you or someone you talk about (ethos)?
 - Genre Considerations: Why did you chose the genre you did? What made you think that genre would be the best one for your audience? For example, if you did a brochure, what made a brochure the best way to get the information to your chosen audience — that is, you knew you had a place to distribute it so that seemed logical?
2. Doing the project: Walk us chronologically through the process you went through to get it done: this then this then this... What went well? What didn't go so well? What did you have to change and when? Did you throw out your original idea altogether, and if so, why? Who/where did you turn to for help? When did you panic (if you did) and what did you do about it?
3. Now that it's “done”: How do you think it turned out? Did you change the kinds of appeals or see them evolve as you went along (it happens)? Why? What, given all the time and money and expertise in the world, would you have done differently? What

works great, what are you happiest about? How easy or hard was it? How do you feel about having done something like this as a college project — can you see using any of this in the future (tools, analysis, etc.)?

*Note: This should be a fluid, cohesive document that reflects on and justifies the rhetorical choices in your New Genre Project. Do not just merely answer each question in list form.