

# Researching Outside the Box

Creatively Considering Multimodality, Genre and Context

## Choose Your Topic

- Choose a topic of social significance that is also personally meaningful to you. This topic needs to be unique and interesting, pushing the boundaries of convention.
- This topic must be very specific, taking a unique angle on a subject matter.

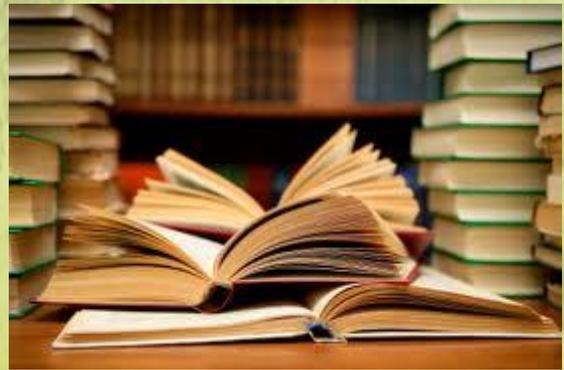
## Research Your Topic

- Learn everything you can about your topic using a variety of sources, both traditional (books, scholarly articles, periodicals, websites), nontraditional (interviews, surveys, other written texts of interest, etc) and popular (fiction, movies, etc related to your topic). You'll document in a bibliography page.
- Seek out at least **fifteen** different sources, which must include a variety of types.

## Present Your Topic via Multimodality

- Present your findings using nontraditional written media. We'll talk more about possible options and purpose.
- Your genre/media selection must directly related to the topic, representing an appropriate choice for the subject and relaying the information to a specific audience in a way that would best suit the context of the topic.
- Demonstrate your understanding of the topic by selecting a genre connected to that topic and using it effectively.

*A major part of this assignment is how creative you presentation is and how closely the genre you chose fits with the topic. Thus, be sure that whatever genre you choose, there is a reason. The method of presentation somehow relates specifically to the topic.*



**Overview;** Students will thoroughly research a self-selected topic of personal and social significance. They will present their findings using nontraditional written media of their own design to explore a unique multiform genre that connects directly to the topic. This assignment asks students to explore the parameters of either an established genre or one of their own creation, using this format to present information they have collected and documented through sophisticated research techniques.

## Objectives:

- Reflect on the context and trajectory of a genre used to present/report information
- Demonstrate a depth of research utilizing a variety of genre-appropriate sources, cited effectively in genre-specific ways
- Articulate comprehensive understanding of a socially/personally significant topic
- Creatively utilize a multimodal genre chosen purposefully for the topic
- Utilize purposeful, genre-based choices in formatting, style, diction and grammar

*Note: This is not a trivial art project or home movie. I have the highest expectation for your work on this project and look forward to thoughtful, college-level work carefully constructed in a professional and impressive manner. Furthermore, as research is the primary focus of this project, such work must be not only documented, but clearly evident in the presentation of materials.*

A few notes about citation and source requirements:

- YOU MUST CITE EVERY PIECE OF INFORMATION YOU USE that does not come from your own brain in this text.
- Appropriately giving credit to sources will prevent any issues of academic dishonesty.
- You must choose a citation method that is appropriate for your genre, giving credit to all resources you use.
- Even if it does not fit with your genre, please create a bibliography of sources used.



Think  
Outside  
the Box

### Genre Analysis Documents

This portion of your project is of **at least equal importance to textual production**, and possibly even more important. Genre analysis should include the following and should not be in traditional essay format:

- Researched commentary on three or more master texts in the genre
- Detailed description of genre features/characteristics
- Information regarding cultural/historical context
- Map of intertextuality and/or trajectory components

**Goal/Purpose/Function** -- This text should:

- 1) offer a way to assess whether a project engages effectively with the genre
- 2) demonstrate your understanding of the genre in terms of cultural and historical activity, as well as **how and why** your text fits and diverges genre characteristics and contextual factors

## Possible Multimodal Approaches

### *A Few Suggestions and Ideas*

**Visual:** There are many ways that information is presented via visual means in society. For example, think about the ways that a museum delivers information via primarily visual means in an exhibit, program, diorama, etc. *Bear in mind, a poster or powerpoint is NOT an acceptable “real world genre”.*

**Video/Audio:** In our society increasingly reliant upon television and radio, information is frequently provided via these means. Consider creating something in these genres, such cinematic or Discovery Channel style documentary, which could be created in amateur form via movie maker, imovie or similar software. Audio texts like podcasts, radio programming, etc might also be interesting choices.

**Electronic/Internet:** The ways that information is relayed on the internet is widespread and comprises a variety of genres. The genre of “website” is unique, but websites can be broken into a variety of subgenres as well. Exploring one such specific genre or other electronic text is one option for your project.

**Journalistic:** Information is circulated via a variety of journalistic publications, either in the form of a newspaper, magazine, television broadcast, etc. You’ll want to consider design elements and incorporate articles, graphic design, and all of the other elements inherent to this genre. Although I do not expect full length, a complete publication would include enough depth to represent both a comprehensive look at the topic and a demonstration of the genre.

**Freedom:** These represent only a small selection of the ways that people disseminate information they have collected via research in “real life” situations. Explore other options and genres you are familiar with or are interested in. The sky is the limit!