

## Genre Analysis Considerations- Possible Questions to Interrogate Genre

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### List #1

1. What *recurrent features* do the samples share? For example: What *content* is typically included? What excluded? How is the content treated? What sorts of examples are used? What counts as evidence (personal testimony, facts, etc.)?
2. How are texts in the genres *structured*? What are their parts, and how are they organized?
3. In what *format* are texts of this genre presented? What layout or appearance is common? How long is a typical text in this genre?
4. What does *language* look like in your genre? What types of *sentences* do texts in the genre typically use? How long are they? Are they simple or complex, passive or active? Are the sentences varied? Do they share a certain style?
5. What *diction* (types of words) is most common? Is a type of jargon used? Is slang used? How would you describe the writer's voice?

### List #2

1. Does your genre require a certain **organization**? Most proposals, for instance, first identify a problem and then offer a solution. Some genres leave room for choice. Business letters delivering good news might be organized differently than those making sales pitches.
2. Does your genre affect your **tone**? An abstract of a scholarly paper calls for a different tone than a memoir. Should your words sound serious and scholarly? brisk and to the point? objective? opinionated? Sometimes your genre affects the way you communicate your stance.
3. What kind of **language/word choice and diction** does the genre utilize? Does the genre require formal (or informal) language? A letter to the mother of a friend asking for a summer job in her bookstore calls for more formal language than does an email to the friend thanking him for the lead.
4. Do you have a choice of **medium**? Some genres call for print; others for an electronic medium. Sometimes you have a choice: a résumé, for instance, can be mailed (in which case it must be printed), or it may be emailed. Some teachers want reports turned in on paper; others prefer that they be emailed or posted to a class Web site. If you're not sure what medium you can use, ask.
5. Does your genre have any **design requirements**? Some genres call for paragraphs; others require lists. Some require certain kinds of typefaces—you wouldn't use Impact for a personal narrative, nor would you likely use Dr Seuss for an invitation to Grandma's sixty-fifth birthday party. Different genres call for different design elements.

## Genres in Context Questions

You should have already considered the features and patterns found in you genre; now discuss what these patterns reveal about the situation and scene by answering the following questions:

- **Considering Patterns:** What do these rhetorical patterns reveal about the genre, its situation, and the scene in which it is used? Why are these patterns significant? What can you learn about the actions being performed through the genre by observing its language patterns? What arguments can you make about these patterns?
- **Considering Participants:** What do participants have to know or believe to understand or appreciate the genre? Who is invited into the genre, and who is excluded? What roles for writers and readers does it encourage or discourage?
- **Considering Emphasis:** How is the subject of the genre treated? What content is considered most important? What content (topics or details) is ignored?
- **Considering Purpose:** What actions does the genre help make possible? What actions does the genre make difficult?
- **Considering Attitude:** What attitude toward readers is implied in the genre? What attitude toward the world is implied in it?
- **Considering Values/Beliefs:** What values, beliefs, goals, and assumptions are revealed through the genre's patterns?