

Rubric as Genre
Lesson Plan/Activity
Meghann Meeusen

Genre/Activity Questions: What is the purpose of a “rubric” and how is it similar and different in its ability to observe and notate expectations of a particular kind of writing or genre? How can we articulate the common conventions and expectations associated with a writing situation, and what challenges are there in doing so?

Considerations: I use this activity to talk about one way people use to evaluate those aspects important in a text, and suggest that a similar structure could be used in genre analysis. However, it is important to be clear that creating a rubric is not the same as genre analysis, simply a format that may be useful in thinking about it.

Also note that this was initially created as a two day activity, and could certainly be developed as such.

Homework Due Today: First, read the documents in the narrative materials folder marked “genre analysis considerations” and “genre in context questions”. Then, collect several examples of “rubrics” and analyze this genre. Go through the questions intended to guide genre analysis and consider these about the genre of the rubric. Write up a short analysis (in whatever form seems most useful to you) about the genre of the rubric and be prepared to discuss this in class.

Objective: Identify the features, context and purpose of the “rubric” as a writing genre. Discuss the use of the rubric for the purposes of identifying genre features and “evaluating” a text in terms of how closely it aligns with genre expectations. Begin discussing how to identify (both conceptually and physically) genre features in your essay

Discussion/Activity

Discuss the rubric as a genre. What is its purpose? Audience? Context? Try to answer the questions in the genre analysis documents for the rubric itself. Look at several examples (which were brought by students) to answer these questions. Identify what features are important to make an effective rubric.

Then talk about how the genre of the rubric can be used to evaluate or demonstrate other genres effectiveness and success (as genres). If time permits, create a sample rubric for a small/simple genre that has already been discussed in class.

Continue discussion by talking about the function of the project’s “genre analysis document”—that since part of the purpose of this document is to demonstrate what elements of the genre are important in terms of assessment, the rubric is somewhat relevant in terms of a possible form some of their genre analysis document (especially

discussion of characteristics) could take. For example, the student might create a rubric for their own genre, then fill it out and annotate it—providing comments about how each feature was demonstrated, as well as when the “real life situation” of this as a class project prevented it.

Also discuss how margin notes will play into this. Demonstrate how to use this function in word, and if time permits, discuss a few examples. Talk especially about the importance of identifying language as it relates to genre.

Ask students to get into groups, then talk about what they have discovered in analyzing the genre of the rubric, and how this could be useful in terms of genre analysis, as well as what limitations the genre of the rubric presents. Return to group to discuss findings.

If time remains, provide a paragraph from a genre specific text, and ask students to identify genre-specific language choices.