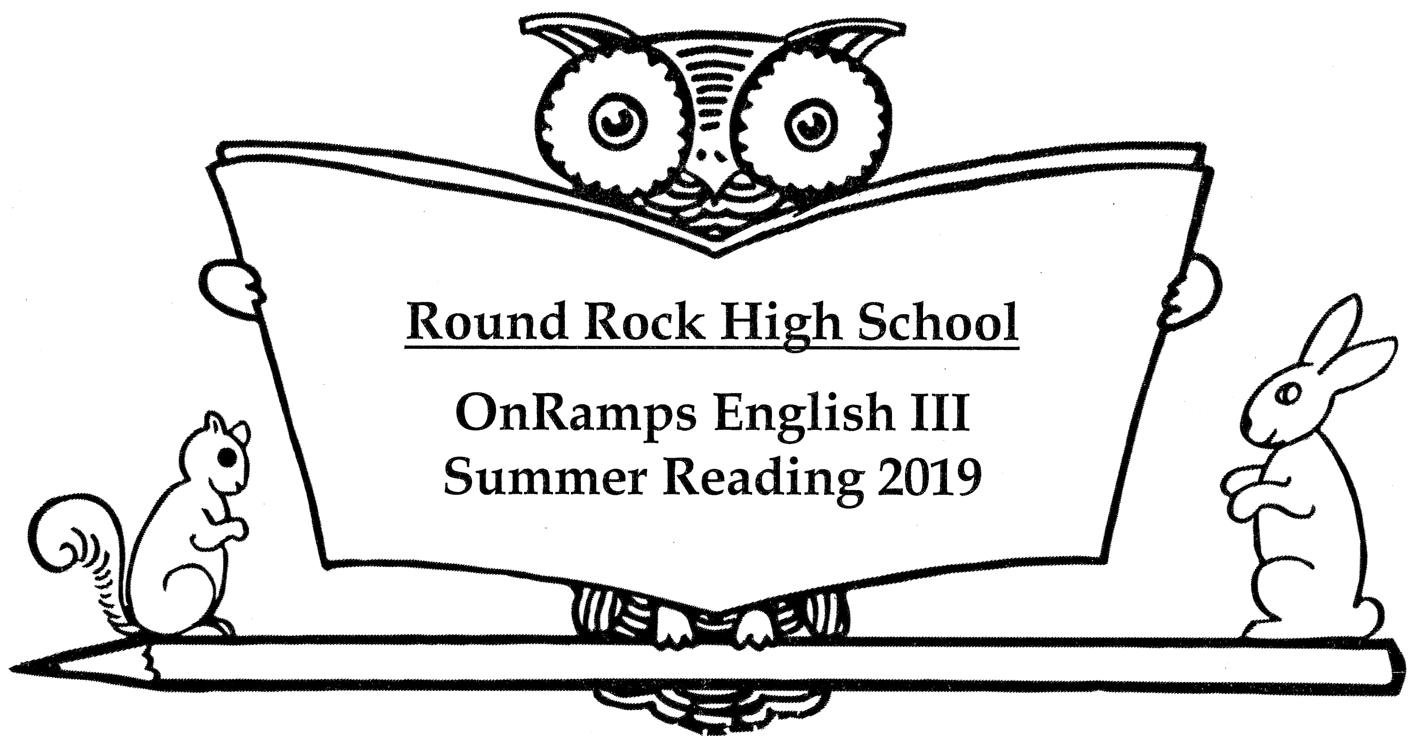


Mrs. Renfroe

OnRamps English III (RHE 306 & RHE 309K)

Hello Students!

My name is Mrs. Renfroe, and I am excited to get to know you through our year of study together.

OnRamps is a dual enrollment program. That means you will be enrolled in English III at Round Rock High School and enrolled in RHE 306 and 309K through The University of Texas at Austin. You will receive a grade both for the high school class and the college class.

We aren't only focused on helping you master content. We also strive to teach study skills and time management that will help with your success in college. To that end, we are asking you to complete reading and writing over the summer.

I have provided you with a suggested schedule to help you chunk the work. On the first day of class, please bring this packet with you. I will not be assigning a grade for the work, but I will be using this assignment to gain first impressions about you and help structure curriculum to support your needs.

If you have questions about the assignment, you can reach me at loren_renfroe@roundrockisd.org. You can also sign up for our class Remind and reach me through a DM: text @RenOnRamps to 81010.

Should you lose this packet, find it on my website: lorenrenfroe.weebly.com.

Suggested Schedule:

"The World is a Text" & Questions	Finish by June 7th
"Writing Today" & Questions	Finish by June 21st
"Writing Arguments" & Questions	Finish by July 12th
"For too Many, Minds Closed to the Truth" & Questions	Finish by July 26th
"Five Lies Our Culture Tells" & Questions	Finish by August 2nd

As part of the skills required for success in the course, it would benefit you to improve your touch typing skills. It is recommended that you take time to brush up on your touch typing skills (typing without look) OR learn touch typing skills if you do not already have them.

Below is a link to a free typing tutor. I recommend you spend half an hour twice a week practicing your typing. Note that there is not a way for me to verify you practiced, but I have included a log in the packet to help you keep track of your practice time.

Free online Typing Tutor **https://www.speedtypingonline.com/typing-tutor (Links to an external site.)**

Table of Contents:

- Page 4: Typing Log
- Pages 5-8: "The World is a Text"
- Page 9: Questions for "The World is a Text"
- Pages 10-18: "Writing Today"
- Page 19: Questions for "Writing Today"
- Pages 20-24: "Writing Arguments"
- Page 25: Questions for "Writing Arguments"
- Pages 26-27: "For too Many, Minds Closed to the Truth"
- Page 28: Questions for "For too Many, Minds Closed to the Truth"
- Pages 29-30: "Five Lies Our Culture Tells"
- Page 31: Questions for "Five Lies Our Culture Tells"
- Page 32: "About Me" Questionnaire

Typing Log

DATE	START TIME	END TIME	WORDS PER MINUTE	ACCURACY

Writing, Reading, and Thinking About Visual and Popular Culture

JONATHAN SILVERMAN ✦ DEAN RADER

- Many instructors ask their students to write personal essays, especially in the first semester of composition courses, so in the final section we include a short guide to this process in **Part VIII**'s cleverly entitled **"How Am I a Text? Writing Personal Essays."** You should always adhere to the guidelines your professor provides, but this short section should supplement what you discuss in class.

Although this section might not be as compelling as essays on *The Simpsons* or *Seinfeld,* it is important nonetheless. Reading and writing feed each other in complex ways, so try to give both your attention.

PART I. HOW DO I WRITE A TEXT FOR COLLEGE? MAKING THE TRANSITION FROM HIGH SCHOOL WRITING

by Patty Strong

Writing is thinking. This is what we teachers of college writing believe. Hidden inside that tiny suitcase of a phrase is my whole response to the topic assigned me by my colleague, Jonathan Silverman, one of the authors of the textbook you are currently reading. Knowing my background as a former teacher of high school English, Dr. Silverman asked me to write a piece for students on the differences between writing in high school and writing in college. I have had some time to ponder my answer, and it is this: Writing is thinking. Now that's not very satisfactory, is it? I must unpack that suitcase of a phrase. I will open it up for you, pull out a few well-traveled and wearable ideas, ideas that you may want to try on yourself as you journey through your college writing assignments.

Writing is thinking. I suggest that this idea encompasses the differences between high school writing and the writing expected from students on a college level, not because high school teachers don't expect their students to think, but rather that most students themselves do not approach the writing as an *opportunity to think.* Students might construct many other kinds of sentences with writing as subject: Writing is hard. Writing is a duty. Writing is something I do to prove that I know something.

When I taught high school English, I certainly assigned writing in order to find out what my students knew. Did they, for example, know what I had taught them about the light and dark symbolism in Chapter 18 of *The Scarlet Letter?* Did they know precisely what Huck Finn said after he reconsidered his letter to Miss Watson ("All right, then, I'll *go* to hell!") and did they know what I, their teacher, had told them those words meant in terms of Huck's moral development? Could my students spit this information back at me in neat, tidy sentences? That's not to say I didn't encourage originality and creativity in my students' writing, but those were a sort of bonus to the bottom line knowledge I was expecting them to be able to reproduce.

College writing is different precisely because it moves beyond the limited conception that writing is writing what we already know. In college, students write to discover what they don't know, to uncover what they didn't know they knew. Students in college should not worry about not having anything to write, because it is the physical and intellectual act of writing, of moving that pen across the page (or tapping the keyboard) that produces the thoughts that become what you have to write. The act of writing will produce the thinking. This thinking need not produce ideas you already know to be true, but should explore meanings and attitude and questions, which are the things that we all wonder and care about.

My discussion of these matters has so far been fairly abstract, caught up in the wind of ideas. Practical matters are of importance here, too, so I will address some points that as a college

6

student you should know. First, your professors are not responsible for your education—you are. While your teachers may in fact care very much that you learn and do well in your coursework, it is not their responsibility to see that you are successful. Your college teacher may not do things you took for granted like reminding you of assignments and tests and paper deadlines. They probably won't accept your illness or the illness of a loved one or a fight with a girlfriend as legitimate excuses for late work. Sloppy work, late work, thoughtless work, tardiness, absences from class—these things are the student's problems. Successful college students accept responsibility for their problems. They expect that consequences will be meted out. Successful students do not offer excuses, lame or otherwise, although they may offer appropriate resolutions. Successful students understand that their education is something they are privileged to own, and as with a dear possession, they must be responsible for managing it. If you wrecked your beloved car, would you find fault with the person who taught you how to drive?

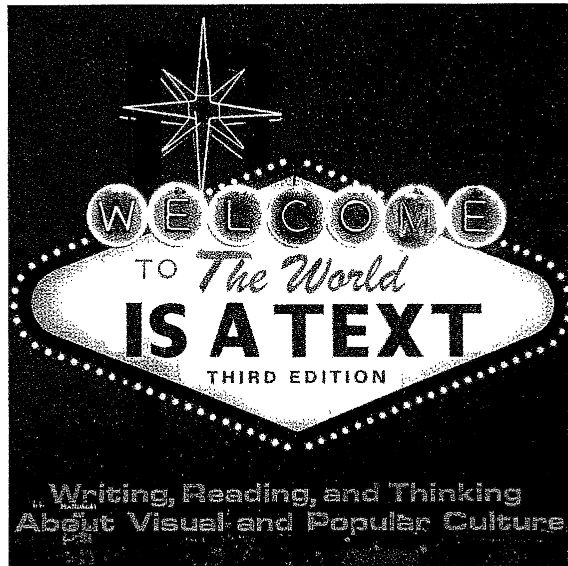
On to the writing task at hand. You will want to write well in college. You probably want to write better and more maturely than you have in the past. To do this, you must be willing to take thinking risks, which are writing risks. I read an interesting quote the other day that I shared with my writing students because I believed it to be true and pretty profound. The American writer Alvin Toffler wrote that "The illiterate of the twenty-first century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn." And so it's true that when you come to the university for your "higher education," you must be willing to unlearn some old things and relearn them in new ways. That's probably true for just about every academic subject you will explore during your university career, and it is certainly true about the writing courses you will take.

Writing is thinking. Writing will lead you toward thought. Your college writing teachers will expect more of your thinking, thinking you have come to through the process of writing and rewriting. In order to get where you need to be, you must relearn what writing is. You must see that writing is not duty, obligation, and regurgitation, but opportunity, exploration, and discovery. The realization that writing is thinking and that thinking *leads* to writing is the main idea behind this book—the simple notion that the world is a text to be thought and written about. The successful college writer understands that he or she writes not just for the teacher, not just to prove something to the teacher in order to get a grade, but to uncover unarticulated pathways to knowledge and understanding.

PART II. FROM SEMIOTICS TO LENSES: FINDING AN APPROACH FOR YOUR ESSAYS

by Dean Rader and Jonathan Silverman

In the first eight pages of this book, we talk a great deal about semiotics as that pathway to knowledge and understanding. Formal and informal decoding of cultural and visual cues can be pretty interesting stuff, but you may be wondering what bearing this has on college, grades, and your class. You are going to have to write some papers for this course, and these concepts will help you land on a topic for your paper. Your next step, however, is to select an approach for that paper. Only rarely can essays be simply observational; most of the time you have to turn those observations into arguments. Thus, in order to make an argument, you have to have an approach, or what talk show host Jim Rome might call a "take." There are any number of **approaches** or **lenses** when writing about nontraditional/popular culture/visual texts. We began with **semiotics** as it explains how texts make meaning through signification



JONATHAN SILVERMAN

University of Massachusetts Lowell

DEAN RADER

University of San Francisco

Upper Saddle River, New Jersey 07458

Questions for "The World is a Text"

1. What metaphor does the writer use in the first paragraph when explaining writing? Explain the meaning of the comparison.

2. How is college writing different from high school writing?

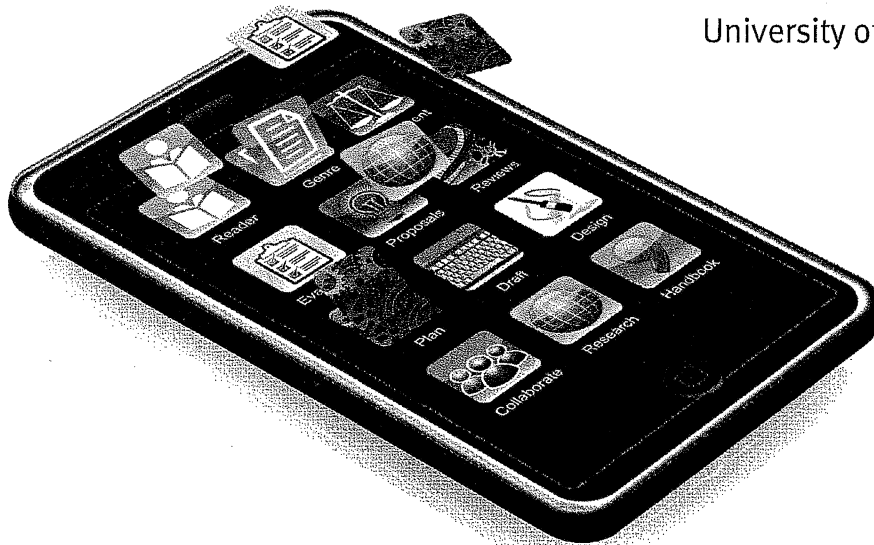
3. Why is the college writer writing?

4. What do you anticipate will be your greatest challenge as you move from being a high school writer to a college writer?

Writing Today

RICHARD JOHNSON-SHEEHAN
Purdue University

CHARLES PAINE
University of New Mexico



Longman
Boston Columbus Indianapolis New York San Francisco Upper Saddle River
Amsterdam Cape Town Dubai London Madrid Milan Munich Paris Montreal Toronto
Delhi Mexico City São Paulo Sydney Hong Kong Seoul Singapore Taipei Tokyo

CHAPTER 1

Writing and Genres

Writing gives you the power to get things done with words and images. It allows you to respond successfully to the events and people around you, whether you are trying to improve your community, pitch a new idea at work, or just text with your friends.

The emergence of new writing situations—new places for writing, new readers, and new media—means writing today involves more than just getting words and images onto a page or screen. Writers need to handle a wide variety of situations with diverse groups of people and multiple technologies. Learning to navigate among these complex situations is the real challenge of writing in today's world.

What Are Genres?

In this book, you will learn how to use writing *genres* to interpret these complex situations and respond to them successfully. Defining the word *genre* is difficult. Mistakenly, genres are sometimes defined by their structure alone (e.g., "A report has five parts: introduction, methods, results, discussion, and conclusion"). But this understanding of genre is a bit misleading. Genres are not fixed or rigid patterns to be followed mechanically. They are not forms into which we insert sentences and paragraphs.

Genres are ways of writing and speaking that help people interact and work together. In other words, genres reflect the things people do, and they are always evolving because human activities change over time to suit new social situations and new challenges. Genres *do* offer somewhat stable patterns for responding to

typical situations. More importantly, though, they reflect how people act, react, and interact in these situations. Genres are meeting places—and *meaning* places.

Up until now, your writing courses have probably taught you how to master one genre—the academic essay—and write for one kind of reader—your teachers. In college, you will need to master and write in a variety of genres that help you to achieve different kinds of goals. This book will help you develop this "genre know-how," which you can use to strengthen your writing in college courses and in your career. You will also master a useful "genre set" that will allow you to respond successfully to a variety of important situations.

With this book, you will learn how to recognize and adapt genres for your own needs. You will become a more agile writer with a greater awareness of the differences among readers and contexts. You will become more proficient at analyzing specific writing situations and at adapting your writing to them.

Using Genres to Write Successfully

For writers, genres offer flexible approaches to writing that reflect how people in communities interact with each other. They provide strategies for analyzing and interpreting what is happening around you. Once you understand your current situation, you can then use genres to focus your creativity, generate new ideas, and present those ideas to others. You can use words and images to mold reality to your advantage.

Readers use genres, too. They use them as guideposts to orient themselves to a text, helping them to anticipate what they are likely to find in the document and how they can use the information in it. Readers are never passive spectators. They bring specific expectations with them and they respond to your writing, in part, according to those expectations. As a writer, when you understand what your readers expect to find, you can make strategic choices about what information you will include and how you will present your ideas (Figure 1.1). Knowing what your readers expect of a particular genre gives you insight about how to compose your text. It gives you power.

FIGURE 1.1 College Writing Requires Genre Know-How

Writing matters because it is one way people get things done. College writing will teach you "genre know-how," the ability to size up writing situations and respond to them appropriately.

Writing with Genres

As a writer, you can use a genre to help you make sense of a complex situation, invent your ideas, and write a text that achieves your purpose and meets the expectations of your readers. Here are the most important things to remember about genres:

Genres Are Flexible. Genres are as flexible and changeable as the human activities they represent. It is helpful to

identify the common features of each genre, so you can use it to help you interpret and write, but keep in mind that genres reflect human activities. As a result, genres should be viewed as flexible and adaptable to the evolving reality around you.

Genres Adjust to Fit Various Situations. When the audience or context changes, a genre needs to be adjusted to suit the new situation. An argument that worked previously with some readers or in a particular context might not work with different readers or in another context.

Genres Evolve to Suit Various Fields. Each discipline adapts common genres to its own needs and purposes. A report written by a biologist, for example, will share many characteristics with a report written by a manager at a corporation, but there will also be notable differences in the content, organization, style, and design of the text.

Genres Shape Situations and Readers. When you choose a particular genre, you are deciding what kinds of issues will be highlighted and what role your readers will play. For instance, readers know that when they encounter a memoir (a type of literary genre), they should read thoroughly and follow the story line. Quite differently, when readers encounter a report (a workplace genre), they assume they can "raid" the text for the specific information they need, that is, they can skip and skim.

Genres Can Be Played With. You can be creative and play with the conventions of genres. Can you use a memoir to review a book? Can you use a rhetorical analysis to study a painting? Sure you can. Genres are stretchy. But if you are going to go against your readers' expectations of the genre, you need to do so consciously and for a specific purpose.

Genres in Movies

You are already very familiar with the concept of genres in media and entertainment. To illustrate how genres work, let's take a look at how they function in the movie industry. Movies can be sorted by the genres that were used to make them (Figure 1.2). Movie genres include romantic comedies, action flicks, documentaries, murder mysteries, musicals, science fiction and fantasy, horror, thrillers, and others. These genres aren't formulas that the writers and directors must follow. Instead, they are familiar patterns that audiences will recognize and understand.

Once the audience recognizes the genre of the movie, they form specific expectations about what kinds of things they will—and will not—experience. For example, a romantic comedy usually explores the amusing awkwardness and pratfalls of a new relationship. Two people meet and feel an attraction to each other. But then, events beyond their control keep them apart and cause humorous misunderstandings. Eventually, the two star-crossed lovers realize they truly do love each other and find a way at the end of the movie to be together.

Directors of successful romantic comedies use the boundaries and conventions of this genre to help them work creatively and produce something that is both recognizable

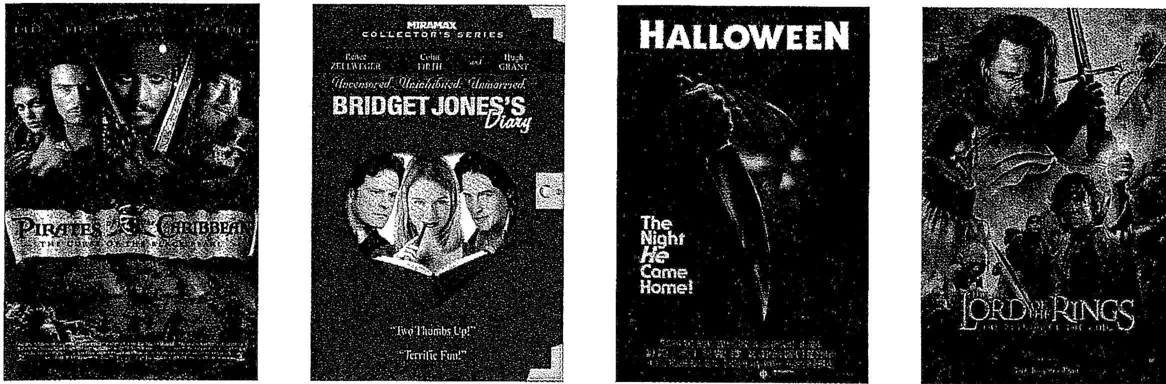


FIGURE 1.2 Movie Genres

Usually, moviegoers recognize the genre of a movie even before they step into the theatre. Movie studios use posters and previews to help audiences know what to expect and how to interpret the movie.

and new. Genres aid the director's creativity by providing guidelines about how the movie should be structured, scripted, visually designed, musically scored, and even edited. Genres also constrain movies by helping directors determine what is "in bounds" and what is "out of bounds." Good directors work creatively within a genre to create something original.

Movies that flop often don't follow a recognizable genre or—even worse—formulaically follow a common genre in a trite way. A movie that strictly uses a genre formulaically feels painfully predictable and shallow. The people in the audience get bored and tune out when they realize that the movie is mechanically following a genre in a predictable way.

Like successful movie directors, effective writers need to fully understand the genres they are using. Genres help writers figure out where to start and how to proceed. They allow writers to create something fresh and new, while also helping them to organize and control their message in a way that readers will recognize and comprehend. In this sense, good writers (like good movie directors) are always balancing the old, familiar, and stable with the new, creative, and dynamic.

Genre and the Writing Process

So, how can genres help you write better? Think of something you already do well. Perhaps you are a good swimmer or a solid basketball player. Maybe you are a great video game player. Do you play the guitar, or do you like to make pottery? Have you learned a martial art? Do you like to do yoga?

To do something well, you first needed to learn the *process* for doing it. Someone else, perhaps a teacher, coach, parent, or friend, showed you the process and helped you get better at it (Figure 1.3, page 6). Then, once you knew that process, you worked on improving and refining your skills. You gained confidence. Before long, you developed the "know-how" for that activity—not just the skill to do it, but also an ability to

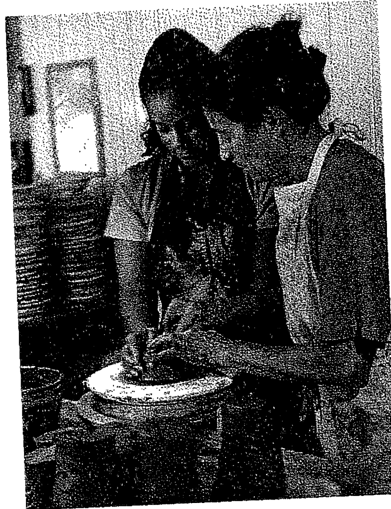
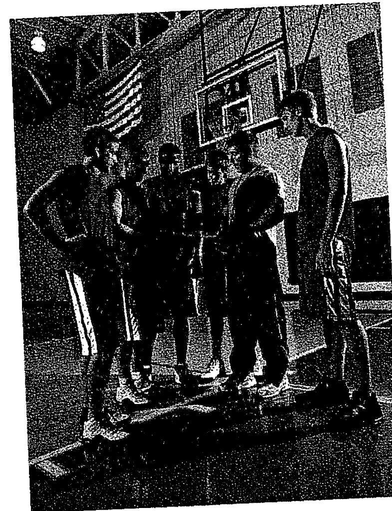



FIGURE 1.3 Learning to Do Something Involves Learning a Process

In order to do something you enjoy, you first had to learn a step-by-step process for doing it. Once you mastered the process and it became second nature, you could make it yours by refining and adapting it.

be innovative and original. When you reached this point, you could then start being creative and trying out new ideas.

Writing is similar to the other things you enjoy doing. To write well, you first need to develop your own writing process. Strong writers aren't born with a special gift, and they aren't necessarily smarter than anyone else. Strong writers have simply learned and mastered a reliable writing process that allows them to generate new ideas and shape those ideas into something readers will find interesting and useful.

Using a Writing Process

A writing process is a series of steps that leads you from your basic idea to a finished document. Over time, you will develop your own unique writing process, but the following six steps work well as a starting place:

Analyze the rhetorical situation. Identify the genre you are being asked to use or the genre that fits the needs of your project. Then define your topic, state your purpose, and analyze your readers and the contexts in which your text will be read or used.

Invent your ideas. Use inquiry and research to generate your own ideas and discover what others already know about your topic.

Organize and draft your paper. Arrange and compose your ideas into familiar patterns that your readers will recognize and find useful.

Choose an appropriate style. Use techniques of plain and persuasive style to clarify your writing and make it more compelling.

Design your document. Develop an appropriate page layout and use visuals to make your ideas more accessible and attractive to readers.

For example, if you are writing a movie review, the "review genre" (discussed in Chapter 6, "Reviews") will help you make decisions about what kinds of information your readers will expect. Should you tell them the plot of the movie? Should you describe the characters? Should you give away the ending? The genre will provide you with a model organization, so you can arrange your ideas in a pattern that your readers will expect. The genre also helps you to make informed decisions about what kind of style and design would work.

The purpose of a genre is to help you figure out how people tend to act, react, and interact in the situation in which you are writing. So if you tell your readers you are giving them a "movie review," they will have some expectations about the content, organization, style, and design of that text. If you meet those expectations, they will probably find the review useful and easy to read. If you bend those expectations, they might find your review creative or unique. However, if you completely violate their expectations for a movie review, your readers will likely be confused or frustrated with your work.

Using Genres in College and in Your Career

This genre-based approach to writing might be new to you. It's the next step toward learning how to write for college and in your future career. You already have a good sense about how the "essay genre" is used, and you know what your professors, as readers, expect from academic essays. Now that you are in college, you will need to master and write in a variety of genres that allow you to achieve new goals. You need to learn how to write for advanced college courses and workplace situations in which the academic essay is no longer suitable.

This book will help you develop genre know-how, the practical knowledge and skill to write effectively with genres. You will learn how to recognize and adapt genres for your own needs, and you will learn how to use your genre know-how to adjust to unique situations and specific readers.

This book will help you to become a versatile, flexible, and agile writer. You will learn how to analyze specific writing situations and then take action with words and images.

Revise and edit your work. Improve your writing by rewriting, reorganizing, editing, and proofreading your work.

Experienced writers tend to handle each of these steps separately, but a writing process shouldn't be followed mechanically from one step to the next. Instead, experienced writers tend to move around among these steps as needed (Figure 1.4). For instance, while drafting your paper, you may find you need to invent more content. Or, while revising, you may decide that you need to rethink the style of the text.

Why bother with a writing process at all? Can't you just write the paper? Truth is, as projects grow more complex and important, you need to give yourself time to generate and refine your ideas. A reliable writing process helps you do things one step at a time. In the long run, following a writing process will save you time and will help you to write something that is more creative and interesting to your readers.

Using Genre as a Guiding Concept

The genre you are using should influence each stage of your writing process, as shown in Figure 1.4. The genre will help you make decisions about the content of your paper, how your paper should be organized, what style would be appropriate, and what kind of design would work best. Then, as you revise and edit your paper, you can use the genre to guide any changes to the text. So as you write, keep the genre you are following in mind. Use the genre as a source for creativity.

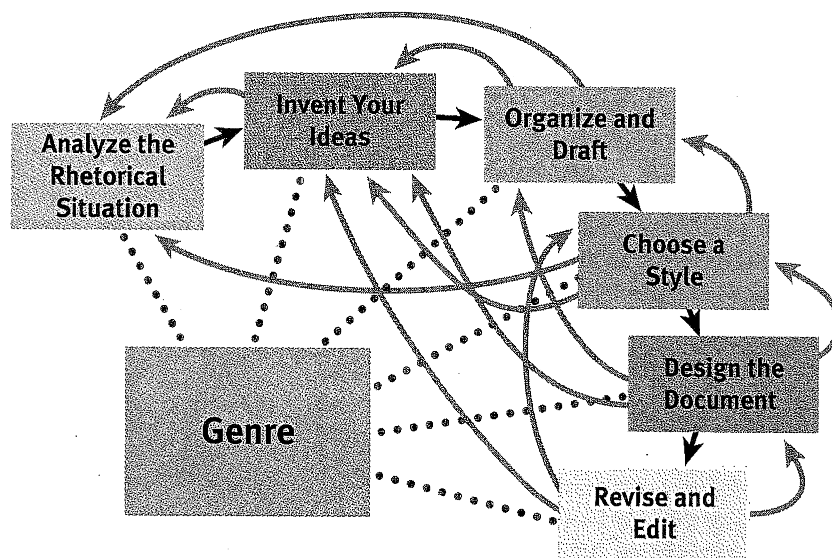


FIGURE 1.4 A Writing Process

Good writers tend to work through steps as they develop their work. They move among these steps in ways that fit their own work habits and personalities.

At the end of each chapter in this book, you will find something called the "Quick Start Guide." The purpose of the Quick Start Guides is to help you get up and running as soon as possible. You can use these guides for review or to preview the essential information in the chapter. Here is the essential information in this chapter.

KNOW What a Genre Is

Genres are ways of writing and speaking that help people communicate and work together in specific situations. Genres offer relatively stable patterns for writing, but more importantly, they reflect how humans act, react, and interact in everyday situations. Genres are meeting places—and *meaning* places.

GET Some "Genre Know-How"

Genre know-how is the ability to use genres to analyze and interpret what is happening around you. When you have genre know-how, you can use genres to focus your creativity, generate new ideas, and present those ideas to others.

KEEP in Mind That Genres Are Flexible

Genres are as flexible and changeable as the human activities they represent. They need to be adjusted to suit evolving situations. They can be stretched and messed around with, to a degree.

DEVELOP Your Writing Process

A writing process is a series of steps that leads you from your basic idea to a finished document. Developing and refining your writing process will save you time and effort in the long run.

USE Genres in College and in Your Career

A genre-based approach to writing helps you master a "genre set" that can be used in advanced college courses and in the workplace. The genre set taught in this book will cover most of the texts you will write in college and in your career.

Questions for “Writing Today”

1. What are genres?

2. How do writers and readers use genres?

3. Explain the flexibility of genres.

4. How do genres impact to success or failure of movies?

5. What are the steps to the writing process? Which step of the writing process do you spend the least time on? Which is most integral to your success?

Writing Arguments

A Rhetoric with Readings

Ninth Edition

John D. Ramage
Arizona State University

John C. Bean
Seattle University

June Johnson
Seattle University

PEARSON

Boston Columbus Indianapolis New York San Francisco Upper Saddle River
Amsterdam Cape Town Dubai London Madrid Milan Munich Paris Montréal Toronto
Delhi Mexico City São Paulo Sydney Hong Kong Seoul Singapore Taipei Tokyo

Placing Texts in a Rhetorical Context

In the previous section, we suggested strategies for finding issues and entering argumentative conversations. Once you join a conversation, you will typically read a number of different arguments addressing your selected issue. The texts you read may be supplied for you in a textbook, anthology, or course pack, or you may find them yourself through library or Internet research. In this section and the ones that follow, we turn to productive strategies for reading arguments. We begin by explaining the importance of analyzing a text's rhetorical context as a preliminary step prior to reading. In subsequent sections, we explain powerful strategies for reading an argument—reading to believe, reading to doubt, and placing texts in conversation with each other through dialectic thinking.

As you read arguments on a controversy, try to place each text within its rhetorical context. It is important to know, for example, whether a blog that you are reading appears on Daily Kos (a liberal blog site) or on Little Green Footballs (a conservative blog site). In researching an issue, you may find that one article is a formal policy proposal archived on the Web site of an economics research institute, whereas another is an op-ed piece by a nationally syndicated columnist or a letter to the editor written by someone living in your community. To help you reconstruct a reading's rhetorical context, you need to understand the genres of argument as well as the cultural and professional contexts that cause people to write arguments. We'll begin with the genres of argument.

Genres of Argument

To situate an argument rhetorically, you should know something about its genre. A *genre* is a recurring type or pattern of argument such as a letter to the editor, a political cartoon, or the home page of an advocacy Web site. Genres are often categorized by recurring features, formats, and styles. The genre of any given argument helps determine its length, tone, sentence complexity, level of informality or formality, use of visuals, kinds of evidence, depth of research, and the presence or absence of documentation.

When you read arguments reprinted in a textbook such as this one, you lose clues about the argument's original genre. (You should therefore note the information about genre provided in our introductions to readings.) Likewise, you can lose clues about genre when you download articles from the Internet or from licensed databases such as LexisNexis or ProQuest. (See Chapter 15 for explanations of these research tools.) When you do your own research, you therefore need to be aware of the original genre of the text you are reading: was this piece originally a newspaper editorial, a blog, an organizational white paper, a scholarly article, a student paper posted to a Web site, or something else?

In the chart on pages 32–34, we identify most of the genres of argument through which readers and writers carry on the conversations of a democracy.

Cultural Contexts: Who Writes Arguments and Why?

A democratic society depends on the lively exchange of ideas—people with different points of view creating arguments for their positions. Now that you know something about the genre of arguments, we ask you to consider who writes arguments and why.

Genres of Argument

Genre	Explanation and Examples	Stylistic Features
Personal correspondence	▪ Letters or e-mail messages ▪ Often sent to specific decision makers (complaint letter, request for an action)	▪ Style can range from a formal business letter to an informal note
Letters to the editor	▪ Published in newspapers and some magazines ▪ Provide a forum for citizens to voice views on public issues	▪ Very short (fewer than three hundred words) and time sensitive ▪ Can be summaries of longer arguments, but often focus in "sound bite" style on one point
Newspaper editorials and op-ed pieces	▪ Published on the editorial or op-ed ("opposite-editorial") pages ▪ Editorials promote views of the newspaper owners/editors ▪ Op-ed pieces, usually written by professional columnists or guest writers, range in bias from ultraconservative to socialist (see pages 350–352 in Chapter 15) ▪ Often written in response to political events or social problems in the news	▪ Usually short (500–1,000 words) ▪ Vary from explicit thesis-driven arguments to implicit arguments with stylistic flair ▪ Have a journalistic style (short paragraphs) without detailed evidence ▪ Sources usually not documented
Articles in public affairs or niche magazines	▪ Usually written by staff writers or freelancers ▪ Appear in public affairs magazines such as *National Review* or *The Progressive* or in niche magazines for special-interest groups such as *Rolling Stone* (popular culture), *Minority Business Entrepreneur* (business), or *The Advocate* (gay and lesbian issues) ▪ Often reflect the political point of view of the magazine	▪ Often have a journalistic style with informal documentation ▪ Frequently include narrative elements rather than explicit thesis-and-reasons organization ▪ Often provide well-researched coverage of various perspectives on a public issue
Articles in scholarly journals	▪ Peer-reviewed articles published by nonprofit academic journals subsidized by universities or scholarly societies ▪ Characterized by scrupulous attention to completeness and accuracy in treatment of data	▪ Usually employ a formal academic style ▪ Include academic documentation and bibliographies ▪ May reflect the biases, methods, and strategies associated with a specific school of thought or theory within a discipline

Genre	Explanation and Examples	Stylistic Features
Legal briefs and court decisions	▪ Written by attorneys or judges ▪ "Friend-of-the-court" briefs are often published by stakeholders to influence appeals courts ▪ Court decisions explain the reasoning of justices on civic cases (and often include minority opinions)	▪ Usually written in legalese, but use a logical reasons-and-evidence structure ▪ Friend-of-the-court briefs are sometimes aimed at popular audiences
Organizational white papers	▪ In-house documents or PowerPoint presentations aimed at influencing organizational policy or decisions or giving informed advice to clients ▪ Sometimes written for external audiences to influence public opinion favorable to the organization ▪ External white papers are often posted on Web sites or sent to legislators	▪ Usually desktop or Web published ▪ Often include graphics and other visuals ▪ Vary in style from the dully bureaucratic (satirized in *Dilbert* cartoons) to the cogent and persuasive
Blogs and postings to chat rooms and electronic bulletin boards	▪ Web-published commentaries, usually on specific topics and often intended to influence public opinion ▪ Blogs (Web logs) are gaining influence as alternative commentaries to the established media ▪ Reflect a wide range of perspectives	▪ Often blend styles of journalism, personal narrative, and formal argument ▪ Often difficult to determine identity and credentials of blogger ▪ Often provide hyperlinks to related sites on the Web
Public affairs advocacy advertisements	▪ Published as posters, fliers, Web pages, or paid advertisements ▪ Condensed verbal/visual arguments aimed at influencing public opinion ▪ Often have explicit bias and ignore alternative views	▪ Use succinct "sound bite" style ▪ Employ document design, bulleted lists, and visual elements (graphics, photographs, or drawings) for rhetorical effect
Advocacy Web sites	▪ Usually identified by the extension ".org" in the Web site address ▪ Often created by well-financed advocacy groups such as the NRA (National Rifle Association) or PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) ▪ Reflect the bias of the site owner ▪ For further discussion of reading and evaluating Web sites, see Chapter 15, pages 362–363	▪ Often contain many layers with hyperlinks to other sites ▪ Use visuals and verbal text to create an immediate visceral response favorable to the site owner's views ▪ Ethically responsible sites announce their bias and purpose in an "About Us" or "Mission Statement" link on the home page

(*Continued*)

Genre	Explanation and Examples	Stylistic Features
Visual arguments	■ Political cartoons, usually drawn by syndicated cartoonists ■ Other visual arguments (photographs, drawings, graphics, ads), usually accompanied by verbal text	■ Make strong emotional appeals, often reducing complex issues to one powerful perspective (see Chapter 9)
Speeches and PowerPoint presentations	■ Political speeches, keynote speeches at professional meetings, informal speeches at hearings, interviews, business presentations ■ Often made available via transcription in newspapers or on Web sites ■ In business or government settings, often accompanied by PowerPoint slides	■ Usually organized clearly with highlighted claim, supporting reasons, and transitions ■ Accompanying PowerPoint slides designed to highlight structure, display evidence in graphics, mark key points, and sometimes provide humor
Documentary films	■ Formerly nonfiction reporting, documentary films now range widely from efforts to document reality objectively to efforts to persuade viewers to adopt the filmmaker's perspective or take action ■ Usually cost less to produce than commercial films and lack special effects ■ Cover topics such as art, science, and economic, political, and military crises	■ Often use extended visual arguments, combined with interviews and voice-overs, to influence as well as inform viewers ■ The filmmaker's angle of vision may dominate, or his or her perspective and values may be more subtle

In reconstructing the rhetorical context of an argument, consider how any given writer is spurred to write by a motivating occasion and by the desire to change the views of a particular audience. In this section, we'll return to our example of illegal immigration. The following list identifies the wide range of writers, cartoonists, filmmakers, and others who are motivated to enter the conversation about immigration.

Who Writes Arguments about Immigration and Why?

- **Lobbyists and advocacy groups.** Lobbyists and advocacy groups commit themselves to a cause, often with passion, and produce avidly partisan arguments aimed at persuading voters, legislators, government agencies, and other decision makers. They often maintain advocacy Web sites, buy advertising space in newspapers and magazines, and lobby legislators face-to-face. For example, the immigrant advocacy group La Raza defends immigrant rights, whereas the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) fights to end illegal immigration and rallies people to pressure businesses not to hire undocumented workers.

Questions for "Writing Arguments"

1. What is rhetorical context?

2. Which of the genres did you find to be the most interesting? Why?

3. How do the stylistic features of genres communicate their intent? Choose one category to use as an example in your explanation.

4. Who writes about immigration and why?

Leonard Pitts Jr.: For too many, minds closed to the truth

You can't handle the truth.

There is a temptation to take that line from Jack Nicholson — snarled at Tom Cruise in *A Few Good Men* — as the moral of the story, the lesson to be learned from a new study on trustworthiness and the news media.

The study, conducted by the nonpartisan Pew Research Center, informs us that America's least-trusted news source is conservative radio talk show host Rush Limbaugh, rated unreliable by almost 40 percent of all Americans. The also conservative Fox "News" follows closely at 37 percent. So America's least-trusted news sources are also its most popular; Limbaugh hosts the number one show on radio and Fox is the highest-rated cable news outlet.

It gets better. Pew tells us America's most trusted news source is CNN; the network that eschews any ideological identifier is considered reliable by 54 percent of us. Yet for as much as we supposedly trust it, we don't seem to like it very much. Its ratings — despite a mild resurgence in recent months — are but a fraction of Fox's and it is undergoing massive layoffs.

For what it's worth, there's evidence to support America's perception of who is and is not trustworthy. PunditFact, an offshoot of PolitiFact, the Pulitzer Prize-winning fact-checking website, has issued a report card on the truthfulness of broadcast pundits by network. It's an imperfect measure, but the results are still compelling. Over 60 percent of Fox pundit statements rated by PunditFact have been found to be some flavor of false.

CNN? Just 22 percent.

If all this sounds like a commercial for the network of holograms and missing plane obsessions, it isn't. Rather, it's a lament for the closing of the American mind.

There is an axiom that he who builds the best mousetrap enjoys the greatest success. But if that's true, how is it the greatest successes in a business measured by trustworthiness are those entities judged least trustworthy of all? Maybe the answer is that conservative hardliners are more rabid in support of those who validate their views than the rest of us are in pursuit of simple truth.

In a nation where political discourse is increasingly a facts-optional exercise and reality now comes in shades of red and blue, that's hardly reassuring.

Two years ago, at the request of yours truly, the people at Nielsen crunched some numbers. They found that in times of major breaking news — the examples used were the Columbine shooting, the Sept. 11 attacks, the commencement of the Iraq War, the Japanese tsunami and the death of Michael Jackson — ratings for all three cable news outlets tend to rise. But, almost without exception, the most dramatic spikes on a percentage basis are enjoyed by CNN. The week of Sept. 11, its ratings rose by *800 percent.* No other network came close.

In other words, when something big has happened and people need to know what's going on, they know where to go. They go where they can trust.

But on a routine day, many Americans, for as much as they will say otherwise, really don't want to be informed so much as to be confirmed in their political biases, in the partisan version of truth that explains the world to them while making the fewest demands on intellect — and conscience. They need the "death panels" and "anchor" babies, the birther controversies and supposedly rampant voter fraud, the "threats" of sharia law and Obama-caused Ebola, the whole rickety structure of falsehood and fear upon which conservatism has built its alternate reality. That's the whole reason Fox exists — and CNN barely does.

And it's why Nicholson's quote, tempting as it is, provides no proper moral for this story.

It's not that we can't handle the truth. It's that some of us prefer the lie.

Questions for "For too Many, Minds Closed to the Truth"

1. In your own words, what is Pitts arguing?

2. Is his argument successful? Why or why not?

3. Do you agree or disagree with Pitts? Explain.

Five Lies Our Culture Tells

The cultural roots of our political problems.

By David Brooks

- April 15, 2019

Four years ago, in the midst of the Obama presidency, I published a book called "The Road to Character." American culture seemed to be in decent shape and my focus was on how individuals can deepen their inner lives. This week, in the midst of the Trump presidency, I've got another book, "The Second Mountain." It's become clear in the interim that things are *not* in good shape, that our problems are societal. The whole country is going through some sort of spiritual and emotional crisis.

College mental health facilities are swamped, suicide rates are spiking, the president's repulsive behavior is tolerated or even celebrated by tens of millions of Americans. At the root of it all is the following problem: We've created a culture based on lies.

Here are some of them:

Career success is fulfilling. This is the lie we foist on the young. In their tender years we put the most privileged of them inside a college admissions process that puts achievement and status anxiety at the center of their lives. That begins advertising's lifelong mantra — if you make it, life will be good.

Everybody who has actually tasted success can tell you that's not true. I remember when the editor of my first book called to tell me it had made the best-seller list. It felt like … nothing. It was external to me.

The truth is, success spares you from the shame you might experience if you feel yourself a failure, but career success alone does not provide positive peace or fulfillment. If you build your life around it, your ambitions will always race out in front of what you've achieved, leaving you anxious and dissatisfied.

I can make myself happy. This is the lie of self-sufficiency. This is the lie that happiness is an individual accomplishment. If I can have just one more victory, lose 15 pounds or get better at meditation, then I will be happy.

But people looking back on their lives from their deathbeds tell us that happiness is found amid thick and loving relationships. It is found by defeating self-sufficiency for a state of mutual dependence. It is found in the giving and receiving of care.

It's easy to say you live for relationships, but it's very hard to do. It's hard to see other people in all their complexity. It's hard to communicate from your depths, not your shallows. It's hard to stop performing! No one teaches us these skills.

Life is an individual journey. This is the lie books like Dr. Seuss' "Oh, the Places You'll Go" tell. In adulthood, each person goes on a personal trip and racks up a bunch of experiences, and whoever has the most experiences wins. This lie encourages people to believe freedom is the absence of restraint. Be unattached. Stay on the move. Keep your options open.

In reality, the people who live best tie themselves down. They don't ask: What cool thing can I do next? They ask: What is my responsibility here? They respond to some problem or get called out of themselves by a deep love.

By planting themselves in one neighborhood, one organization or one mission, they earn trust. They have the freedom to make a lasting difference. It's the chains we choose that set us free.

You have to find your own truth. This is the privatization of meaning. It's not up to the schools to teach a coherent set of moral values, or a society. Everybody chooses his or her own values. Come up with your own answers to life's ultimate questions! You do you!

The problem is that unless your name is Aristotle, you probably can't do it. Most of us wind up with a few vague moral feelings but no moral clarity or sense of purpose.

The reality is that values are created and passed down by strong, self-confident communities and institutions. People absorb their values by submitting to communities and institutions and taking part in the conversations that take place within them. It's a group process.

Rich and successful people are worth more than poorer and less successful people. We pretend we don't tell this lie, but our whole meritocracy points to it. In fact, the meritocracy contains a skein of lies.

The message of the meritocracy is that you are what you accomplish. The false promise of the meritocracy is that you can earn dignity by attaching yourself to prestigious brands. The emotion of the meritocracy is conditional love — that if you perform well, people will love you.

The sociology of the meritocracy is that society is organized around a set of inner rings with the high achievers inside and everyone else further out. The anthropology of the meritocracy is that you are not a soul to be saved but a set of skills to be maximized.

No wonder it's so hard to be a young adult today. No wonder our society is fragmenting. We've taken the lies of hyper-individualism and we've made them the unspoken assumptions that govern how we live.

We talk a lot about the political revolution we need. The cultural revolution is more important.

Questions for "Five Lies Our Culture Tells"

1. What are the five lies?

2. What type of information does Brooks use to illustrate his ideas?

3. Do you agree with Brooks argument? Why or why not?

4. Who is Brooks intended audience?

NAME:______________________

"About Me" Questionnaire

1. What motivated you to sign up for OnRamps English?

2. What do you hope to learn or master during our year together?

3. How do you feel about your writing?

4. What is your greatest strength as a person? What is your greatest weakness?

5. If you were a color, what color would you be and why?

6. What words do you live by? (Consider a quote, a song lyric, a line from a book or poem, words of wisdom from a family member…)