

Writing in the Professions

RPW 300

Part I: Foundations :: Rhetorical-Genre Analysis Memo

Overview

The first assignment of the semester explores genres of writing common to your profession. In short, genres are ways to categorize media. There are genres of books, movies, music, and even workplace documents. You'll want to consider a genre common to your profession (i.e. grant proposals, activity reports, flyers, pamphlets/brochures, web pages, press releases, etc.) and gather samples. Next, you'll analyze each artifact, considering reader-users, purpose, context, and social construction, among other aspects, and draw comparisons. This assignment culminates in a written memo discussing your findings.

Step 1: Collect Artifacts

The first step toward completing this project is to consider which genres are important in your profession and collect document artifacts. Some genres such as emails and memos, while serving important functions in the workplace, are common across most professions. Avoid choosing these ubiquitous genres. Instead, consider genres that serve important functions in your specific profession. Please note that the genres important to your profession do not have to be hard-copy, text-based documents. Multimedia genres are certainly appropriate for this project, if these genres are important to your profession. If you are unsure which genres are important in your field, talk with one of your professors or a current practitioner in your chosen profession.

Once you've chosen a genre on which to focus—one that is important to your profession—collect artifacts (actual documents written/created in this genre). You'll want 3-5 artifacts for Step 2.

We'll start the collection process during Module 2.

Step 2: Analyze Artifacts

Now that you've gathered 3-5 artifacts of a genre important in your profession, you will analyze each artifact, drawing comparisons across each artifact. Also in Module 2, I will post a document that will guide your analysis.

Step 3: Write Memo

Adhering to the conventions of a professional memo—discussed in Chapter 5 of *Technical Communication Today*—write a memo that synthesizes your artifact analysis. You will want to discuss the rhetorical aspects such as reader-users (audience),

context, purpose, and style from your analysis, as well as the conventions of the genre. Additionally, consider the following questions to help guide your memo:

1. What does your analysis reveal about this genre (and its importance) in your profession?
2. When writing in this genre, what do you need to be aware of regarding reader-users?
3. Considering your analysis, in what ways does context impact how writers approach this genre?
4. In what ways does this genre influence how action is taken or work is completed in your profession? What role(s) does the writer play in helping reader-users take action when composing/creating in this genre?
5. Based on your analysis, in what ways do writers manage their purpose when composing/creating in this genre?

Use these questions as a jumping off point. The purpose of the memo is for you to discuss your analysis; therefore, your response/discussion should be more fluid than simply rigidly addressing the above questions. Certainly, the artifacts you've gathered and the analysis you've conducted will yield discussion points not categorized by the above questions. Please feel free to address these areas as well. Your final memo **must** incorporate evidence from your analysis (e.g. excerpts, screen shots, and quotations), supporting the claims you make.

The final memo should be between **500-600 words** and is due via the Assignment tool on our course Canvas site as a PDF by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, October 2, 2016.