Multigenre Research Paper

One of the major projects of this course is to learn how to write a substantial research paper. This learning process includes finding a topic of interest, doing research, taking notes, using the writing process to produce multiple drafts, and writing a Works Consulted. These skills will be important for you not only in your future classes, but also in careers and in every day life. In years past, classes have written papers on people, general topics, and themes from this course, all in a standard research paper format. This year you will be trying something a little different: a multigenre research paper on the person, topic, or theme of your choice. This is ultimately an argumentative piece where you are making a claim about the cultural significance of your topic.

“[Multigenre papers] recognize that there are many ways to see the world, many ways to show others what we see.”
--Tom Romano

Research

Finding a Topic: For this paper, you may choose to do your research on a person (historical figure, politician, entertainer, etc.), a general topic (the history of marbles, affirmative action), or a theme from your knowledge base. Some guidelines:

- Pick something that interests you! You’ll be spending a lot of time on this paper so you’ll want to be researching something you enjoy.
- Pick a general topic so that you’ll be sure to find resources on it, then narrow your focus to a particular aspect you discover through research.
- Have a few topics in mind to start your research. Some topics might not work out depending on the resources you can find.
- If you’re stuck for topic ideas: talk with friends and family, browse through the internet, anything to get your mind working and ideas flowing.
- Choose someone, or something that you believe adds something to culture (not necessarily YOUR OWN). What does this person or thing contribute to American, Californian, Southern Californian, San Diegan, West Coast U.S., Peruvian, Timbuktuian, Malian, Libyan, Nova Scotian, Croatian, etc.

Research: You must cite at least 7 sources in your final paper. That may mean you use more than 7 in your research, but decide to only use information from some of them in your paper. The 7 sources that you cite must be used in some way in your final draft. Your resources may be found in a variety of places. My advice would be to start in the library, either here at school or in our public library. A librarian is a great resource for help, so make sure to bring your questions to him/her. From there you can go to the computer, browsing through online journals and article indexes. Once you have a good idea of your topic, the Internet will be a great tool for focused researching. Try to use both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are created at the time period you are researching. They include letters, newspaper articles, diary entries, etc. Secondary sources are sources created after the fact that reflect on the event or time period. They often analyze the primary sources.

The Paper

Writer’s Purpose: Your job is to persuade a body of readers about a specific topic using research to back up your writing. You must create an argumentative thesis and persuade your readers about the “cultural significance” of your topic. Make sure that your paper is full of the important and useful information that comes out of your research.
Audience: You choose the audience that your paper speaks to. Depending on the genres and content, it could be an audience of a certain time period, a certain age level, or simply a contemporary audience. Keep this in mind while you write. As it is a class assignment, your peers and teacher will be reading your paper.

Form: Your final paper must include:
- A table of contents that identifies what genres you are including and why (you can choose to do the “why” part in your conclusion, if you’d like)
- An introduction to your topic – usually in the form of a letter to your audience
- At least five different genres from different categories. (See a list of possible genres on the next page. If you wish to use a genre not listed, please approve it with me first.)
- A conclusion that ties your paper together
- A set of endnotes that will serve as both the Works Consulted and can include any other information you wish to present. You may also choose to use footnotes – just be consistent.

The five (or more) genres can be presented in any format you choose. You must pick a genre from five different categories, which represent varying types of writing. If you choose to do more than five, you can repeat categories, pick from the last category, or use a genre not listed. You can present them separately or interweave them into a larger framework, however they should be connected by unifying themes, repeated motifs, genres that speak to each other, or topics that are mentioned in some genres and expanded in others. Do not simply cut and paste five genres and call it a paper. Use your own professional discretion as to the margins and font you wish to use for each genre. As you’ll see from the following list, not all the genres will be completely non-fictional. You are free to merge the non-fictional research you do with fictional context.

Genre Ideas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group 1: Print Media</th>
<th>Group 2: Visual with Words</th>
<th>Group 3: Visual Display</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper Article</td>
<td>Poster</td>
<td>Picture/Photograph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obituary</td>
<td>Invitation</td>
<td>Graph</td>
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<tr>
<td>Editorial</td>
<td>Ad</td>
<td>Map</td>
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<tr>
<td>Letter to the Editor</td>
<td>Travel Brochure</td>
<td>Certificate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advice Column</td>
<td>Greeting Card</td>
<td>Recipe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Magazine Article</td>
<td>Cartoon</td>
<td>Collage</td>
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</tbody>
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<tr>
<th>Group 4: Informational</th>
<th>Group 5: Creative Writing</th>
<th>Group 6: Structured</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Skit</td>
<td>Essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Song</td>
<td>Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trivia Game</td>
<td>Poem</td>
<td>Book Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeline</td>
<td>Short Story</td>
<td>Letter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Directions</td>
<td>Personal Narrative</td>
<td>Speech</td>
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<tr>
<td>Idea Web</td>
<td>Conversation</td>
<td>Descriptive Paragraph</td>
</tr>
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Grading:

Structure (15%): Paper includes: Table of Contents, introduction, at least 5 genres (one from each category), conclusion, and endnotes.

Quality of Content & Style (50%): Each of the required elements is strong in its language, clarity, meaning, and information. The writing meets the intended purpose and matches needs of the audience.
Creativity/Appropriateness of Genres (15%): The paper shows thought, effort, and creativity on the part of the writer. The genres included are varied and appropriate for the content presented and specific genre conventions are met. Research (20%): Research was thoroughly performed and documented and at least 7 sources were used and cited in the final paper.

Procedures Checklist

1. Brainstorm topics. Settle on a few that interest you and do a little researching. Pick one topic that you’ve found ample resources for.
2. Fill out the “Research Plan” worksheet and submit it to me for approval on 9/19-20.
3. Perform your research. Check the library, computer, and Internet for sources. You might want to also research by going to museums, conducting interviews, or finding other hidden treasures.
4. Some class time will be dedicated to showing examples of multigenre works so that you have an idea of what your paper can look like. Study these examples and draw inspiration.
5. Organize your sources in some way meaningful to you (write an outline, draw a web or map, etc.) and formulate ideas for your paper. Play around with different genres and see which ones work for the information you have.
6. Write a first draft of your paper. This draft should include at least 3 genres but may not have the overall unifying theme yet if you choose.
7. Conference with your peers in class to get suggestions, ideas, and critiques. Conference with me. This will be scheduled as a part of our class.
8. Revise your first draft. Go back and do more research. Write more drafts. Do whatever necessary to make your paper the best possible. You may choose to change some of your genres to something more suitable. Decide on an overall theme or structure to tie your paper together. Make sure you have an annotated table of contents or preface, an introduction, a conclusion, and end notes with appropriate citation of sources.
9. With a finished draft in hand (“finished” in the sense that it includes every required component), conference with your peers and myself.
10. Revise and proofread this draft. Hand in your final, polished draft.
Research Plan

1. What is your topic? Who is your target audience? What is the cultural significance of your topic?

2. Describe what you know about your topic.

3. Tell what you want to learn about.

4. Initially, what five genres are you planning on using? In what order? Provide a logical justification for ordering your genres.

5. Provide a preliminary bibliography.