Unit 4: Multi-genre Research Paper

What is a multi-genre research paper?

A multi-genre research paper is an alternative to the traditional five-paragraph essay. As the name suggests, it emphasizes the use of multiple genres to present information on given research topic. As you might know, *genre* is a term used to represent any type of art including literature, speeches, drawings, music, etc. With this type of project, you will be expected to research a topic of your choosing and then present the information you gather using a variety of genres (e.g., poems, essays, etc.).

Learning Objectives:

* Research information about a topic that interests you
* Cultivate and practice information literacy skills in finding, accessing, and evaluating information from different mediums
* Design creative interpretations through multiple genres to represent key learning
* Incorporate elements of MLA style writing and documentation
* Compile all research into a single Google Site that combines multigenre and traditional elements of research
* Demonstrate ability to embed images, hyperlinks, audio, and other items in order to create a multimedia experience.

Steps in Multi-genre Research Paper Process

Finding a Topic: The first step, naturally, is to choose a topic. For this paper, you may choose to do your research on a person, an event, or a general topic; however, your topic must have a “worldly connection.” By this, I mean, your topic should extend farther than the United States.

Turning a Topic into a Research Question: Once you have determined a topic (i.e., the Islamic Revolution), you must develop a research question that will be the basis for your “research paper.” It is important to keep in mind that a *topic* and a *research* *question* are not the same thing. A topic is simply the general subject. The research question, however, is a specific question that will guide your research.

* Broad research topic: Islamic Revolution of 1979
* Focused research question: How did the Islamic Revolution impact Iranian women and gender roles in Iran?

Conducting Research: Once you have determined your research question(s), you will conduct independent research. You must cite at least four (4) sources in your final “research paper.” We will be in the media center on select days; however, you will be expected to complete a significant amount of work outside of class on your own. When we are in the media center, be sure to utilize the print resources that are available to you. From there, you can go to the computer and browse online journals and article indexes. Once you have a good idea of your topic, the Internet will be a great tool for focused researching.

As a part of your research, be sure to draw information from a variety of sources (e.g., documentaries, journal articles, news clippings, etc.). In addition, try to use both primary and secondary sources. Remember, *primary sources* are created at the time period you are researching. They include letters, diary entries, etc. *Secondary sources* are sources created after the fact that reflect on the event or time period, and they often analyze the primary sources.

Research Log: During your research and throughout the writing process, you will keep a research log that you will turn in with your final paper. All items for your research log should be kept in a folder of some sort that will be turned in at the culmination of the project. This folder will include the following:

* Journal entries: Every so often, I will give you some time in class to reflect on your researching and writing processes. Here you can write about your frustrations, your triumphs, your questions, and your interpretations. This is your chance to explain the choices you made in your research and writing.
* Research notes: Your notes can take on any format that works for you. You can use notecards, marked-up photocopies, written or typed notes, or some other method. Whichever method you choose, you must be able to submit them for evidence of productive research of the duration of the research assignment.

Writing the “Research Paper”

Writer’s Purpose: Your job is *to inform* a body of readers about a specific topic using research to back up your writing. Your paper may be strictly informational in tone, you may create an argumentative thesis and persuade your readers, or you can take on a more entertaining project. Just make sure that your paper is full of the important and useful information that comes out of your research.

Audience: As it is a class assignment, your peers and teacher will be your immediate audience. Your larger audience, however, might include other people. Perhaps you will choose to share your research paper with others outside of class.

**Form:** Your final “research paper” should be a digital product (e.g., website, blog, etc.) that can be shared easily. The “paper” must include the following:

* “Dear Reader” letter (will be written last)
* Table of Contents (identify title of texts and genres)
* At least six different texts from the different genre groupings (*If you wish to use a genre not listed, please approve it with me first*.)
* Reflection Letter
* Works Cited

Below is a table with a number of suggestions for different genres. Everyone should have at least one artifact from each of the categories.

Although you will be utilizing different genres/text-types, remember that everything should be connected in some way (e.g., 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 texts that represent different 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. For example, to use the Islamic Revolution example previously mentioned, one might produce a fictional interview with a person who lived through this revolution based on factual information gathered from research.

**Genre Ideas:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Group 1: Print Media* Newspaper Article
* Obituary
* Editorial
* Letter to the Editor
* Advice Column
* Magazine Article
 | Group 2: Visual with Words* Poster
* Invitation
* Ad
* Travel Brochure
* Greeting Card
* Cartoon
 | Group 3: Visual Display\*\** Picture/Photograph
* Graph
* Map
* Certificate
* Collage
* Glogster
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| --- | --- | --- |
| Group 4: Informational* Interview
* Survey
* Trivia Game
* Timeline
* Directions
* Idea Web
 | Group 5: Creative Writing* Skit
* Song
* Poem
* Short Story
* Personal Narrative
* Conversation
 | Group 6: Structured * Essay
* Report
* Book Review
* Letter
* Speech
* Presentation
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\*\* Texts that come from Group 3 must be accompanied by some written artifact. For example, perhaps you will create a collage to illustrate a certain concept. To receive full credit, you would need to submit a written piece (100 words minimum) describing the artifact and how it ties into your project.

**The Parts of the Multi-genre Research Paper**

Below is a breakdown of the different pieces required in your research paper, as well as more details on things to include in each section.

**“Dear Reader” Letter**

Although this is the first page that your audience will see, this letter will be the last thing that you do. This letter will serve as a roadmap for your readers. It will provide a brief overview of your topic, explain how to navigate your portfolio, and discuss your journey with this assignment. If you’re struggling to write the letter, focus on trying to answer the following questions:

* Why did I choose this topic and why is it important to me?
* What did I know about the topic before my research began?
* What were my research questions?
* What resources did I use to find my information?
* What did I learn about this topic through my research?
* How does my research make a difference to me? To others?

**Table of Contents**

In the table of contents, you must clearly outline the parts of your paper. Below is an example that has seven (7) entries. Obviously, your table of contents will have more entries.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **#** | **Title/Description** | **Genre** |
| 1 | Dear Reader… | Letter |
| 2 | “The Veil” vs. “Freedom” | Double Voice Poem |
| 3 | “Growing Up in a Revolution” | Interview |
| 4 | Conclusion | Reflection |
| 5 | Annotated Works Cited | Works Cited |

**The Texts**

While the type of texts you choose to create is up to you, there are a few things you must do for each text in your paper. First, you must provide a summary of the text at the beginning so that the reader knows what to expect. Here’s an example of a summary for a double-voice poem entry:

*Much of Persepolis centers around dichotomies: war and peace; fundamentalism and liberalism; masculinity and femininity. One of the most obvious dichotomies, however, is that of the sentiments toward the obligatory veil. To represent both sides of the conflict, I wrote these poems from contrasting viewpoints.*

For each text, you must describe and cite the reference material you used to create your text. Here’s a model entry for the double-voice poem mentioned above:

*Although I had a cursory understanding of the changes that took place during the Islamic Revolution, I looked for more information on the ways in which women were impacted. I came across a journal article “Changing Roles: Women Before, During, and After the Revolution” that addressed how the new regime created more conservative requirements for women’s clothing. The article also discussed how different women responded to these changes.*

**The Reflection Letter**

As the name suggests, the reflection letter is where you will reflect on the process of researching, composing, and designing your final product. This letter should be directed to me (the teacher).

**Works Cited**

At the end of your paper, include an appropriately formatted (MLA) works cited page.

**Showcasing Your Research Paper**

To display your “research paper,” you will design a professional website. I highly recommend Weebly (<http://www.weebly.com>). It’s a free website creator that is very user-friendly. You do, however, have the option of using a different website creation application (i.e., Google Sites).

**Evaluation of the Multi-genre Research Paper**

Below is a breakdown of how you will be evaluated.

* **Structure (10%):** Paper includes: “Dear Reader” letter, table of contents, introduction, six texts (one from each genre), reflection letter, and works cited.
* **Quality of Content & Style (45%):** 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 (10%): 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 (15%):** Research was thoroughly performed and documented and at least four sources were used and cited in the final paper.
* **Research Log (15%):** The learning logs provide useful information and meaningful reflections about the paper and the paper process according to the set guidelines.
* **Productivity** **(5%)**: Use of class time to work on this assignment.