Everything's a Text
Readings for Composition

Dan Melzer
California State University, Sacramento

Deborah Coxwell-Teague
Florida State University

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DAN MELZER

DEBORAH COXWELL-TEAGUE

1 What Is Literacy?

Today information about the world around us comes to us not only by words on a piece of paper, but also more and more through the powerful images and sounds of our multimedia culture. . . . If our children are to be able to navigate their lives through this multimedia culture, they need to be fluent in "reading" and "writing" the language of images and sounds just as we have always taught them to "read" and "write" the language of printed communications.

—*Center for Media Literacy*

Meaning is made in ways that are increasingly multimodal—in which written-linguistic modes of meaning are part and parcel of visual, audio, and spatial patterns of meaning. Take for instance the multimodal ways in which meanings are made on the World Wide Web, or in video capturing, or in interactive multimedia, or in desktop publishing, or in the use of written texts in a shopping mall. To find our way around this emerging world of meaning requires a new, multimodal literacy.

—Professors Bill Cope and Mary Kalantzis, *Multiliteracies*

Twenty-first-century readers and writers need to

- Develop proficiency with the tools of technology
- Build relationships with others to pose and solve problems collaboratively and cross-culturally
- Design and share information for global communities to meet a variety of purposes
- Manage, analyze, and synthesize multiple streams of simultaneous information

- Create, critique, analyze, and evaluate multimedia texts
- Attend to the ethical responsibilities required by these complex environments

—from *Toward a Definition of 21st Century Literacies*
by the National Council of Teachers of English

ewrite Definitions of Literacy

A *freewrite* is a kind of informal, in-class writing that focuses on using writing to think about and explore ideas. The goal of a freewrite is *not* to create finely crafted paragraphs or grammatically correct sentences, but to just keep your pen moving (or keep typing on the keyboard) and let the ideas flow. Some of the freewrites in this book will ask you to make a list, some will ask you to reflect on your experiences, and some will ask you to talk and write in groups. The goal of this freewrite is to get you thinking about the definition of *literacy*. What do you think it means to be *literate*? Are there different definitions for literacy in different time periods, cultures, and countries?

Definitions of Literacy

When you hear the word *literacy*, the first thing you might think of is print literacy—reading words in books, magazines, and newspapers, or writing essays for a class. Maybe you associate being literate with knowing Standard English or with having read the novels that are required reading in high school literature courses, like *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Catcher in the Rye*, or *Pride and Prejudice*. Traditional ideas about what it means to be literate are reflected in grammar handbooks and in composition textbooks that provide universal rules for good writing and in books such as E. D. Hirsch's *Cultural Literacy*, which makes the argument for a single, standard English language and a set of texts that all educated Americans should read.

These traditional ideas about literacy have been challenged by rapid transformations in America and around the world. You've probably heard terms like *multimedia*, *multiple intelligences*, *multiculturalism*, and *multilingual*. The traditional idea that there should be one standard way of writing and speaking in America is being questioned by educators who think of literacy as "multiple." Because of the increasing ethnic diversity of America and the variety of global Englishes being used around the world, a literate person needs to know how to cross linguistic boundaries and how to respect language and cultural diversity. In his book *Critical Literacy*, Eugene Provenzo argues that being literate means having knowledge of "complexity and diversity." Educators such as Provenzo, Paulo Freire, and Ira Shor argue that one aspect of this complexity and diversity is political and cultural conflict. Critical literacy educators argue that an important part of being literate is being aware of the relationship between language and power, and they ask who is left out and why one group gets to decide what the rules of communication are and who gets to speak. Being literate means being able to evaluate what you read and being able to reflect critically on your own reading and writing processes. This means being able to understand how economic, social, and political factors have shaped your own literacy history.

Writers such as Cynthia Selfe, James Paul Gee, and John Seely Brown argue that because of the explosion of digital communications, a literate person needs to be skilled in more than just print literacy. Many new types of communications—blogs, graphic novels, streaming video, PowerPoint, text messaging, e-mail, virtual reality—require skills that are different than the skills needed to compose in traditional print literacies. These new media literacies often combine print literacy with digital, visual, and oral literacies. These channels of communication—print, digital, visual, and oral—are what communication theorists call *modes*. The term *multimodal* is used to refer to literacies that combine these different channels of communication. Traditional print literacies like books, magazines, and newspapers are still important forms of literacy, but the ability to read and compose in digital, visual, and oral modes is also critical to being a literate person in the twenty-first century. It's just as important that you learn to "read" a photo, song, or television show as it is to learn to read words on the page or the screen.

One of the kinds of literacies we'll focus on throughout this book is *academic literacies*. But academic literacy is only one kind of literacy, and even academic literacy is not a universal standard or a unified set of rules. What we value in academic writing in America is not necessarily what is valued in academic writing in other countries. Even in your own college, each field (the natural sciences, the social sciences, the humanities) will present you with a different version of what it means to be literate. You might find conflicts and connections with the writing you do in school and the writing you do for yourself, or the kinds of literacies that are valued by your family or your community.

You will encounter many kinds of literacies in your public life outside of school, whether they are political speeches, newspaper editorials, or pop culture magazines. Academic literacies, personal literacies, pop culture literacies, and civic literacies are all contexts for literacy that will present you with different purposes, audiences, and forms of writing that will shape your reading and writing processes. All acts of literacy are *situated*—they are constructed by the specific situation you find yourself in as a reader or composer. This literacy situation includes the role you play as the composer

of a message, the form you compose in, your audience, and the social and cultural contexts for you and your audience. Rather than talking about a single, unified concept of literacy or the writing process, this book talks about multiple and situated literacies and composing processes. We use the term *compose* instead of *write* because literacy involves the creation of not just printed words but also photos, speeches, songs, artwork, videos, and so forth.

To help us think about this concept of multiple literacies, consider these literacy examples:

> The Mexican music group Molotov combines heavy metal and hip-hop, English and Spanish, and rap beats and traditional Mexican music to create a new "hybrid" form of rap music that has an audience in Mexico, the United States, and around the world.
>
> A student in a history class at San Antonio Community College creates an informative Internet resource site about the feminist movement that includes JPEG images, an essay about feminism, links to other Web sites, audio clips of an interview with a professor on campus who was part of the feminist movements of the 1970s, and a link to a video about the feminist Betty Friedan.
>
> In 1998, Joan Blades and Wes Boyd, two Silicon Valley entrepreneurs, start an online petition to "Censure President Clinton and Move On to Pressing Issues Facing the Nation." Within days, hundreds of thousands sign the petition, and Blades and Boyd form a Political Action Committee, MoveOn.org, with ad campaigns, marches, civic events, petitions, book publishing, and a Web site.
>
> Magic Bean Café in Michigan creates a page on *Facebook* to share photos and advertise their menu, music events, poetry readings, and newsletter. The page has 295 friends. The *Facebook* page is linked from Magic Bean Café's Web site.

In the four examples above, composers work in oral modes (creating music or clips of interviews), in digital modes (creating Web sites and online petitions), in visual modes (adding JPEG images and photo galleries to a Web site), and in multimodal literacies (creating a *Facebook* site that includes print text, images, and hyperlinks). In order to be literate, the composers in our examples needed the agility to compose for multiple purposes and audiences. The composers in our examples gathered information about feminism for a college class and for a global audience on the Internet, started a petition in order to affect political change, and advertised a business while creating a sense of community among the people who frequented the business.

New audiences and contexts mean new forms of writing that evolve to meet the demands of new literacy situations—new *genres*. Genres such as the online petition or the social networking Web site (such as *Facebook*) are new forms that have evolved as useful ways of communicating—new genres of communicating. The composers in our examples work in multiple genres.

MoveOn.org communicates through books, news articles, press releases, ads, letters, e-mails, petitions, and so forth. Some of these genres have been around for a long time (such as the press release), and others have evolved with new technologies (such as e-mails or online petitions). In addition to being able to communicate in a variety of genres, the ability to combine genres to create hybrid forms is a valuable skill for twenty-first-century literacy.

Molotov combines hip-hop, heavy metal, and traditional Mexican music genres to create a new genre of hip-hop. Molotov also combines Spanish and English, adding even more language variety to a genre—hip-hop—that constantly adds new expressions to the English language. As the United States becomes more diverse and global communications become faster and easier, composers who can speak and write in multiple languages and dialects will have an advantage over those who are monolingual and can use only the standardized version of English found in grammar handbooks.

Freewrite Your Literacy Experiences

In this freewrite, you will see just how many different literacies you read and compose. Make a list of everything you read and composed in the last week. How many different modes did you compose in (print, visual, digital, oral)? How many different types of compositions (genres) did you read and compose? How many different audiences did you compose for?

At this point you might be thinking that all of this talk about literacies doesn't connect to you, a student in college. But consider what a student in one of our first-year writing courses read and composed in a single week.

Composed:

- A research paper for a history class
- E-mails to friends and family
- An Evite invitation to a party
- Lyrics for a song for her band
- A blog entry about her literacy history for her composition class
- A job application

- Text messages to friends
- A PowerPoint presentation in a marketing class
- Reading responses posted to an electronic discussion board for a sociology class

Read:

- Articles from an academic journal for the history research paper
- *Spin* magazine
- Other students' blog entries from her composition class
- Strips of the Webcomic *Achewood*
- The student newspaper
- Textbook chapters for her sociology and chemistry classes
- The TV show *The Office*
- Mail from her bank about an account she just opened up
- Songs on her iPod
- A yoga video on *YouTube*

Each of these composing and reading situations presented our student with different audiences, different purposes for reading and composing, and different kinds of texts (including digital, visual, and oral texts). The purposes, audiences, and texts shaped her reading and composing processes, and she needed the flexibility to adjust her approach for each new literacy situation she encountered. Each act of reading and composing was situated in a specific purpose, genre, audience, and context. When you stop and think about all of the different kinds of texts you compose and read, in school and out of school, it's clear that the way we define literacy—and what it means to be a literate person—is multiple.

When we use the term *multiple literacies*, then, we mean that a literate person in the twenty-first century needs to be able to:

- Compose in multiple modes (print, oral, visual, digital)
- Compose for multiple purposes and audiences, including audiences with diverse cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds
- Compose in multiple contexts, including school, home, work, and civic contexts
- Compose in multiple genres, including new media genres such as blogs or text messages
- Read multiple kinds of texts, including visual texts such as ads, billboards, films, and so forth.

Even though a key word you will see throughout this book is *multiple*, there are features of any literacy situation that composers need to be aware of in order to communicate effectively. We've already touched on some of these features, such as purpose and audience and genre. In this next section, we'll look at some of these factors in any literacy situation.

Situating Literacy

Even though there is no single definition of literacy or of the composing process, there are factors that a reader or composer needs to consider in any literacy situation, whether it's writing an essay for a sociology class, viewing a video on *YouTube*, or putting together a PowerPoint presentation. In the rest of this chapter, we'll look at some of the major factors you'll need to consider in any literacy situation: purpose, audience, persona, medium, genre, and context. Even though twenty-first-century literacies are complex and demanding, being aware of these different rhetorical factors in literacy situations can help you analyze any kind of text and compose in any kind of literacy situation.

...ewrite Defining the Factors in Literacy Situations

The goal of this freewrite is to find out what you already know about some of the key factors in any literacy situation that we're going to discuss in the rest of this chapter. Write for a total of ten minutes about how you would define each of the key terms below. If you're not sure of a definition, write down words you associate with the term. Be prepared to share your thoughts with the class.

purpose persona genre
audience medium context

Literacy Purposes

Everything we compose has a purpose: to persuade someone to buy a product, to make someone laugh or cry, to get an "A" on a test, to remind yourself what you need at the grocery store, to brainstorm a topic for a research paper. The composing we do both in and out of school calls on us to read and write for multiple purposes, and the literacy situation will play a role in constructing our purposes. For example, if you're taking an essay exam for a college class, your purposes will be shaped by the exam questions, the teacher as your audience, the genre of the essay exam, and even the amount of time you have to complete the exam.

To talk in more detail about composing purposes, let's look at a letter written by former President Bill Clinton. This letter of apology was sent to Japanese Americans who were interned during World War II, and it was part of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which gave reparation checks of $20,000 to Japanese Americans who were forced to live in prison camps when the United States went to war with Japan.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 1, 1993

Over fifty years ago, the United States Government unjustly interned, evacuated, or relocated you and many other Japanese Americans. Today, on behalf of your fellow Americans, I offer a sincere apology to you for the actions that unfairly denied Japanese Americans and their families fundamental liberties during World War II.

In passing the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, we acknowledged the wrongs of the past and offered redress to those who endured such grave injustice. In retrospect, we understand that the nation's actions were rooted deeply in racial prejudice, wartime hysteria, and a lack of political leadership. We must learn from the past and dedicate ourselves as a nation to renewing the spirit of equality and our love of freedom. Together, we can guarantee a future with liberty and justice for all. You and your family have my best wishes for the future.

Bill Clinton

Let's take a close look at former President Bill Clinton's letter of apology to Japanese American victims of internment camps to think about the way composers' purposes affect what they compose. The first paragraph reveals that one purpose of the letter is to admit that the United States had acted unjustly. President Clinton's primary audience, the Japanese Americans who were held in internment camps, is fully aware of the injustice of the government's behavior during World War II, but up until this point the government had not officially acknowledged that it was wrong. One purpose of Clinton's letter, then, is to finally acknowledge that the U.S. government had seriously wronged Japanese Americans. Because this is such an important purpose, it's the focus of the first paragraph. To clearly signal this intent, President Clinton uses words such as *unjustly, sincere apology*, and *unfairly denied*.

Another purpose for writing the letter is to outline why the United States acted unjustly and how we can learn from past mistakes. President Clinton argues that "the nation's actions were rooted deeply in racial prejudice, wartime hysteria, and a lack of political leadership," and he says that we must learn from these mistakes. Clinton ends his letter with words such as *equality*, *freedom*, and *liberty and justice for all*. These words could be aimed at both the primary audience (Japanese Americans) and a broader secondary audience (Americans in general).

Even though President Clinton states that this is a letter of apology, a close look at the language he uses could reveal other purposes. For example, notice that he begins the letter with the phrase "Over fifty years ago." This phrase gives readers a sense of distant events—the first sentence might have had a different effect on readers if he would have written, "It was only fifty years ago . . . ." The language he uses to describe the internment is much different from the language that a Japanese American who was interned might use to describe his or her experiences. Words such as *evacuated* or *relocated* can have positive connotations, as when people in danger are evacuated by the government to a safer location, or when people relocate for a better job. Even the word *interned* has fewer negative meanings than the word *imprisoned*.

Ending with familiar patriotic words and phrases such as "liberty and justice for all," President Clinton further distances himself and the current government from past injustices and ends his apology on an optimistic note rather than a note of regret. You could argue that even though his primary purpose was to acknowledge and apologize for past injustices, his language reveals that he is also distancing himself and the current government from these injustices, and trying to put a positive spin on his apology by aligning his own values with patriotism. As you read the texts in this book and analyze composers' purposes, think about both what composers state as their purposes and what other, unstated purposes their language might reveal.

Freewrite Literacy Purposes

Read President Barack Obama's inaugural address on page 152. As you read President Obama's address, think about the ways that his purposes affect his voice and style, the tone he takes, the way he organizes his address, the kind of arguments he makes, and the type of evidence he uses. In small groups, discuss your analysis of President Obama's address.

Take notes on the group's analysis of the composer's stated and unstated purposes, and how his purpose (or purposes) affected his voice, style, tone, word choice, organization, arguments, evidence, and so forth. Be prepared to report out to the class.

Literacy Audiences

Composers always have both a purpose for composing and an audience or audiences to receive their message. Sometimes the primary audience for what you compose is you—for example, when you're writing in your diary or making a to-do list. In school the teacher is often the primary audience, but teachers can play different roles. A teacher might play the audience of an "examiner," testing you to see whether you've understood ideas from a class text or a lecture. A teacher might play the role of representative of her academic field, asking you to learn to write like a chemist, a historian, or an anthropologist in order to initiate you to her field. A teacher could simply play the role of an interested reader, asking you to tell her about your literacy history or your personal opinions on a subject.

Beyond school, the audiences we compose for become even more diverse: friends, family, Web surfers, government officials, companies—the list is endless. Often we compose for both primary and secondary audiences: We send an e-mail to a friend and "cc" other friends, we create an electronic portfolio of our work for a capstone course that will also be used when we enter the job market, and we write a poem to a loved one but then decide to publish it in a school journal, and so forth. Some writing situations ask us to create an audience through the words we use—to invoke an audience. Other writing situations present us with a very real audience that we need to address directly to be persuasive—for example, a speech at a public event. Every time someone sits down to compose, he or she imagines audiences they're writing to, and they're shaped by the audience they're imagining.

Freewrite Audience Contexts

The purpose of this freewrite is to give you some context for the three speeches by Malcolm X that we'll discuss in the section below. If you're in a computer classroom with Internet access, choose a search engine and enter the term *Malcolm X*. Browse a few Web sites to find out more about Malcolm X, the Civil Rights movement, and the Nation of Islam. If you're not in a computer classroom, form small groups and have the group compose a list of facts they already know about Malcolm X, the Civil Rights movement, and the Nation of Islam, and then share their list with the class.

Let's look at a concrete example to see how an audience shapes a composer's message. The speeches of the Civil Rights leader Malcolm X reveal how composer's adjust their arguments, tone, style, and evidence for different audiences. Read the passages that follow from three speeches by Malcolm X, each given to a different audience. The first speech was to a Civil Rights group in Detroit, the second speech was given to the Harvard Law School, and the third speech was given to the Nation of Islam. As you read the speeches, think about the different voice and style that Malcolm X takes on for each audience and the different kinds of examples that he uses to make his arguments.

Excerpt from a Malcolm X speech to a Detroit Civil Rights group:

Just as the slavemaster of that day used Tom, the house Negro, to keep the field Negroes in check, the same old slavemaster today has Negroes who are nothing but modern Uncle Toms, 20th century Uncle Toms, to keep you and me in check, keep us under control, keep us passive and peaceful and nonviolent. That's Tom making you nonviolent. It's like when you go to the dentist, and the man's going to take your tooth. You're going to fight him when he starts pulling. So he squirts some stuff in your jaw called novocaine, to make you think they're not doing anything to you. So you sit there and 'cause you've got all of that novocaine in your jaw, you suffer peacefully. Blood running all down your jaw, and you don't know what's happening. 'Cause someone has taught you to suffer—peacefully.

Excerpt from a Malcolm X speech to Harvard Law School:

There was another man back in history whom I read about once, an old friend of mine whose name was Hamlet, who confronted, in a sense, the same thing our people are confronting here in America. Hamlet was debating whether

"To be or not to be"—that was the question. He was trying to decide whether it was "nobler in the mind to suffer (peacefully) the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" or whether it was nobler "to take up arms" and oppose them. I think his little soliloquy answers itself. As long as you sit around suffering the slings and arrows and are afraid to use some slings and arrows yourself, you'll continue to suffer.

Excerpt from a Malcolm X speech to the Nation of Islam:

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad teaches us that as it was divine will in the case of the destruction of the slave empires of the ancient and modern past, America's judgement and destruction will also be brought about by divine will and divine power. Just as ancient nations paid for their sins against humanity, White America must now pay for her sins against twenty-two million "Negroes." White America's worst crimes are her hypocrisy and her deceit. White America pretends to ask herself: "What do these Negroes want?" White America knows that four hundred years of cruel bondage has made these twenty-two million ex-slaves too (mentally) blind to see what they really want.

White America should be asking herself: "What does God want for these twenty-two million ex-slaves?" Who will make White America know what God wants? Who will present God's plan to White America? What is God's solution to the problem caused by the presence of twenty-two million unwanted slaves here in America? And who will present God's solution? We, the Muslims who follow The Honorable Elijah Muhammad, believe wholeheartedly in the God of justice.

When Malcolm X spoke to the Civil Rights group in the blue-collar town of Detroit, he used informal, conversational language, with words such as *stuff* and *cause* and sentences such as *Blood running all down your jaw.* Malcolm X also used images that were effective for persuading his audience who was not sure whether to follow Martin Luther King's nonviolent approach or Malcolm X's more militant approach. The African American Civil Rights group in Detroit would have had a strong negative reaction to the image of an "Uncle Tom," and none of them would have wanted to be associated with that image.

Notice that Malcolm X adjusted his language when he addressed the Harvard Law School audience, which at that time was made up almost exclusively of upper-class Caucasian males. For the Harvard audience, Malcolm X used a formal dialect of English, with words such as *whom* and quotes from Shakespeare. The example of Shakespeare not only struck a chord with the audience, but also caused them to perceive Malcolm X as being aware of white European cultural traditions and able to draw on those traditions. Making a parallel between Hamlet and the suffering of African Americans at the hands of those in power in America helped Malcolm X persuade a skeptical audience to sympathize with his cause.

Malcolm X delivering a speech

When Malcolm X spoke before the Nation of Islam, his language, tone, and delivery was in the style of a preacher speaking a sermon, with techniques such as repetition (for example, repeating the phrase *White America*) and asking the audience a series of questions. He used images and ways of thinking that appealed to his religious audience, such as the idea of sin and divine will. Because his audience was receptive to his message, Malcolm X was more forceful in his language and stance. He talked about White America paying for its sins, hypocrisy, and deceit—language he wouldn't have used in front of the Harvard audience.

The ability to move effectively between different audiences and adjust your language and delivery is what linguists call *code switching*. In a sense we're all code-switchers, whether we're moving between the language of our school and our home or the different composing expectations of our biology class and our English class.

When you compose in college and beyond, your audience will always influence the way you compose and what you say. Sometimes you'll have an immediate and very "real" audience, such as when you give a speech or conduct a phone interview. Sometimes you'll be able to imagine your audience but they will be more distant, such as when you write an editorial for the campus newspaper or post a video to *YouTube*. At other times you will shape the audience you want to receive your message: for example, if you were to create a political blog to attract College Republicans or Democrats. Often we

write only for ourselves as an audience, whether it's a to-do list in a PDA or an entry in a diary. Audiences can be encouraging or hostile, diverse or monolithic, inspiring or debilitating. As you analyze and respond to the readings in this book, think carefully about how the composers' audiences have shaped their texts.

Freewrite Analyzing Audience

The goal of this freewrite is to practice analyzing the ways an audience shapes a composition. Find a magazine ad that does an effective job of appealing to its target audience. Write about whom you think the target audience is, how the target audience shapes the ad, and why you think the ad is effective in appealing to the target audience. Be prepared to share your ads in small groups and discuss the ads with the class.

Literacy Personas

A composer's persona includes the stance she takes, her tone, the vocabulary she uses, her voice and style—everything that makes up the image she portrays in her text. A composer's persona is influenced by the previous texts she has read, the audience she's composing for, and the purpose, medium, and genre of what she's composing. Writing teachers such as David Bartholomae and Patricia Bizzell argue that a writer's persona is *socially constructed*, which means that the literacy situation shapes the composer's persona. For example, when you write an essay for a college class, your persona will be influenced by what you think is the appropriate style for academic writing, and that may or may not conflict with the persona you take on when you're writing for yourself or to friends and family. Your idea of what the appropriate persona is for a particular academic essay will also be shaped by what your high school teachers told you about college writing, the writing expectations of the teacher who assigned the essay, the academic field of the class, the genre of the essay, and so forth.

Let's look at an example of the way a composer's persona is shaped by the writing situation. In Chapter 8, which focuses on academic literacies, there is a case study of a student writing in a sociology class. Greg Calabrese was a junior at Albion College when he wrote a research report for Social Psychology, a course for sociology majors. Greg's persona in his research report was shaped by the writing assignment, Greg's prior experiences writing in his major of sociology, the expectations of the teacher, and the genre of the sociology research report. Below is an excerpt from the part of Greg's report that describes his research methods. As you read it, think about the persona that comes across in Greg's text.

> For the purpose of this essay, I decided that my research would be two-fold. First, I felt that I would gain a better insight to men's views of how they interact with each other and by themselves if I conducted some form of semi-structured interviews. I chose to interview three college aged men (Alex, David, and Jim), all from a small Midwest college and all who grew up in middle-class families. I asked them a series of questions about their experiences in bathrooms as well as their feelings about certain common occurrences in bathrooms throughout their lives. I also will be discussing what observations I have made in my countless experiences in male bathrooms over the past twenty-one years. These observations are intended to supplement my interviews with the three participants as well as add to the discussion of how men interact with each other and by themselves in a restroom or locker-room setting. I feel that it will be interesting to consider not only what interactions are like in a normal bathroom or locker-room, but also to examine these events through a gendered lens to a certain extent.

Greg is composing in the genre of the sociology research report, which is often published in sociology journals and is read and reviewed by other sociologists. Although Greg is not planning to publish his report, he knows that his teacher is going to play the role of an expert sociologist helping Greg gain access to the field of sociology by learning how to write, think, and talk like a sociologist.

Typically sociologists don't use informal language in research reports, and some of Greg's choices of words (for example, *two-fold* or *certain common occurrences* or *supplement*) would sound overly formal in a casual conversation about men's behavior in bathrooms or a stand-up comedy performance about men and bathrooms. Greg is taking on a persona that will be effective for the literacy situation. Part of the persona that Greg establishes through his writing involves the use of specific jargon terms that sociologists use, such as *semi-structured interviews* or *gendered lens*. Greg is consciously creating his persona to sound like a sociologist, but that persona is constructed by the genre of the sociological research report and the conventions of sociology as a field (the ways of researching and writing that are considered acceptable by the community of sociologists). As you read and analyze the selections in this book, think about the ways that authors' personas are shaped by their purpose, audience, and genre.

Freewrite Changing Personas

The goal of this freewrite is to get you to reflect on how your persona changes depending on the context of what you're composing. First, think of something interesting that happened to you since you've started college. Pretend you're writing an e-mail to a friend and describe the experience. Then, pretend you're writing an e-mail to a parent or grandparent and describe the same experience. Finally, describe the same experience in an e-mail to a former high school teacher. Read your three e-mails to a writing partner and discuss the ways that your persona changed depending on your audience and purpose.

Literacy Mediums

Mediums and modes are closely related. If a mode is a channel of communication—oral, visual, digital, print—then a medium is the tool that the composer uses within that channel to deliver his or her message. For example, composers working in a visual mode might use mediums such as photographs, painting, or billboards. Composers working in a print mode might use mediums such as books, magazines, newsletters, or fliers. Understanding the way that the medium of a composition affects its content can help you understand and analyze any type of text, whether the medium is a sculpture, Web site, or poster. The medium that a composer uses to deliver her message affects every aspect of the content of a message. For a concrete example of how medium affects composing, let's look at a composition in different mediums. Read the following passage from the third book in J. R. R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* series, *The Return of the King*, and then read the version from the script of *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*. As you read these two excerpts, think about how the different mediums affect the composition.

Excerpt from J. R. R. Tolkien's novel *The Return of the King*:

The light sprang up again, and there on the brink of the chasm, at the very Crack of Doom, stood Frodo, black against the glare, tense, erect, but still as if he had been turned to stone.

"Master!" cried Sam.

Then Frodo stirred and spoke with a clear voice, indeed with a voice clearer and more powerful than Sam had ever heard him use, and it rose above the throb and turmoil of Mount Doom, ringing in the roof and walls.

"I have come," he said. "But I do not choose now to do what I came to do. I will not do this deed. The Ring is mine!" And suddenly, as he set it on his finger, he vanished from Sam's sight. Sam gasped, but he had no chance to cry out, for at that moment many things happened.

Something struck Sam violently in the back, his legs were knocked out from under him and he was flung aside, striking his head against the stony floor, as a dark shape sprang over him. He lay still and for a moment all went black.

Excerpt from the script for *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*:

INT. CRACK OF DOOM - DAY

The HEAT is almost UNBEARABLE . . . SAM sees FRODO in the DISTANCE . . .

FRODO
I'm here, Sam.

ANGLE ON: FRODO is standing on the EDGE of the CRACK OF DOOM . . . a deep LAVA FILLED CHASM, in the very heart of ancient SAURON'S FORGES, the greatest in Middle-earth.

The RAGING ORANGE GLARE from the CHASM turns FRODO into a BLACK SILHOUETTE . . . standing TENSE and STILL.

FRODO holds the RING in his HAND . . . he RAISES IT, holding it over the BUBBLING LAVA far below.

SAM
(yelling)
Destroy it — go on! Throw it in the fire!

CLOSE ON: FRODO . . . a STRANGE EXPRESSION on his face . . .

SAM
What are you waiting for? Just let it go!

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: The HUM of the RING grows louder and louder! FRODO PULLS the RING close to his body as he turns to SAM.

FRODO looks at SAM, the RING has finally taken him.

FRODO
The Ring is mine.

SAM SCREAMS as . . .

. . . FRODO PUTS THE RING ON! He VANISHES!

SAM
No!

CUT TO:

EXT. BLACK GATES OF MORDOR - DAY

With a storm of wings, the NAZGUL wheel around and hurtle towards MOUNT DOOM!

In the midst of the BATTLE — GANDALF . . . realising FRODO has been seen . . .

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. CRACK OF DOOM - DAY

CLOSE ON: SAM is SCREAMING for FRODO . . .

ANGLE ON: FOOTPRINTS moving across the ASH COVERED CAVERN FLOOR!

SUDDENLY! GOLLUM smashes a ROCK down on SAM'S HEAD, knocking him to the GROUND!

GOLLUM LEAPS on to the INVISIBLE FRODO!

CLOSE ON: FRODO'S FOOTPRINTS . . . staggering about under GOLLUM'S WEIGHT!

ANGLE ON: GOLLUM clawing FRANTICALLY, riding on the BACK of the INVISIBLE FRODO . . .

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. BLACK GATES OF MORDOR - DAY

ARAGORN turns and is confronted by an ARMOURED TROLL, wielding an ENORMOUS MALLET . . .

Composing in the medium of the book, Tolkien relies on vivid and detailed description to create the scene. The words he chooses, the length and tone of his sentences, his character descriptions—all of these matters of language and style are critical to the composition, and each sentence and paragraph must be carefully shaped.

The visual medium of film relies much more heavily on visual motion and camera angles to tell a story, with brief directions for close-ups, sound, and specific camera angles. The medium of film lends itself to "intercuts," and the script breaks away from one scene and goes to another (the gates of Mordor) and then returns to the scene with Sam and Frodo and Gollum. If Tolkien had gone back and forth between scenes in such a short span, the passage would have felt choppy, but in the medium of film intercuts can be an effective way to build tension and interest. The conventions of what makes for an effective composition vary from medium to medium, and awareness of the conventions associated with the different mediums that you'll encounter in 21st century literacies will make you a more effective reader and composer.

Freewrite Changing Mediums

The purpose of this freewrite is to consider how a change in mediums affects a composition. Think of a text that you've read in two different mediums: a book that was made into a film, a comic strip that was made into a video game, a play that was made into a film, a book that was made into a television show, and so forth. How did the change in medium affect the content of the composition (think about composing features we've been discussing like purpose, audience, and persona)?

Literacy Genres

If a mode is a channel of communication, and a medium is a tool for delivering a message within that channel of communication, then a genre is a form of that tool that is appropriate for specific literacy situations. For example, within the oral mode of communication, there is the medium of the speech, and within the medium of the speech, there are genres such as wedding toasts, political acceptance speeches, graduation speeches, and so forth. Each genre of a speech is appropriate in a specific kind of situation (a political rally, a graduation, a wedding, and so forth). In the example from the freewrite below, the mode is oral and the medium is music. Genres of music include country, hip-hop, reggae, jazz, and so forth. Within each genre there may be subgenres as well. For example, within the genre of jazz, there are swing, Dixieland, bop, acid jazz, and so forth.

ewrite Music Genres

The purpose of this freewrite is to help you understand the concept of genre by thinking about genres you're familiar with: music genres. As a class, come up with a list of genres of music. Then choose a genre from the list and write for five minutes, exploring the following questions:

- What kinds of personas do musicians tend to take on in their songs in the genre?
- Who are the primary audiences for the genre, and how do those audiences affect the subject of the music and persona of the composers?
- What social contexts influence artists in the genre (for example, race, class, gender, politics)?
- If you're familiar with the history of the genre, how has the genre changed and evolved over time?

A genre is much more than a format. Genres—such as the scientific experimental report, the newspaper editorial, the poetry slam, the baseball box score—all have evolved as useful responses to literacy situations. Genres shape and are shaped by composers' purposes, audiences, mediums, and contexts. Genres are complex; a genre such as comedy in film can have many subgenres (romantic comedy, parody, dark comedy, slapstick, and so forth).

To get a better sense of this idea of genres as complex responses to literacy situations, let's look at a genre of music you might be familiar with: hip-hop. Hip-hop developed out of communities of urban MCs sampling records and rapping over the beats during parties. The genre of hip-hop developed from social action—a community of composers with similar purposes and interests, all trying to communicate in similar ways. Hip-hop has many subgenres, such as trip-hop, gangsta rap, alternative, and so forth.

Following is an example of one subgenre of hip-hop, message rap. We'll look at the rapper Mos Def's "Dollar Day," which is a response to the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans. As you look at Mos Def's song, think about the form, style, and social context for message rap as a genre. You can also watch the video of this song by doing a Google video search of "Mos Def Dollar Day."

Excerpt from Mos Def's "Dollar Day":

Listen, homie, it's Dollar Day in New Orleans
It's water water everywhere and people dead in the streets
And Mr. President he bout that cash
He got a policy for handlin the niggaz and trash
And if you poor you black
I laugh a laugh they won't give when you ask
You better off on crack
Dead or in jail, or with a gun in Iraq
And it's as simple as that
No opinion my man it's mathematical fact
Listen, a million poor since 2004
And they got-illions and killions to waste on the war
And make you question what the taxes is for
Or the cost to reinforce, the broke levee wall
Tell the boss, he shouldn't be the boss anymore
Y'all pray amen

God save these streets
One dollar per every human being
Feel that Katrina clap
See that Katrina clap
God save these streets
Quit bein' cheap nigga freedom ain't free
Feel that Katrina clap
See that Katrina clap

Lord have mercy
Lord God God save our soul
A God save our soul, a God
A God save our souls
Lord God God save our soul
A God save our soul soul soul
Soul survivor

If a genre is a response to a recurring literacy situation, then one way to analyze a genre such as message rap is to think about some of the factors in literacy situations that we've been discussing: purpose, audience, persona, medium, and context.

The purpose of some genres of hip-hop is focused on getting people to dance and relax and have fun, but message rap has a more serious purpose. The primary purposes of songs in the subgenre of message rap are to make a political statement by exposing injustices and to persuade the audience to take action. Mos Def's purpose is to make a strong political message about then-President Bush and the war in Iraq, and his language reflects his purpose ("Mr. President he bout that cash" and "killions to waste on the war"). Mos Def is aware of his primary audience (teenagers and young adults, primarily from urban areas), and he is trying to get his audience to understand the injustice he perceives and take action against it. At the end of the video of "Dollar Day," Mos Def says to his audience, "Don't talk about it be about it."

Purpose and audience affect the personas that artists take on when they compose message rap. In his performance Mos Def gradually takes on an angrier and louder tone, and by the end of the song he's shouting—and because he's working in an oral medium, his tone of voice is an important way to establish his persona. In message rap, this persona of anger is shaped by the social context. Most message rap is composed by people who grew up poor and who experienced firsthand racism and inequality. Message rap is a good example of genre as social action—a useful and repeated response to events such as Katrina and the Iraq war that expose inequalities of class and race in America.

ewrite College Writing Genres

The purpose of this freewrite is to help you make a connection between the discussion of genre in this section of Chapter 1 and the kinds of genres you're going to be writing in your college classes. Review the syllabi and any assignment descriptions your college teachers have given you this semester. Make a list of the genres of writing you're going to be asked to compose in. Then, choose one writing assignment and analyze it as a genre. What is the purpose and audience of the genre? What are the conventions of the genre, including conventions of form and style? What is the social context of the genre?

Literacy Contexts

Every factor of a literacy situation that we've been discussing—purpose, audience, persona, medium, genre—is influenced by social contexts. An audience's ethnicity, social class, political beliefs, and so forth influences its response to a text, and a composer's persona is shaped by her personal history and values and the language communities she belongs to. Consider the ways these advertising campaigns failed because the advertisers didn't consider the social context of their situation:

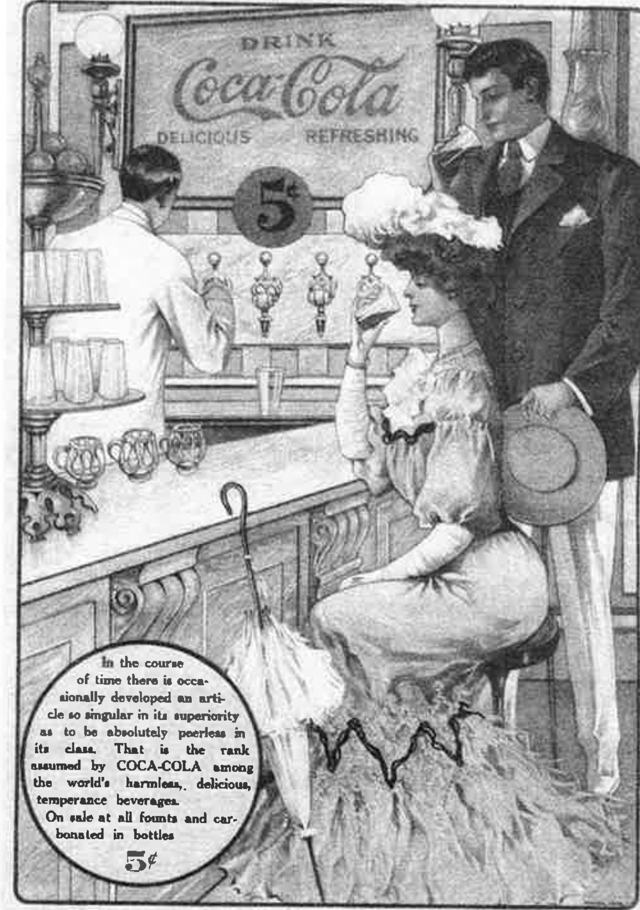
> When Gerber started selling baby food in Africa, they used the same packaging as in the U.S., with the baby on the label. Later they learned that in Africa, companies often put pictures on the label of what's inside, because many African consumers can't read English.
>
> In a joint advertising campaign with Hummer, McDonald's gave away toy plastic Hummers in Happy Meals. Environmental groups raised an outcry, and McDonald's ended the promotion because of the negative response from the environmental groups and from consumers concerned about the message McDonald's was giving kids.
>
> A British brewery had to cancel a multimillion-dollar TV advertising campaign for an alcoholic fruit drink after protests from the New Zealand government. The ad featured eight British women in bikinis on a beach performing a version of the haka, a ceremony performed by the indigenous New Zealand Maori. The haka is a revered ceremony, and the Maori were offended that it is was being performed by British women in a commercial selling alcohol.

In each of these literacy situations, the composers' message failed to be persuasive because the composers were insensitive to cultural and social contexts.

Freewrite Composing Contexts

The purpose of this freewrite is to help you think about the importance of context for literacy situations by analyzing the context of a recent literacy situation you responded to. Choose something you've composed recently, and write for five minutes about the ways the broader social context of the situation influenced your composing processes and the final product. This might include your own social contexts as a composer (your literacy history, your gender, your ethnicity, and so forth), the values and attitudes of the audience you were composing for, or the social context of the genre you were composing in.

Every composition is situated in a social context. For example, take a close look at the following advertisements from Coca-Cola, each one from a different social/historical context.



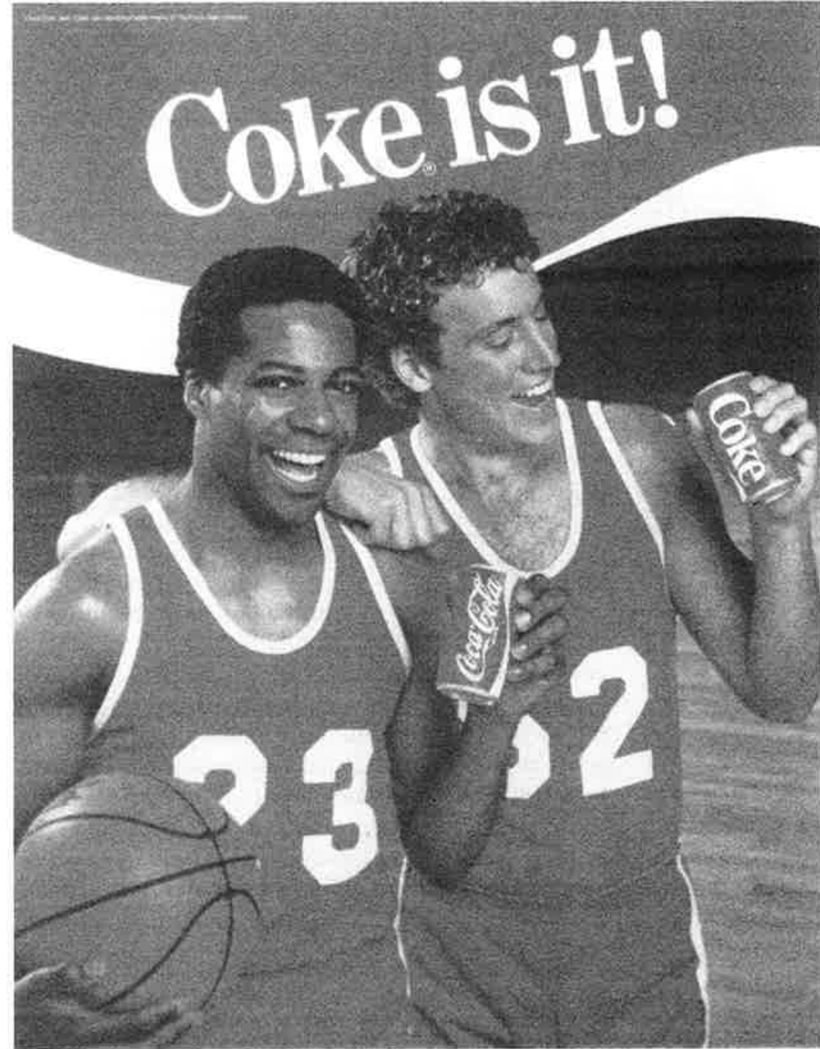
Coca-Cola advertisement from 1905

This ad is a reflection of—and is shaped by—its social context. The way the woman is portrayed in the ad, from her elaborate clothing to the delicate way she is posed, reveals the social context of gender roles in the early 1900s.

The following Coca-Cola ad from the 1950s is also shaped by the context of women's strict gender roles at the time.

Coca-Cola advertisement from 1950s

To understand why this ad was effective at reaching its target audience, you need to understand the social context of women's roles in the 1950s, with the husband going off to work and the wife focused on serving her husband. Compare the ad from the 1950s to a Coca-Cola ad from the 1980s on the following page:



Coca-Cola advertisement from 1980s

Analyzing this ad would require some consideration of race relations in the 1980s, which would also require a knowledge of the history of race relations between African Americans and whites in America.

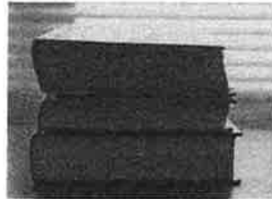
As you analyze and respond to the selections in this book, think about the composers' purposes, the audiences they are writing for, the way purposes and audiences affect the persona they take on, the mode and genre of the texts

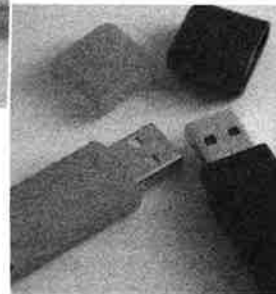
they're composing, and the social context. Throughout your college career, you will explore a variety of modes and genres of texts, written in a variety of social contexts, but these factors of any literacy situation can be a tool for you no matter what kind of text you read or compose.

Freewrite Reflecting on Literacy

The purpose of this freewrite is to get you to reflect on what you learned about literacy in this chapter. How did your definition of literacy change after reading this chapter?

2 Reading and Composing Processes





In Chapter 1, we focused on the ways in which literacy is multiple, with multiple mediums and genres, multiple audiences and purposes for composers, and multiple social and cultural contexts for literacy situations. Today, just as there's no single kind of literacy, there's no single process for reading or for composing. Each medium, genre, and context you encounter, in school and out of school, will require a different set of reading strategies. Each literacy situation you respond to will ask you to engage in different composing processes. In this chapter, we're not going to present you with one standard reading process or one universal composing process. Rather, we'll talk about multiple reading and composing processes for multiple purposes, mediums, genres, and contexts.

Freewrite Your Multiple Reading and Composing Processes

The purpose of this freewrite is to connect your own experiences as a reader and composer with the reading and composing processes we're going to talk about in this chapter. Think of two things you've read recently in two different mediums and describe your reading processes for each medium. How did your reading processes differ in the two mediums? Next, choose two things that you composed recently in two different genres and describe your composing processes for each genre. How did your composing processes differ for each genre?

Reading Processes

In the introduction to this chapter, we talked about the need to adapt different reading processes to different purposes for reading and for different genres of texts, but no matter what medium or genre you're reading in or what your purpose or context is for reading, your literacy will improve if you think of reading as a process and if you are an active and critical reader.

Freewrite Reading Quiz

To get you thinking about your own beliefs about reading and your own reading processes, take this reading quiz and discuss it in small groups and/or with the class.

1. I like to read. True ___ False ___
2. I do a lot of reading. True ___ False ___
3. If I don't understand something I've read, I read it more than once. True ___ False ___
4. I use different reading strategies depending on why I'm reading and what I'm reading. True ___ False ___
5. I think you can "read" an ad or a video or an event just like you read a book. True ___ False ___
6. Good readers are fast readers. True ___ False ___
7. Good readers understand what they're reading the first time. True ___ False ___
8. If you read something from a book or a Web site, it's probably true. True ___ False ___
9. I'm an active, not a passive, reader. True ___ False ___
10. Reading a lot can help you become a better writer. True ___ False ___

To think about reading as a process, let's take a look at a hypothetical example of an assignment for a college film studies class that has you "read" a film and write a critical analysis. Here's a typical assignment you might get in a film class:

> Write a three to five page essay analyzing the cinematography of the film *Trainspotting*. Consider how the cinematography influences plot, character development, mood, and theme.

If you were given this assignment, you might begin your reading process by "prereading" to get ready to view *Trainspotting*—especially if you haven't seen the film before. To preread, you might get on the Web and browse through reviews

of *Trainspotting*. After reading four or five reviews, you'd get a sense of some themes from the movie: drug use as a mental escape from gritty surroundings, the horrors of drug addiction, and drugs as both a rush and a destructive force.

Once you've prepared yourself to "read" *Trainspotting*, it would be a good idea to come up with a strategy for being an active and not a passive viewer when it's time to watch the film. You might reread the assignment to make sure you have a good understanding of its purpose. Because you need to "analyze" the film, you know you'll need to do more than just summarize the plot. You'll need to watch the film carefully and closely and break down the role of cinematography in the film, and especially how cinematography influences plot, character development, mood, and theme. To help you be an active reader and focus on your primary purpose, you might keep a double-entry reading log as you view the movie. On one side of your log you can list "plot," "character development," "mood," and "theme." On the other side of the log you can leave space for your observations and responses on each of these topics as you view the film. Here's what an excerpt from a double-entry log on *Trainspotting* might look like:

Scene where the main character is in his bed with drug withdrawal

Theme	The bedroom looks like a prison, with bare walls and only one small window. Connects to the theme of drugs as a kind of prison. The character is hallucinating that a baby is crawling on the ceiling and crying. Contrast of innocence versus world of drug use. The character also hallucinates that his parents are on a cheesy game show talking about his drug problem. This connects to the theme of drugs as an escape from a fake modern world. The drug world is more "real" but also scarier.
Mood	The lighting is dark, especially the character is under the sheets. The darkness and shadows set a mood of fear and despair. It looks like the bed sheets are suffocating the main character as he gets panicky, and the odd camera angle from under the sheet adds to this effect. Music you might hear at a techno club is playing in the background. This adds to the tension because it's the kind of music the character would listen to when he's doing drugs at a club, but instead of being relaxed and dancing he's going through withdrawal and hallucinating.

Once you reach the end of your "reading" of *Trainspotting*, you might use the "scene selection" link on the root menu of the DVD and, using your reading log as a guide, return and "reread" key scenes, adding to your reading log. Even after you've reviewed key scenes, there will probably be aspects of the film you didn't understand. To help you get a better understanding, you might visit the teacher during his or her office hours to talk about your questions, chat with some of your peers in class, or look up some critical responses to *Trainspotting* by searching for articles about it in film journals. Your reading process won't be done when you begin writing your essay. As you draft the essay you will probably want to review parts of the movie, and as you draft you might discover new things you want to say about the film, which might require more "rereading" of *Trainspotting*.

The example of this film assignment shows that there are some general aspects of reading processes that you should consider no matter what you are reading—aspects such as prereading, using writing to help you read, rereading, and seeking feedback on what you're reading. But there are also aspects of the reading process needed to successfully complete the film assignment that relate specifically to the purpose and medium of the task. For example, if you were asked to summarize the film or give your personal response to the acting, your reading process would be different. If you were

A still shot from the film *Trainspotting*

asked to read the book *Trainspotting* by Irvine Welsh, your reading process wouldn't involve drawing on visual and oral literacies or navigating a DVD menu.

Despite the fact that your reading process is always situated—that it always depends on the purpose, genre, medium, and context—it's possible to make some generalizations about good readers. Good readers don't expect to perfectly understand what they're reading the first time they read it, and they know that responding to and analyzing texts requires rereading. Effective readers are active, not passive, readers. They interact with the text, highlighting key words and ideas, writing comments and questions in the margins, and thinking about ways the text is similar to and different than prior texts they've read. Active reading means critical reading—questioning assumptions authors make and thinking about your own responses to ideas and arguments authors present in their texts. Successful readers see reading as a social process. That means that they're open to revising their understanding of and responses to a text after they've talked about the text with others.

Advice for Improving Your Reading Processes

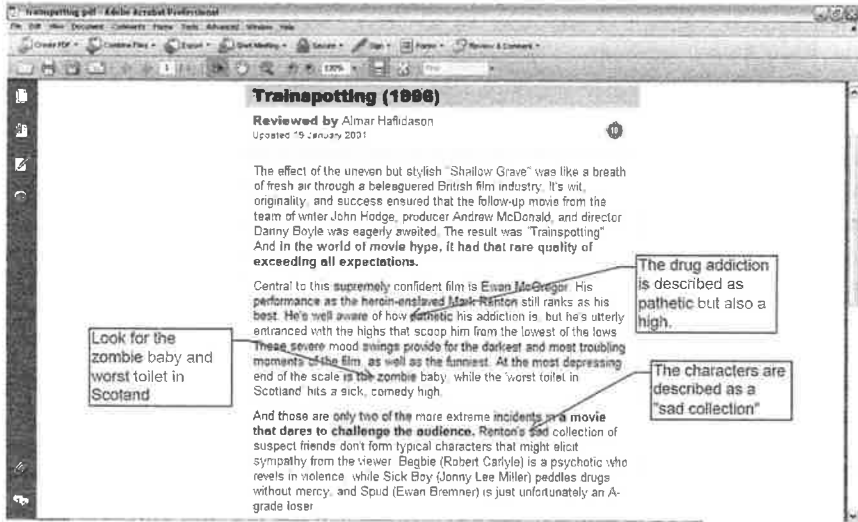
Following is advice for improving your reading processes:

Use "prereading" strategies to activate prior knowledge before you read. Being literate in the twenty-first century means having to read and respond to new genres, hybrid texts, and texts from cultural contexts you aren't familiar with. Before you read a textbook or watch a film or interpret an event, reflect on what you already know about the subject and genre of what you're reading and what questions you know you'll have. You can do some freewriting about what you already know about a topic before you read, or create a list of questions you have before watching a film or observing an event. Prereading can also include skimming a text before you read. This might mean browsing through the table of contents of a textbook for a class, reading an abstract of an article in a journal before reading the article, viewing a movie trailer on *YouTube* before seeing the film, or listening to a sample of a CD on *Amazon.com* before purchasing it.

Read texts more than once. Don't think that because you need to read a text multiple times, you're a bad reader. Even experienced and successful readers need to reread passages or entire texts to understand and fully engage with what they're reading. The willingness to reread a text is an important quality of being a successful reader. The more difficult the text, the more you will need to reread. Just as words on a page can have deeper meanings that

you can't get from one quick read, images in a movie or the way instruments are played in a song can be significant in ways that you will miss the first time you watch or listen.

Annotate texts as you read. To be a successful reader of twenty-first-century texts, you'll need to develop an active reading process. Being an active reader means interacting with texts as you read them by annotating. This could mean highlighting key words and concepts in a textbook, writing notes and questions in the margins of an article, taking field notes when you observe a place or an event, writing your personal responses to a television show in a fan blog, and so forth. Annotating as you read keeps your mind active, helps you retain information, and gives you ideas for responding. We looked at one strategy for annotating—the double-entry log—in the example reading process for the *Trainspotting* assignment. You can also annotate directly on a text—even an electronic text. For example, let's say you're surfing the Internet for reviews of *Trainspotting* and you find a review you want to annotate. You might capture a screen shot of the online review by pressing the "Print Scrn" key of your computer, save it as a PDF file, and then annotate it using the Adobe Acrobat commenting tools.


Trainspotting (1996)

Reviewed by Almar Haflidason
Updated 19 January 2001

The effect of the uneven but stylish "Shallow Grave" was like a breath of fresh air through a beleaguered British film industry. It's wit, originality, and success ensured that the follow-up movie from the team of writer John Hodge, producer Andrew McDonald, and director Danny Boyle was eagerly awaited. The result was "Trainspotting". **And in the world of movie hype, it had that rare quality of exceeding all expectations.**

Central to this supremely confident film is Ewan McGregor. His performance as the heroin-enslaved Mark Renton still ranks as his best. He's well aware of how pathetic his addiction is, but he's utterly entranced with the highs that scoop him from the lowest of the lows. These severe mood swings provide for the darkest and most troubling moments of the film, as well as the funniest. At the most depressing end of the scale is the zombie baby, while the "worst toilet in Scotland" hits a sick, comedy high.

And those are only two of the more extreme incidents in a **movie that dares to challenge the audience.** Renton's sad collection of suspect friends don't form typical characters that might elicit sympathy from the viewer. Begbie (Robert Carlyle) is a psychotic who revels in violence, while Sick Boy (Jonny Lee Miller) peddles drugs without mercy, and Spud (Ewan Bremner) is just unfortunately an A-grade loser.

Online review with annotations

Annotating could mean writing notes in the margin, like in the PDF file above, or it could mean underlining, highlighting, circling, and so forth.

Think critically about the assumptions, arguments, and evidence the author presents. Many of the messages we're bombarded with are meant to try to sell us products or win our vote or promote a person or company. It's important to be a critical and not a passive reader when you're confronted with messages from campaign commercials, billboard ads, charts and graphs in a newspaper, mass e-mails, and so forth. Being a critical reader means asking questions:

What assumptions does the composer make in his or her arguments?
What is the composer's background?
Who is the intended audience?
Does the composer consider more than one perspective?
Are there social/cultural/political aspects of the issue that the composer doesn't consider?
What does the composer's language or imagery reveal about his or her position?
What kind of evidence (written or visual or oral) does the composer use to support his or her argument?
Does the composer use reliable evidence?
What is your position on the issue, and how is it similar to or different from the composer's position?

Talk about what you've read with others. When you go to a movie with friends, the first thing you probably do afterward is ask your friends what they thought of the movie. If there was a scene you didn't understand, you might ask them how they interpreted it. If you're trying to evaluate how good the movie was, it helps to hear what other people thought of it. When you get home, you might search the Web for some reviews of the movie to see what critics said. Reading is an individual *and* a social process. If you're struggling with a difficult text for a college class, ask questions of your teacher and of your classmates. You can also do some research and find out what others have said about the text you're struggling with.

Reading for Multiple Purposes

In the introduction to this chapter, we mentioned that there's no single reading process that successful readers go through. Just as you compose for multiple purposes, you read for multiple purposes. If you read *People* magazine while you're stuck in a long line at the grocery store, you're not going to annotate or reread, and you probably aren't going to worry about whether you retain the information you're reading. If you're reading a dense philosophy book that you'll be tested on in a college class, you'll expect to reread and use a pencil or highlighter to mark up the book as you read, underlining key concepts and writing comments and questions in the margins. Your purpose for reading shapes your process.

Freewrite Reading Purposes and Processes

The purpose of this freewrite is for you to reflect on how different purposes for reading affect reading processes. Think of something you read recently for pleasure, something you read to get information, and something you read to support an argument you were making in an essay for college. Write for five minutes about how your reading processes differed for each different purpose for reading.

To think about how your reading purpose affects your reading processes, we'll look at three purposes for reading the same text. Below is an article from the opinion section of a college newspaper, the *Arizona Daily Wildcat*. The article was written by Allison Dumka, a senior at the University of Arizona. Try reading this article three times, with a different purpose each time. First, pretend that you've picked up a copy of the *Wildcat* between classes, and you're just reading the article casually on your own. Then, read the article as though you've been assigned to read it for a class and to summarize and analyze the author's main arguments. Finally, read the article as though you're the editor of the *Wildcat*. Pretend that Allison has submitted the article to you as a draft, and you're going to give her feedback for revising it.

Mascot ban about abuse, not political correctness

This isn't a debate about political correctness. The NCAA was right to decide that schools with hostile American Indian symbols must abandon their mascots to be eligible for lucrative post-season games. They were right because the inconvenience of changing a college sports team's mascot is negligible, compared to the injustices of colonization forced on hundreds of indigenous groups in the U.S.

The Indian Removal Act of 1830 forced five major tribes east of the Mississippi River to relocate to Indian Territory, or what is now Oklahoma, so that Southerners could take over the land these tribes had lived on.

You get where I'm going with this. The manipulation of indigenous groups in the United States, along with the general disrespect our government has shown for tribal sovereignty, has been clearly documented.

In 1838, the U.S. government forced the Cherokee Nation to relocate to the West, under part of the Indian Removal Act. Cherokee leaders never agreed to this treaty, but federal troops forced 17,000 Cherokee to leave their land.

Cherokee Nation v. Georgia, decided in 1831, effectively provided no protection of the basic human rights of the Cherokee people. It allowed Georgia to violently "encourage" Cherokee to leave. Approximately 4,000 Cherokee died along the 2,200-mile journey, which is now called the Trail of Tears.

Not only has the NCAA decided that mascots based on Native American symbols are unacceptable, but some students agree. University of Illinois student Stephen Naranjo became a plaintiff in a lawsuit brought by the Illinois Native American Bar Association with intent to retire the mascot. A Native American, Naranjo says: "If the people you think you're honoring say you're not, that should be case closed."

The Chief Illiniwek mascot has performed dances thought to be offensive exaggerations of American Indian sacred rituals.

A team's success is not contingent upon its mascot. Therefore, when a mascot is offensive to the groups of indigenous people it is based upon, it's time to change it.

Now, I'm not a sports person. So I wondered how important a mascot is to athletes.

Marcus Tyus, a political science junior and a sprinter for the UA men's track and field team, said, "Using a tribe to represent a student body isn't really fair. Most of them aren't members of a tribe, so they shouldn't be able to use that as their mascot. It's crossing a line. A symbol that can be offensive shouldn't be a mascot. Racism is racism."

If a mascot were loosely based on stereotypes of any other ethnic, religious or gender identity, it would be obvious how tasteless and potentially racist these mascots would be. Imagine a NCAA team called the Meatheads, the Fairies or the Whities.

Ultimately, it's up to the NCAA to set these standards of respect, and teams that want to participate in lucrative postseason play will have to comply. Compliance with demonstrating respect to indigenous groups should be a fairly basic concept. Students or players who disagree need to take a class about colonization, and then they can come argue about political correctness.

Freewrite Your Multiple Reading and Composing Processes

In what ways did your reading processes differ for each different purpose for reading the mascot ban article above? Talk about your different reading processes in small groups and/or with the class.

Reading in Multiple Mediums

Throughout this book, we've defined *reading* broadly, as much more than just reading books and magazines. Reading in the twenty-first century means interpreting and analyzing not just printed texts, but also visual images, speeches, Web sites, performances, architecture, and so forth. This means that the medium of a text—the kind of tool that is used to deliver the message—shapes our reading process. For an example of how a medium can dictate what kind of reading process we go through, take a look at the following excerpts from the book *Understanding Comics* by Scott McCloud. McCloud talks about the ways that the medium of the comic affects the way we read and understand comics.

Scott McCloud, from *Understanding Comics*

Scott McCloud, from *Understanding Comics* (continued)

Now that you've read McCloud's ideas about how the medium can shape your reading process, try reading a similar "message" in three mediums. Following is a newspaper editorial, a poster, and a link to a television commercial that are all from an advertising campaign by the Ad Council and Stop Impaired Driving. The campaign is focused on stopping drunk driving. First, read the newspaper editorial and think about your reading process.

"Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest." Aggressive Impaired Driving Crackdown Seeks to Save Lives

Drunk driving is one of America's deadliest crimes. In 2005, nearly 13,000 people were killed in highway crashes involving a driver or motorcycle operator with an illegal blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 or higher. The picture for motorcycle operators is particularly bleak. Forty-one percent of the 1,878 motorcycle operators who died in single-vehicle crashes in 2005 had BAC levels of .08 or higher.

That's why local law enforcement officials will join with thousands of other law enforcement and highway safety agencies across the nation from August 15 and throughout the Labor Day holiday to take part in the *Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest.* crackdown on impaired driving.

Our message is simple. No matter what you drive—a passenger car, pickup, sport utility vehicle or motorcycle—if we catch you driving impaired, we will arrest you. No exceptions. No excuses. We will be out in force conducting sobriety checkpoints, saturation patrols, and using undercover officers to get more drunk drivers off the road—and save lives that might otherwise be lost.

Driving with a BAC of .08 or higher is illegal in every state. Yet we continue to see far too many people suffer debilitating injuries and loss of their loved ones as a result of impaired driving. This careless disregard for human life must stop. To help ensure that happens, our local law enforcement officers are dedicated to arresting impaired drivers wherever and whenever they find them.

To further prevent people from driving while impaired, many judges sentence drunk drivers not only to jail time, but also require certain convicted impaired drivers to install ignition interlock devices on their vehicles. Ignition interlocks can detect when an offender has been drinking and prevent a vehicle from starting, thus helping reduce the chances that offenders might again take to the road while impaired. Other technologies prescribed by judges include transdermal devices that detect alcohol through a person's skin and are used in combination with a treatment plan.

It's important to remember, however, that much of the tragedy that comes from drunk driving could be prevented if everyone would take these few simple precautions:

- If you are planning to drink alcohol with friends, designate a sober driver before going out and give that person your keys.
- If you're impaired, call a taxi, use mass transit or call a sober friend or family member to get you home safely.
- Use your community's Sober Rides program.
- Promptly report to law enforcement drunk drivers you see on the roadways.

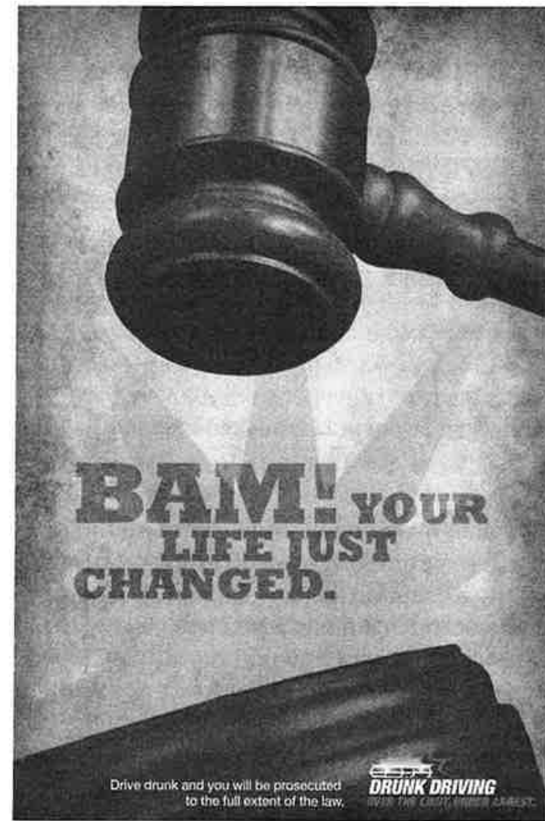
- Wear your seat belt while in a car or use a helmet and protective gear when on a motorcycle as these are your best defenses against an impaired driver.
- Finally, remember, if you know someone who is about to drive or ride while impaired, take their keys and help them safely make other arrangements to get to where they are going.

Drunk driving is simply not worth the risk. Not only do you risk killing yourself or someone else, but also the trauma and financial costs of a crash or an arrest for impaired driving can be significant. Violators often face jail time, the loss of their driver's license, higher insurance rates, attorney fees, time away from work, and dozens of other expenses.

Don't take the chance. Drunk driving is a serious crime. Remember: *Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest.*

For more information, visit www.StopImpairedDriving.org.

Now, "read" the poster that was also part of the anti–drunk-driving campaign, and think about the ways that the process of reading the medium of the poster differs from the process of reading the editorial.



Drunk-driving poster

For the same message in the medium of a television commercial, visit the Ad Council Web site http://www.adcouncil.org/default.aspx?id=49 and click "Ambulance" under the heading "Television."

ewrite Reading in Different Mediums

The purpose of this freewrite is for you to reflect on your reading of the three mediums of the anti-drunk-driving advertising campaign. Write for five minutes about the ways your reading processes differed for each medium. Be prepared to share your freewrite in small groups or with the class.

Reading in Multiple Genres

In Chapter 1, we defined a genre as much more than just a template or a set of rules for a composition. We said that genres are common and useful responses to literacy situations—they are a form of social action within a community of readers and composers. Understanding the genre you're reading and the conventions and purposes of that genre can help you develop more effective reading processes.

ewrite Genre and Reading Processes

Review the discussions of genre in Chapter 1, and in your own words, write a definition of *genre*. Then, think of a genre you've read recently (for example, a textbook, Web site, lab report, or horror movie). Write for five minutes about the ways in which the genre of what you read affected your reading process.

Let's take a look at a genre you might encounter in one of your college classes, the scientific experimental report. The experimental report in the sciences is a response to a common literacy situation: scientists needing to report the results of their research in an organized and clear way to other scientists. As it evolved, the scientific experimental report developed conventions of form that helped the science community read and write about scientific research. One convention of the scientific experimental report is a summary of the purpose, research methods, and results of the experiment in a single paragraph at the beginning of the report—an "abstract." Here's an example of an abstract from a scientific experimental report of a study of chimpanzees published in the science journal *Behavioural Processes*:

> **Abstract**
>
> The majority of studies on self-recognition in animals have been conducted using a mirror as the test device; little is known, however, about the responses of non human primates toward their own images in media other than mirrors. This study provides preliminary data on the reactions of 10 chimpanzees to live self-images projected on 2 television monitors, each connected to a different video camera. Chimpanzees could see live images of their own faces, which were approximately life-sized, on one monitor. On the other monitor, they could see live images of their whole body, which were approximately one-fifth life-size, viewed diagonally from behind. In addition, several objects were introduced into the test situation. Out of 10 chimpanzees tested, 2 individuals performed self-exploratory behaviors while watching their own images on the monitors. One of these 2 chimpanzees successively picked up 2 of the provided objects in front of a monitor and watched the images of these objects on the monitor. The results indicate that these chimpanzees were able to immediately recognize live images of themselves or objects on the monitors, even though several features of these images differed from those of their previous experience with mirrors.

Abstracts became a common convention of the genre of the experimental report because, as more and more scientific studies and scientific journals were published, the community of scientists found it useful for writers to include a brief summary of their study and findings that other scientists could read first to decide whether they wanted to read the entire study. If you were asked to read the study of chimpanzees, you'd want to read the abstract as a form of *prereading*. The abstract will give you a good sense of the most important aspects of the research you're about to read, which can help focus your reading.

Most scientific reports are divided into specific and clearly labeled sections: an introduction, a section on research methods, a section reporting the results, and a discussion section in which the researcher reflects on the significance of the results. Knowing that the genre of the scientific report is structured this way can help improve your reading process. For example, let's say you've come across this article on chimpanzees as part of a research paper you're writing for a biology class. If you know that it's a convention of the "Introduction" section of an experimental report to include a review of previous research on the topic—a *literature review*—you can find other sources for your research paper by looking carefully at the literature review. Here's one paragraph from the literature review in the "Introduction" section of the chimpanzee research report:

> Another study showed that chimpanzees can use the live image on a video monitor to locate an otherwise hidden object (Menzel et al., 1985). Poss and Rochat (2003) also showed, in a slightly different experiment, that chimpanzees and one orangutan were successful in finding a reward hidden in one of two areas when they were able to view the hiding event on a video

monitor. Eddy et al. (1996) described that chimpanzees responded differently to a self-image in a mirror versus a videotaped image of other chimpanzees.

If you know that scientists usually include a literature review in the "Introduction" section of the genre of the experimental research report, you can focus your reading on finding more sources for your own research paper.

In the genre of the scientific research report, it's a convention that writers summarize the most important findings of their experiment in the "Discussion" section. If you were reading the chimpanzee article and having trouble understanding the study and the results, you could skip ahead to the discussion section, read the writer's discussion of his results, and then go back and reread the results section, armed with more information and a better understanding. Here are the first few sentences of the "Discussion" section of the chimpanzee article:

> **Discussion**
>
> This experiment showed that two chimpanzees with experience of mirrors used live-video images to investigate their own body. They inspected parts of their face not otherwise visible, although the orientation of left and right was the reverse of that of their previous experience with a mirror. They also explored the back of their body while looking at the monitor; the absolute size of the image was much reduced from life-size. In addition, the object-directed behavior shown by one individual indicates that this chimpanzee not only recognized self, but also environmental objects.

The major findings of the study are clearly explained in the discussion section, and if you were having trouble understanding what the most important findings of the study are, you could adjust your reading process and skip right to the "Discussion" section.

Whatever you're reading—a music video, a bumper sticker, a play, a novel—your reading process will be shaped by the genre you're reading, and an awareness of the conventions of the genre you're reading will help improve your reading process.

Freewrite Television Genres

The purpose of this freewrite is to connect our discussion of the way genre affects reading process to genres you're probably familiar with—television show genres. First, think of a genre of television shows that you like (for example, sitcoms, reality shows, sketch comedy shows, soap operas, talk shows, and so forth.). Next, list some conventions of the genre you've chosen. Write for five minutes about the ways in which your "reading" of that genre (your viewing of those kinds of shows) is affected by the conventions of the genre.

Reading in Multiple Contexts

Freewrite Context Questions

The purpose of this freewrite is to get you thinking about how your personal context affects the way you read a text. Reread the song by Mos Def, "Dollar Day," on page 20. How did your knowledge of Hurricane Katrina affect your reading? How did your own attitudes about the government's reaction to Hurricane Katrina affect your reading? How did your knowledge of and attitudes about rap music affect your reading?

If you completed the freewrite above, you probably found that your reading process and the way you responded to Mos Def's song "Dollar Day" depended on your personal context. If you were a supporter of former President Bush and the Iraq War, your experience of reading "Dollar Day" was different than someone who did not favor the Bush government or the war. If you're a fan of Mos Def, that probably influenced the way you responded to his message. If you don't listen to rap as a genre and aren't familiar with it, then you probably went through a different reading process than someone who listens to rap all of the time. Personal context plays an important role in reading processes, and so do social and cultural contexts. You couldn't read and respond to "Dollar Day" without some knowledge of its historical and social context.

The act of reading always involves a complex and dynamic personal and social context for the reader and the text. Readers' processes and the way they interpret and respond to texts are influenced by factors such as:

Their ethnicity	Their economic background
Their gender	Their age
Their personal beliefs	Their prior experiences with the kind of text they're reading

In addition to the reader's personal and social context, the social and cultural context surrounding the text is also important. Factors that help shape a text include:

- The author's race, gender, economic class, and so forth
- The historical period of the text
- The culture in which the text was produced
- The history of the genre and medium of a text
- The ways people have responded to the text

Let's look at a poem about the war in Iraq to help us think about the ways social and cultural factors shape how we read a text. First, read the poem

"Eulogy," and think about how your own personal knowledge and experiences shape your reading of the text.

Eulogy

Brian Turner

It happens on a Monday, at 11:20 A.M.,
as tower guards eat sandwiches
and seagulls drift by on the Tigris River.
Prisoners tilt their heads to the west
though burlap sacks and duct tape blind them.
The sound reverberates down concertina coils
the way piano wire thrums when given slack.
And it happens like this, on a blue day of sun,
when Private Miller pulls the trigger
to take brass and fire into his mouth:
the sound lifts the birds up off the water,
a mongoose pauses under the orange trees,
and nothing can stop it now, no matter what
blur of motion surrounds him, no matter what voices
crackle over the radio in static confusion,
because if only for this moment the earth is stilled,
and Private Miller has found what low hush there is
down in the eucalyptus shade, there by the river.
PFC B. Miller
(1980–March 22, 2004)

Freewrite Context and "Eulogy"

In small groups or with the class, talk about how your own personal knowledge and experiences shaped your reading of "Eulogy." Then do an Internet search for information about the problem of soldiers committing suicide in the war in Iraq, and after you've explored some Web sites about this problem, reread "Eulogy." How did your further knowledge of the problem of soldiers committing suicide in the Iraq war shape your second reading? Explore this question in groups or with the class. Next, do an Internet search for reviews of Brian Turner's book of poems, *Here, Bullet.* Once you've browsed some review of the book, read "Eulogy" again and discuss the ways your knowledge of the author and the book affected your reading. How do you think Turner's experiences shaped his poem?

Composing Processes in Multiple Literacies

Freewrite Your Composing Processes

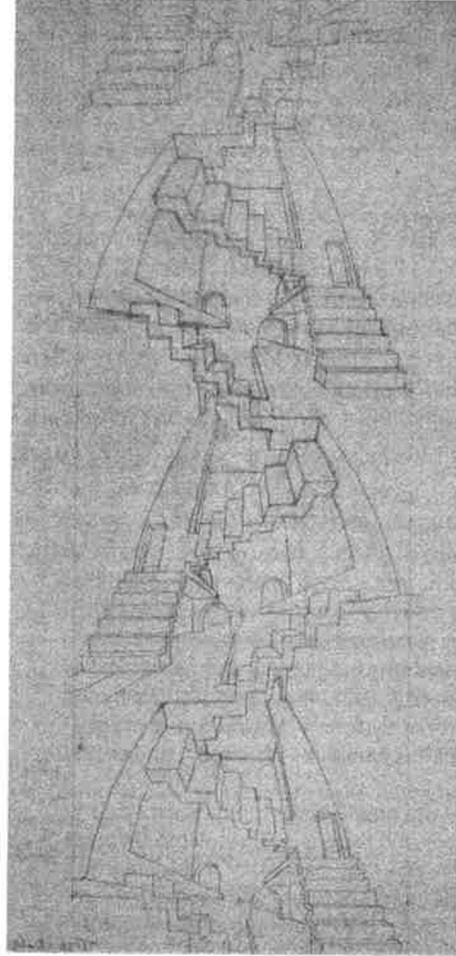
The purpose of this freewrite is to encourage you to think about your own composing processes and compare your composing processes with your peers'. Draw a cartoon or some other visual image (for example, a flowchart) that describes your composing processes. Share your cartoons or visual images in small groups and compare the similarities and differences among your processes and your peers' processes. Be prepared to discuss these differences with the class.

In the rest of Chapter 2, we'll explore the ways that purpose, medium, genre, and context shape your composing processes. But before we talk about the ways composing processes will differ in different literacy situations, let's talk about some general features of composing processes. To do this, let's take a look at the composing process of an artist, M. C. Escher, as he composed a lithograph (a print). First, take a look at the final version of M. C. Escher's lithograph *High and Low* on page 46.

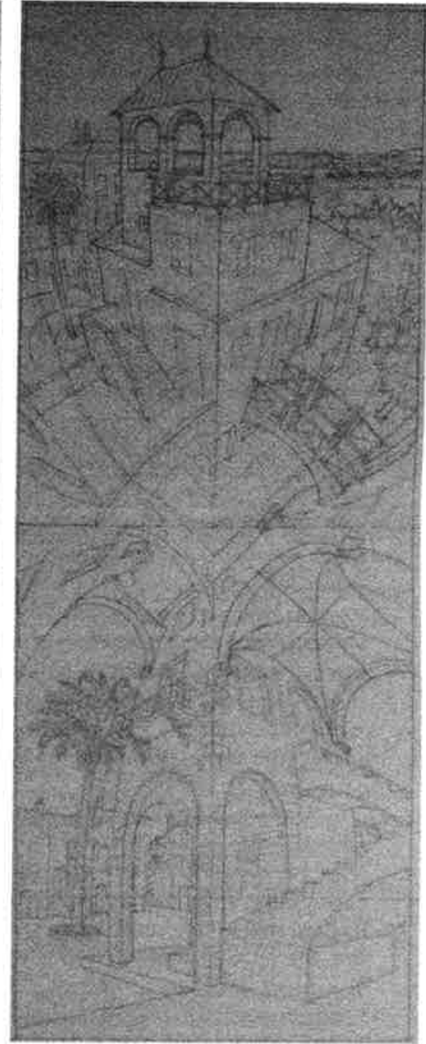
High and Low is a complex and detailed work of art, and it would be a mistake to think that Escher composed it in one sitting, or that he created it the night before an exhibition—just as you can't write a research paper for a class in one sitting, or the night before it's due. Escher engaged in a lengthy composing process that involved drafting, revising, and editing. When Escher began to compose *High and Low*, he did some first-draft sketches of the drawing. Take a look at the first draft of *High and Low* on page 47.

If you compare this first version of *High and Low* to the final version on page 46 you'll get a sense of how different even an expert composer's first draft and final draft are. Although the basic concepts in the first draft and final draft of *High and Low* are similar, every aspect of the composition changed dramatically from the first draft to the final draft: the perspective, the shape and style of the buildings, the trees, and the addition of human figures. You can see some of these changes in the second version of *High and Low* on page 47.

M. C. Escher's *High and Low* (final version)



M. C. Escher's *High and Low* (preliminary work 1)



M. C. Escher's *High and Low* (preliminary work 2)

Escher made significant changes between the first and second drafts of *High and Low*. He changed the perspective, and completely revised the structure and style of the buildings. But even this second draft was rough, and between the second draft and the final draft, Escher added human figures and went through many more major changes. Consider all of the details he developed as he drafted, such as the shading, the added stairways and arches and banisters, and the background buildings. In each draft of *High and Low*, the content, style, mood, and surface details changed significantly.

One Student's Composing Process

For an example of a composer's process in a print medium, let's look at parts of an early draft and a final draft of an essay by a college student writer. Lauren Kiser was a first-semester, first-year student enrolled in ENC 1101, the first of two required composition courses at Florida State University, when she composed "Unearthing," a personal literacy narrative. We'll look more closely at Lauren's essay drafts and her composing processes in the case study in Chapter 3: Situating Personal Literacies, but for now we'll focus on some specific revisions Lauren made. To get a sense of how a composition changes as composers revise, let's compare the first draft of the opening of Lauren's essay to the final draft. Following is Lauren's first draft of the opening paragraphs:

> My life began with a backdrop of what some may consider paradise: a small, cozy home sitting on the side of a hill, the Blue Ridge Mountains on the horizon, and all of the solitude that comes with living in a town set in a frame made of pine, maple, and coal. Unfortunately for me, I never found my paradise in this small coalmining town, but it is where my life began, and so it is also where my story begins.
>
> The wooded scenery provided me with ample opportunity to explore the natural world as a child. My grandfather and I spent hours walking through what we called the "Bernstein Bear" trail in my backyard. There I learned about moss and ferns and rollie-pollie bugs that we found under rocks. I learned that pine trees are green year round and if you light pine needles on fire, the smoke keeps the gnats away.

Lauren received feedback from her peers and her teacher and took her essay through multiple drafts. In the process memo she wrote to describe her composing processes, Lauren said:

> *My rough draft was a starting point. When I first sat down to write, I had no idea how I was going to approach the topic and began with an entirely different tone and storyline. One day after that I was in the mood to write and sat down and completely rewrote the first part of my paper to what it is now (excluding some revisions). My second draft includes more details and a better flow.*

For Lauren, the drafting and revising process involved more than just editing sentences. She relied on feedback to help add details that made her essay more descriptive and well developed. You can see the kind of revising she did by comparing the first draft of her opening paragraphs with the opening paragraphs of her final draft:

> My life began with a backdrop of what some may consider paradise: a small, cozy home sitting on the side of a hill, the Blue Ridge Mountains on the horizon, and all of the solitude that comes with living in a town set in a frame made of pine, maple, and coal. Unfortunately for me, I never found my paradise in this small coalmining town, but it is where my life began, and also where my story begins.
>
> The wooded scenery provided me with ample opportunity to explore the natural world as a child. From the time I could walk, I was interested in bugs, flowers, and leaves. The boundless forest in my backyard encouraged exploration. My grandfather and I spent hours walking through what we called the "Bernstein Bear" trail, named after my favorite series of books at the time. There I learned about moss and ferns and rollie-pollie bugs that we found under rocks. I learned that pine trees are green year round and if you light pine needles on fire, the smoke keeps the gnats away. My grandfather was part Native American and taught me that we should never take more than we need, and to always give back to nature. I learned many lessons that I did not realize until later in life. Most of all, he taught me to be observant of my surroundings and to appreciate seemingly insignificant things.

In addition to developing ideas and adding examples and details, revising could also mean changing the focus of your composition and adding and deleting entire sections. As Lauren drafted and revised, she deleted her entire closing paragraph and wrote a completely different ending. Following is Lauren's original closing paragraph:

> Once I reached kindergarten, I was faced with my first major educational obstacle—my teacher Mrs. Nancy. Kindergarten teachers are typically perceived as kind, generous, and___. Mrs. Nancy, however, was exceptional at inhibiting my learning. When going through exercises that taught my classmates and I how to write our names, I was scolded because this was a skill that I had already acquired. I quickly lost interest in the monotony of writing my name, so my perfectly sculpted chicken scratch became more and more difficult to decipher and then again I was scolded for my sloppiness.

> This was a major setback for me as far as my interest in school went. My teacher often sent notes home to my mother, complaining about everything from my brilliantly colored sky that had every color in the crayon box in it—except blue, to my lack of interest in playing kitchen with my classmates.

As Lauren drafted and revised her essay, she began to focus more and more on the influence of her mother on her literacy. She decided to delete the details about Mrs. Nancy and close her essay with a greater focus on her mother. She deleted most of the closing paragraph above and added these closing paragraphs:

> My "home schooling" of sorts put me ahead of my peers when I began attending public school. It was difficult for me, given that my mother, not being a local, was already disliked by many, and that I had already been provided the education that was required for pre-k and kindergarten. I was scorned by teachers and administrators for being ahead and was left in a class that was not engaging and monotonous for my young and growing mind.
>
> My mother, however, supplied me with a steady stream of activities to keep me interested in school-related subjects. Besides my extraordinary library of books, she encouraged me to be creative and supplied a limitless stock of glue, glitter, paint, and my favorite—Crayola crayons. In school, when my classmates were learning their colors and shapes, I was discovering new and innovative ways to incorporate them into whatever medium was available. Our refrigerator proudly displayed layer upon layer of colorful construction paper, tempera paint, and a rainbow of glitter. Often, my mother received notes from my teachers complaining about my excessive use of art supplies.
>
> I also spent much time outdoors helping my mom do yard work. She taught me the names of flowers and the secret formula of sun, water, and love that makes them grow. I saw many of the things that I read put into action. I collected caterpillars and put them in a terrarium, hoping they would turn into butterflies like in *Where Butterflies Grow*. Seeing a bird's nest or a bunny transformed my literary knowledge into a hands-on experience.
>
> The foundation of my education was made concrete by my mother and grandfather. They allowed me to explore the world around me with few boundaries. My youthful curiosity was satisfied not only with published texts, but also with many hands-on experiences. Because I was neither forced nor restricted in my education, my drive to obtain a better understanding of all subjects has been fueled by my intrinsic motivation.

Hopefully, the examples of M. C. Escher and Lauren will help you see that successful composers engage in an extensive process of drafting and revising and editing. In a moment, we'll think about the ways in which the mediums

Escher and Lauren were composing in shaped their processes, but first, let's look at some general strategies for composing processes that can apply in almost any literacy situation.

Don't pressure yourself to get the composition right in the first few drafts. Even a famous artist such as M. C. Escher used early sketches to explore ideas and play with composition and perspective. Lauren wrote entire paragraphs that she later wound up deleting. In the early stages of composing processes, don't pressure yourself to create perfect designs or finely crafted and edited sentences. Try freewriting or sketching to generate ideas, and don't worry about editing sentences or perfecting visual designs in early drafts.

Separate revising from editing and proofreading. When M. C. Escher revised his first version of *High and Low*, he didn't just change a few small details. He completely rethought the design and perspective of his composition, and added significantly to the content of the lithograph from the first version to the final version. Successful composers aren't afraid to revise the content of their compositions as they draft. They might change focus, add evidence, delete entire pages or paragraphs, change their voice and style, and so forth. Composing is thinking, and as you compose you'll think of new ideas that will change your first draft in significant ways—you'll revise. When you have a final draft of your composition, you're ready to edit. Editing means reshaping sentences and focusing on strategies like word choice and design formatting to improve your composition. After you've revised and edited, it's a good idea to proofread. Proofreading means looking closely and carefully at your final draft to catch typos, misspelled words, grammatical errors, and so forth.

Give yourself time to engage in the composing process. The kinds of complex literacy situations you'll encounter in and out of school demand time for drafting, revising, and editing. Beginning your composing process just before an essay is due for a class won't give you time to explore your initial ideas, rethink your first drafts, or edit your final draft. Lauren began writing her literacy essay shortly after she received the assignment, and she took the essay through multiple drafts. You will also want to give yourself time to get feedback from an outside reader or readers. With feedback from her classmates and her teacher, Lauren was able to focus her essay and find out where she needed more details.

Composing is a social process; composers benefit from feedback throughout the process. You might have a romantic vision of artists such as M. C. Escher in which they work alone in their studios, creating art from

inspiration. But the reality is that successful composers treat composing as a social process. Even before he began composing, an artist such as Escher sought out models from fellow artists to give him ideas: he looked for models of the genre he composed in and he explored what other composers had done. Artists also get feedback from fellow artists as they sketch and paint. To seek feedback in college, you could make appointments to talk about your drafts with your college teachers, form writing groups or partners with peers in your classes, or visit your school's writing (or tutoring) center. Getting feedback on drafts of your compositions can help you see different perspectives and develop your ideas and examples.

In the rest of this chapter, we'll explore the ways composing processes are "situated." This means that composing processes are shaped by the literacy situation: the purpose, audience, medium, genre, and so forth. For example, because Escher was working in the visual medium of drawing, his drafts consisted of sketches, and his revision strategy focused on perspective and the visual design of the composition. Lauren's revision process was influenced by the conventions of the genre of the literacy essay, with its emphasis on telling stories and providing descriptive details to help draw readers into the narrative. Both Escher and Lauren's processes were influenced by their own histories as composers—for example, their awareness of what kind of processes worked best for them. Prior "texts" were also an influence on both Escher and Lauren—In Escher's case, other painters whose work influenced him, and in Lauren's case, the example literacy narratives she was reading in class as well as her peers' literacy narratives that she read during peer-response workshops. Your composing process will always be shaped by the literacy situation, and you'll need the flexibility to adjust your processes for the multiple literacy situations you'll encounter both in school and out of school.

Composing for Multiple Purposes

Every aspect of your composing process will be shaped by your purposes for writing. If you're writing an e-mail to a friend with the purpose of planning a party, you're not going to do much revising and editing—and you may not even bother to use spell check. If you're writing an e-mail to a teacher for the purpose of asking to do an independent study, you'll probably draft and revise your request and take the time to edit your sentences. If you're writing an e-mail to a parent or grandparent for the purpose of explaining how to program his or her TiVo, you'll probably focus on choosing your words carefully and making sure the information is clear as you

reread what you've written. To think about how purposes for composing shape composing processes, let's look at three assignments from three first-year writing classes. Read the assignments and think about the primary purpose for the writer in each.

First-year writing assignment from Professor Sylvia Morales of California State University, Sacramento

Write an essay that *analyzes* the ways in which the university uses language and prescribes language use. Some questions to consider are: (1) What does the university teach students about language use? (2) Why does it teach students these things? (3) What should the university teach students about language use, specifically writing? (4) Should the university change with the times, cultures, and so forth or should it maintain and/or teach some standard of spoken and written English? (5) How much of an influence does the university have on language use in America?

The length of this assignment will make it difficult to cover all of the above questions or all of the ways in which the university influences language use in adequate depth. Therefore, you should focus your essay on one or two aspects. For example, you may compare and contrast the academic discourse community with another discourse community. You may focus on just spoken language or on just written language. It is also possible to focus on certain conventions of language use, as many of our readings have done, such as grammar or word choice. Finally, you may analyze the influence that the university has on our language use versus other influences such as the media or family and friends. The focus and purpose of your essay is up to you; however, the essay must analyze in some way the university's role in determining and/or influencing language use.

First-year writing assignment from Professor Linda Haines of Purdue University

Comprehensive Annotated Bibliography

Annotated bibliographies provide brief overviews or summaries of articles related to a specific topic. Often they are compiled in order to demonstrate what sources are available on a topic that a scholar is considering studying.

For this assignment, you will find, read, and create annotations for scholarly articles and Web sites related to your semester-long research. We'll begin this assignment with the Convos Essay, in which you will research something that relates to the Kevin Locke Convocations performance. You will add to your bibliography when you research someone on Purdue's campus for your profile assignment and again when you work with a group on the Public Service Announcement assignment, and once again when you work on your final research report. By the end of the semester, you will have a detailed record of your research.

First-year writing assignment from Professor Robert Lamm of Arkansas State University

Each student will keep a writing journal that will act as a record of development as a reader, writer, and arguer. The student will follow these procedures:

A. Use a thin binder or a spiral notebook.
B. Write in the journal at least five days a week.
C. Label each entry with the day's date. Bind them sequentially.
D. Freewrite the journal, but focus on the subject of writing. Freewriting, also called automatic or stream of consciousness writing, involves never stopping your pen, even if you can't think of anything to write; but focused freewriting limits the subject of your journal. Freewrite for 5 minutes each session to produce entries of at least 100 words each session.
E. Scoring: Sixty complete entries will be an "A"; 50, a "B"; 40, a "C"; 30, a "D"; 20 or fewer, an "F."
F. Your journal must always be on some aspect of writing: your experiences, especially your reactions to reading or writing assignments in this class this semester.
G. You may label an entry "Don't Read" or "Don't Share" if you don't want the teacher to read a particular entry. You keep your journal at the end of the semester.
H. You shouldn't worry about grammar, punctuation, or spelling in your journal. Its grade will be based on the number of words, not upon quality. That is because the chief purpose of this kind of journal is to develop flow.

For each of these three assignments, the writer's purposes will affect the composing processes he or she engages in. For the first assignment, the composer needs to carefully analyze university language. This is not the kind of assignment that can be written at the last minute, and the writer would need to give himself or herself time to decide on a focus and engage in an extensive composing process. Because the assignment asks for an in-depth analysis, the writer will need to go through multiple drafts.

The second assignment asks the writer to read and summarize texts over an entire semester. Reading and writing are closely connected in this annotated bibliography assignment, and the composer would need to find the main ideas of texts and highlight those main ideas as he or she reads. Although writing brief summaries of texts won't require the kind of revising necessary for the first assignment, a composer completing the annotated bibliography assignment might find herself revising earlier annotations as her knowledge of her topic grows over the course of the semester.

The purposes of the first two assignments call for structured and organized thinking, whether it's analyzing or summarizing. Assignment number three is far less structured because the purpose is to explore ideas informally, and the writer's process wouldn't require revision or editing.

Freewrite Purpose and Process

Now that you've looked at the way the purpose of a writing assignment can shape a writer's process, think about the purposes of the writing assignments for the writing class you're in now. Write for five minutes about the purpose of each writing assignment for the class and how that purpose (or purposes) might shape your composing processes.

Composing in Multiple Mediums

Consider the ways that the medium an author is composing in shapes the author's composing process in these examples:

A Web designer creates a flowchart of all of the pages she intends to include in a Web site so she can decide how many links to create on her index page and how she can keep the number of linked pages to a minimum so she doesn't overwhelm Web surfers visiting her site.

A stand-up comic always reads his routines aloud after he has a first draft and then reads aloud again after each revision, trying to improve the timing of the routine and his choice of words.

A photographer visits the same mountain at different times of the day and evening to create a series of photographs capturing the changes to a landscape based on shadows and the quality of light.

A rock musician never writes her lyrics until after she's arranged the music because she feels that the music should set the tone and theme of the content of the song.

In each of these examples, the tool of communication the author is using to create his or her composition—the medium—plays a significant role in the kind of composing process the author engages in. To get some insight into how a composing process is shaped by the medium, we'll focus on the medium in the last example from above—a musician composing songs. Read the excerpts below from different interviews with the musician and songwriter Beck (Beck Hansen). In these interview excerpts, Beck discusses his composing processes for creating music.

From an interview with *Pitchfork.com:*

BH: With modern recording techniques and living in the Pro Tools era, the process gets really drawn-out, and it can become painstaking. There's an infi-

nite amount of possibilities and detours and things that can distract you from actually just performing the song and having whatever emotion that's invested into the song come through in the recording. Basically, what I'm saying is there is such a technical aspect now, whereas they used to just set up mics and record it, and there weren't a lot of options. That is something that I think musicians routinely complain about or comment on. There's nothing new about that, but I thought it would be interesting to try it the old way. But on *Mutations* and *Sea Change*, a lot of those songs were recorded live. It's something that I've always been interested in, even though I *am* interested in the more modern recording techniques as well.
Pitchfork: Which technique would you say you enjoy more?
BH: I enjoy recording live better, but I think by the nature of it you are going to end up with something that's a little bit more traditional. When you use some of the more modern recording devices and Pro Tools, when you get into the technology, you are aching to get into some territory.
Pitchfork: A record like *Odelay* is almost the antithesis of the old way. That record is so full of information. Listening to it, it sounded like it must have taken forever.
BH: It *did* take forever, which in a way was good. I think we were using a very early version of Pro Tools. Compared to what we have now; it was digital, but it was very primitive, so it took forever. I remember you would record a guitar part, and we would have to sit there for 15 or 20 minutes waiting for the computer to process it. You'd see the little wheel spinning on the computer, and you'd be praying that the hard drive didn't crash and you didn't lose the performance. There were all kinds of limitations with how we did that record, but I think that's what made it more interesting and made us try more interesting things. Back then, Pro Tools only had four or eight tracks, so we couldn't actually hear all the tracks. We could only hear eight at a time, so if a song had 25 or 30 tracks, we wouldn't be able to hear it until we went into the studio and put it all on tape. The process was a little bit backwards.

From an interview with *Paste Magazine:*

Of "Guerolito" Beck says; "I was listening to a lot of Miles Davis records from the early '70s where he would do multiple versions of one song. There was this idea in rock that there was only one definitive version of a song. On "Guerolito," we did all the remixes and then I went into the studio and—for our own amusement—started doing a calypso version of "Scarecrow" and then all these other strange versions. A song is just a skeleton and you can just do whatever you want on top. That was the idea I was exploring."

While each album is united by feel, Beck has never worked to a theme. His method is to go into the studio with some beats and start improvising vocals over them. He has no lyrics prepared on paper. As he puts it, he just gets on the microphone and "lets it fly." When something magical happens, he keeps it. This process was made easier on The Information because it was the first record he and Godrich used computers on. "It afforded us the ability to experiment," he says. "We could try a lot of things and waste a lot of ideas. There are almost too many options. You can drive yourself crazy with options."

Often, Beck's best lines will come up when he's not even aware he's being recorded. It happened that way with the chorus of The *Information*'s lead track, "Elevator Music." He describes the state of mind he has to get into to do this as being almost like that of someone meditating. He has to ignore his surroundings and forget that close friends are listening in the control room. He can't afford to be self-conscious. "There are so many internal rhythms and rhymes," he says. "If I was to sit down right now and write out a couple of stanzas and tried to rap them, they wouldn't flow. The rhymes come out of the beat. They come from a conversation with the beat. Rhythmically, the process is closer to jazz improvisation."

It's tempting to describe this method of composition as stream-of-consciousness, but it's not quite as soul-baring because he has the opportunity to revise and erase. "It's like a conversation with another person," he explains. "Both people willfully talk about what they want to talk about, but it's not scripted. There are times when I go up on the mic when it is just stream-of-consciousness because I don't know what's coming next, but anyone who writes has to have some kernel of an agenda or plan. But we're all ultimately talking out of our necks. We're all making it up as we go along."

From an interview with *Interview Magazine*:

Interviewer: Your songs are such a hodgepodge of musical styles that somehow perfectly fit the evocative narratives. What comes first?
Beck: Usually the music inspires the lyrics. The lyrics just sort of fall off like a bunch of crumbs from the melody. That's all I want them to be—crumbs I don't want to work any kind of fabricated message. Sometimes I'll have an idea for a story or have a subject and that will inspire lyrics, but most of the time, hopefully, they already exist somewhere else.
Interviewer: When recording an album, how involved are you in what the other musicians are playing?
Beck: Well, my first few albums, I was playing most of the instruments myself. But I have been known to sit in front of a musician, singing to him what he needs to play.

ewrite Medium and Composing Processes

The purpose of this freewrite is to help you think about the idea that the medium you compose in shapes your composing processes. Think of a composition you created that was in a medium other than print text (for example, a Web site or a speech or a photo). How were your composing processes different from your processes for composing in print? How did the medium you were composing in affect your composing processes?

Composing in Multiple Genres

Your composing process for writing an e-mail to a friend may involve one draft and no revising or editing, whereas your composing process for a book review for a history class may involve finding model book reviews to emulate, writing multiple drafts, and visiting the writing center to get some feedback from a tutor. Composing a job application will involve careful editing and proofreading, and composing a Web site will require attention to visual design and hyperlinks. Each different genre demands a different composing process.

Let's look at examples of student writers composing in two genres to help us think about the ways the genre you're composing in shapes your composing processes. Gopi Pitcher was a student at James Madison University when she composed a slide show for an assignment in a first-year writing course. We'll take a closer look at Gopi's slide show in the student case study in Chapter 5: "Situating Visual Literacies," but for now, we'll focus on what Gopi had to say about how composing in the genre of the slide show affected her processes:

> *I felt that composing the slide show was harder than I thought. Unlike the essay I have no words to explain everything I want to or had explained within the essay. Everything had to be shown. . . . Finding the pictures started to get difficult when trying to find those specific photos that capture the very emotions that I wanted to show my audience, so they too could evoke some emotion or reaction. With an essay, I could just ramble on then clean it up later with editing; you can't do that with a visual argument. Then there is the worry that the argument won't come through. It has to be a strong argument so anyone on any given day can view it and say, "Hey I know what she's trying to tell me."*

Composing in the genre of a slide show required Gopi to focus her process not on freewriting or revising words but on finding photos and then deciding which photos would be most effective. In the genre of the slide show, the convention is to focus on images rather than words to get your message across. As Gopi mentioned, she wasn't able to "ramble on and then clean it up later," like she could with a print genre such as an essay or research paper, so her process was more focused and limited.

The genre you're composing in will affect not just the way you brainstorm and revise but also the specific choices you make as you fine-tune your composition. Maria Correa was a student in a first-year writing course at Florida State University when she created a Web site about the communities with the worst poverty in Brazil (the "Favelas"). We'll look more closely at Maria's Web site in Chapter 6: "Situating Digital Literacies," but for now we'll focus on what Maria had to say about some specific choices she made about the design of her Web site:

> *As for the structure of the Web site, I chose to have the big banner on the top of the page with the title,* Favelas of Brazil. *I wanted the words* Favelas and Brazil *to stand out, so I made that font larger than* of. *Then, I placed the links on the left side of the page. For the rough drafts and process memos, since there are three of each, I wanted to have a heading that stood out and each link to the rough drafts and memos as a sub-link to their headings. Then, I wanted to have my movie in the middle of my home page. I wanted the video itself to be bigger, but I tried changing it in several ways and it didn't work out. I didn't want to include anything else in my home page so it wouldn't distract from my movie.*

Because Maria was composing in the genre of the Web site, an important part of her process involved making choices about design: the size of the banner, the placement of links, the appearance of the video, and the overall look of the page. Banners, links, and embedded videos are all conventions of the genre of the Web site. These kinds of choices about the design of her composition would have been less important if Maria were composing in the genre of an e-mail or an editorial or a book report. Genre affects all aspects of composing processes, from finding a topic to drafting and revising to document design and editing.

Freewrite Genre Interview

Think of a specific genre you've composed in recently, whether for a course or on your own. Then, get into pairs and interview a peer about the ways in which the genre he or she composed in shaped the composing process. Here are some things you can consider in your questions:

- The conventions of the genre
- The composer's familiarity with the genre
- The purposes and audiences for the genre
- The social and cultural contexts of the genre

Be prepared to report to the class what you found in your interview.

Freewrite Literacy History

The purpose of this freewrite is to help you think about the ways your personal context will shape the writing you do in college. Write for ten minutes about your high school literacy history. Consider your personal background and how it influenced you as a writer and reader, the influence of your teachers, and the kinds of texts you read and composed.

Composing in Multiple Contexts

When we began drafting this textbook, our composing processes were shaped by many personal and social contexts: our experiences as teachers of writing, our prior experiences using textbooks in our classes, our attitudes about reading and writing, the trends in our field, the kinds of reading and writing that are becoming more and more influential in the wider culture, and so forth. If you completed the freewrite at the bottom of page 59, you probably found that the personal and social contexts you were composing in had a major influence on the way you composed. Let's look at some examples of how personal and social contexts affected composers' attitudes and processes. Read the following excerpts from three essays from Chapter 3: "Situating Personal Literacies." All of the excerpts focus on the ways that personal and social contexts influenced three writers.

Excerpt from Sherman Alexie's "Superman and Me":

My father, who is one of the few Indians who went to Catholic school on purpose, was an avid reader of westerns, spy thrillers, murder mysteries, gangster epics, basketball player biographies, and anything else he could find. He bought his books by the pound at Dutch's Pawn Shop, Goodwill, Salvation Army, and Value Village. When he had extra money, he bought new novels at supermarkets, convenience stores, and hospital gift shops. Our house was filled with books. They were stacked in crazy piles in the bathroom, bedrooms, and living room. In a fit of unemployment-inspired creative energy, my father built a set of bookshelves and soon filled them with a random assortment of books about the Kennedy assassination, Watergate, the Vietnam War, and the entire 23-book series of the Apache westerns. My father loved books, and since I loved my father with an aching devotion, I decided to love books as well.

Excerpt from Paule Marshall's "From the Poets in the Kitchen":

My mother and her friends were after all the female counterparts of Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*. Indeed, you might say they suffered a triple invisibility, being black, female and foreigners. They really didn't count in American society except as a source of cheap labor. But given the kind of women they were, they couldn't tolerate the fact of their invisibility, their powerlessness. And they fought back, using the only weapon at their command: the spoken word.

Those late afternoon conversations on a wide range of topics were a way for them to feel they exercised some measure of control over their lives and the events that shaped them. "Soully-gal, talk yuh talk!" they were always exhorting each other. "In this man world you got to take yuh mouth and make a gun!" They were in control, if only verbally and if only for the two hours or so that they remained in our house.

Excerpt from Gloria Anzaldúa's "How to Tame a Wild Tongue":

I remember being caught speaking Spanish at recess—that was good for three licks on the knuckles with a sharp ruler. I remember being sent to the corner of the classroom for "talking back" to the Anglo teacher when all I was trying to do was tell her how to pronounce my name. "If you want to be American, speak 'American.' If you don't like it, go back to Mexico where you belong."

Freewrite Responding to the Reading

Go to Chapter 3 and read the entire text of one of the three essays excerpted previously. Make a list of the personal and social/cultural factors that influenced the author. What factors were a positive influence? What factors were a negative influence? Next, write for five minutes about both the positive and negative personal and social/cultural contexts that influence you as a composer.

In every example of composing in this chapter, from Brian Turner's poem to M. C. Escher's lithographs to the essays by Alexie, Marshall, and Anzaldúa, factors such as purpose, medium, genre, and context shaped composers processes, and each composing process was different. Twenty-first–century readers and composers need the rhetorical agility to adapt their reading and composing processes to multiple literacy situations and to avoid using the same process for each literacy situation they face. As you read the texts in this book, think about what reading strategies will be most effective for your purposes for reading and for the medium and genre of the text. Before you begin to engage in the writing projects, consider what composing processes will best suit the kind of text you're composing and the context of the assignment. In this class and in all of the composing you do in and out of school, remember that the literacy situation will shape your composing processes.