

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.

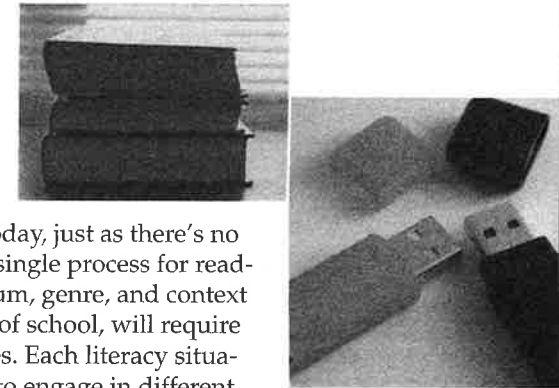
Freewrite Reflecting on Literacy

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?

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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 "pre-reading" to get ready to view *Trainspotting*—especially if you haven't seen the film before. To pre-read, 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	<p>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.</p> <p>The character is hallucinating that a baby is crawling on the ceiling and crying. Contrast of innocence versus world of drug use.</p> <p>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.</p>
Mood	<p>The lighting is dark, especially the character is under the sheets. The darkness and shadows set a mood of fear and despair.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

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

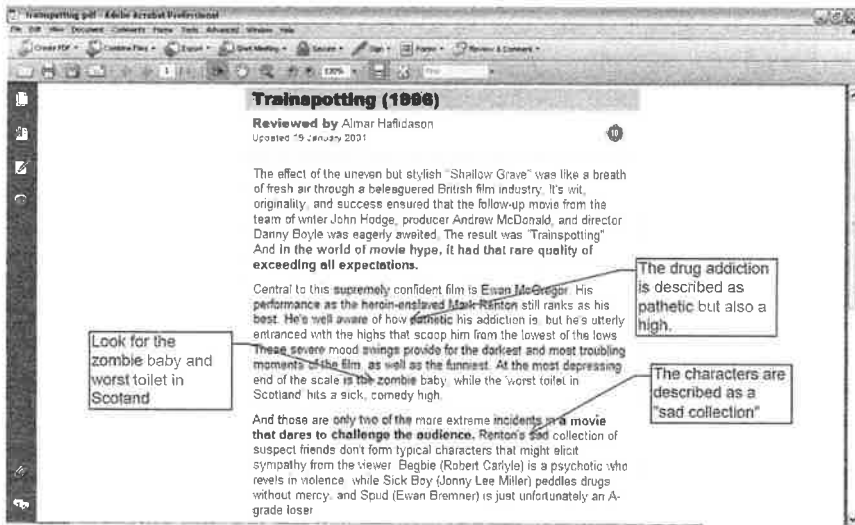
Following is advice for improving your reading processes:

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.



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 Whites.

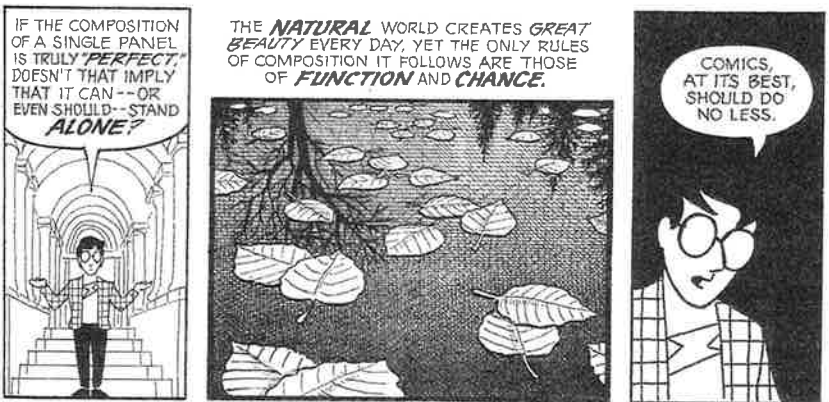
Ultimately, it's up to the NCAA to set these standards of respect, and teams that want to participate in lucrative postseason play will have to comply. Compliance with demonstrating respect to indigenous groups should be a fairly basic concept. Students or players who disagree need to take a class about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

Freewrite Your Multiple Reading and Composing Processes

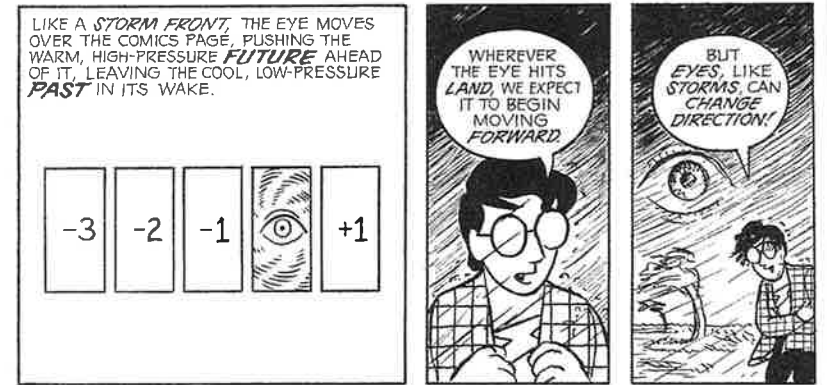
In what ways did your reading processes differ for each different purpose for reading the mascot ban article above? Talk about your different reading processes in small groups and/or with the class.

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.

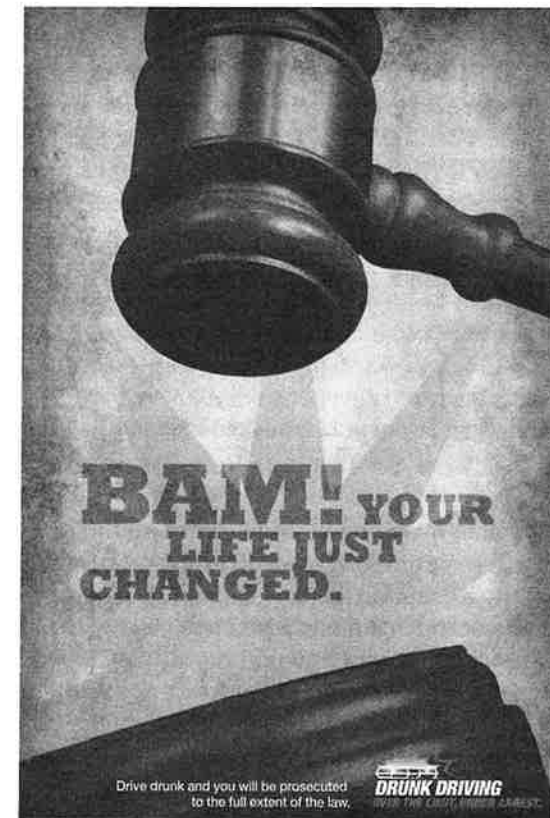
- Wear your seat belt while in a car or use a helmet and protective gear when on a motorcycle as these are your best defenses against an impaired driver.
- Finally, remember, if you know someone who is about to drive or ride while impaired, take their keys and help them safely make other arrangements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

Freewrite 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.

Freewrite 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.

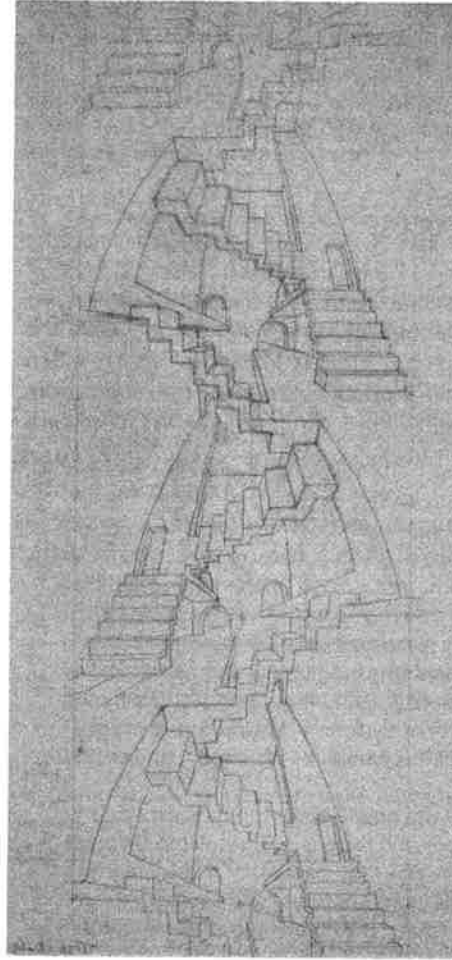
In the rest of Chapter 2, we’ll explore the ways that purpose, medium, genre, and context shape your composing processes. But before we talk about the ways composing processes will differ in different literacy situations, let’s talk about some general features of composing processes. To do this, let’s 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.

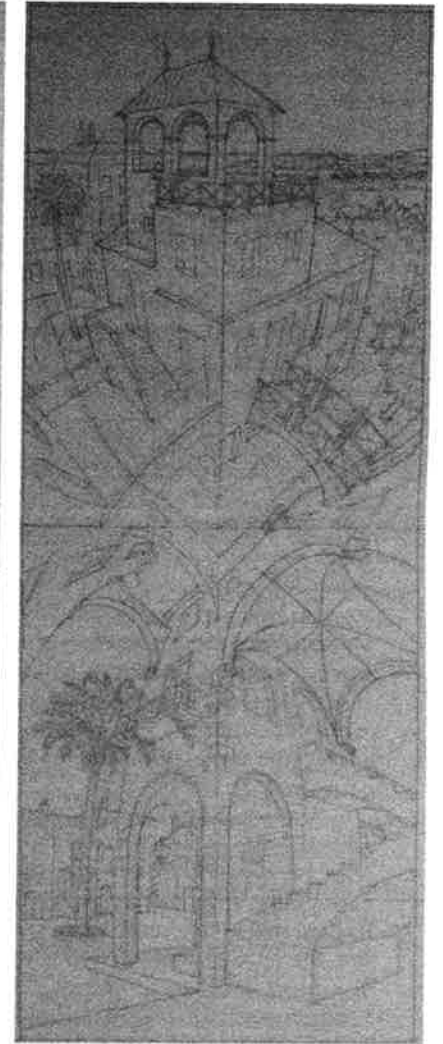
If you compare this first version of *High and Low* to the final version on page 46 you’ll get a sense of how different even an expert composer’s first draft and final draft are. Although the basic concepts in the first draft and final draft of *High and Low* are similar, every aspect of the composition 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.

Freewrite 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 proof-reading, 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. "Soullly-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.