

LE1 - Genres That Matter to You

Genres That Matter to You (Unit One)

(Note: Don't do this unit one assignment if you plan to do the "Genres That Matter" assignment for either unit two or three)

Instructor name

120 section number

Writing strategies we're working on here:

Rhetorical awareness: analyzing contexts and purposes for writing, analyzing audience expectations, making conscious decisions about form and content of your writing. *Critical thinking, reading and, writing*: Reading critically, using evidence to support your analysis. *Processes*: reflecting on kinds and uses of writing in your life (and all of our lives), using evidence from your own work, integrating personal and academic work. *Use of conventions*: Analyzing and employing genre conventions, including MLA citations and conventions of standard English.

Possible readings for this assignment:

Maya Angelou, "Graduation"

Andrea Fishman, "Becoming Literate: A Lesson from the Amish"

Dick Gregory, "Shame"

Overview:

In this unit, we will investigate the kinds of writing you do that are valuable to you. We're going to work hard to uncover a genre—as we define it together in class—that expresses you, the one genre that you could not possibly live without. What is this genre? What kinds of writing are included in it? Why is it relevant? –Throughout these investigations, we'll work together to uncover how writing functions in a variety of settings for all of us.

In the first part of this essay, your mission is to explain the importance of that genre to an audience not familiar with it – a real audience, actually in this class – and explain to them how they might write something in this genre and why they might want to do it. You'll need to focus here both on how to write it, and what the relevance of the genre is – whether it means extending to other audiences, working in new communities, or something else. For the second part of this essay, you'll draw from both your experiences with this genre and those of your class colleagues as evidence. As a community, what genres are personally significant and why? What does the range of genres reveal about who you are as writers?

Exploration One:

What's the one genre you couldn't live without as a writer? How'd you learn it? Why is it so important to you? What role has it played in your life? What specific instances can you point to that demonstrate its value to you? What kind of people

use it? What's it for? How might you teach it to someone else?

Exploration Two:

In this exploration, you'll first read and take notes on everyone's Exploration One (either posted to an online site or posted around the room). First, look at the range of genres included. What do your colleagues value, and why? Then, choose one or two Explorations that extend your thinking—they helped you think about a genre in a slightly different way; they made you say "a-ha!" or, "oh, that's kind of interesting;" they made you wonder about something new. Using those explorations and your own Exploration One, consider the following questions: What kinds of writing are significant, and why? How do genres function for these writers, and how do you know?

Possible activities with this assignment:

Observing--observe everything you see—happening in season, writing down everything—walk to more than one place. Purpose: how to notice details, analyze text, analyze writing

Description and Interpretation—discuss differences and why? Why are there differences in what each person sees?

Learning how to be Curious—look at a painting, write, why you think you're seeing what you're seeing—inferences about what's going on—choices that are being made about something.

Categorizing genres—as a class, discussing the different kinds of, for example, movies—categorize into different kinds of movies and then discuss how you knew what category it went in and why—use this to get at what you know implicitly about genres/kinds of writing.

Look at various generic conventions—then actually write a rap, song, etc—then practice analyzing them.

Look at something that deconstructs a genre, like Homestar Runner

Have a "genre show and tell" day as a precursor to Exploration One

Audience: Since the students in the class are members of the intended audience for this LE, have them list what their expectations are of a given text. In the same discussion: What makes good writing? What do you (the student) respond to in writing? What makes a text more or less credible? [This can also help them build a foundation for understanding the expectations of other audiences.] - Amber V