

Composing Your Genre Piece

If you've followed Gwen to this point, we hope you have some solid ideas for your own composition, including a sense of your rhetorical situation and choices—and of the genre or genres that would work best in response.

Steps for Composing

Once you're ready to move from your freewrite to creating a first draft, keep the following steps in mind. As we've mentioned elsewhere, there is not "one process" that will work for everyone, and your own processes will likely vary from project to project. The following guidelines for composing are here for you to draw on as needed.

Step 1. Write a solid draft. Review the freewrite you created earlier in this process and begin fleshing it out so it has a beginning, middle, and end, or whatever elements are appropriate for your chosen genre. It should include, at least in rough form, the main points you want to make, as well as some examples or evidence you'll use to support your points.

Working from this draft, follow the steps below to evaluate and revise it.

Step 2. Evaluate your use of experience & evidence. Look at a really good example of the genre you're working in—and compare it to yours. How does that author support claims with evidence? Draw on experience? What kind of evidence will your audience expect and respond to? Will anecdotes and personal stories be convincing to your audience, or will they be more convinced by statistics and references to peer-reviewed studies?

Note: Refer to the sample of your genre as you complete steps 3–7.

Step 3. Confirm the scope of information to provide. How much coverage of the topic is appropriate for the genre you've selected? Examine the sample of the genre you're comparing your draft to. Does it present an overview of the subject? What is the level of detail?

Step 4. Consider your use of style. Think about voice, tone, language, and point of view. Is the genre you're composing in characterized by the use of first or third person? How explicit and present will your voice and experience be in the piece? Look at the example you're comparing your piece to. Does that composer use an objective, authoritative tone, or a personal, subjective tone, or something else?

Step 5. Look at how you use rhetorical appeals. Look at your draft and the sample genre piece you're consulting. To what extent does the other author use ethos, pathos, and/or logos? How effective is his or her approach, and what might you want to adapt for your own work?

Step 6. Look at your organization. How have you organized your content? Is this the best way, considering who your audience is and what you're trying to achieve? Is it logical? Persuasive? Does the sample you're consulting have anything to offer you in terms of a model for improving your work?

Step 7. Consider your mix of words & images. This is also a moment to think about design and medium. Are you being as effective as you could be? Again, consult your example.

Step 8. Make a list of what you want to work on when you revise. Base your list on what you've determined in steps 2–7.

Step 9. Revise your draft based on your revision list. After you've revised, reread your work and make notes to address things you want to improve for the next draft.

Step 10. Revise a little more. Get your work in the best shape you can in the time you have.
