

What Is a Guided Reading?

Guided readings throughout this book (such as the one provided on the previous page for *Hipster Llama*) highlight the moves that writers and composers make in different genres and modes, and they also point out common genre conventions. These readings are presented with critical annotations in the margins of the page or screen. The annotations focus on two main ideas:

1. The composer’s **rhetorical situation and choices** (purpose, audience, rhetorical appeals, modes/media) and
2. The typical **conventions of the genre** the author chose to compose in (common elements, style, design, and sources).

We’ve designed the annotations to help you see how authors respond to their rhetorical situations. Seeing the choices and decisions that experienced authors made can help you learn how to think through and respond to the rhetorical situations you will find yourself in.

Guided readings appear in the table of contents at the beginning of the book and in the brief contents that open chapters, and they are also listed in the adjacent directory.

Ways to Apply Guided Readings

As you read in different genres on your own, you might use the headings we’ve used for the guided readings to remind you of things to notice. We are big fans of annotating, as you might have noticed, and we hope you might try annotating the pieces you read the same way we’ve annotated the guided readings. We find that annotating a reading helps us articulate our thoughts and move them from being fuzzy, half-formed ideas to concrete observations and analysis.

When you are composing, find a guided reading in the genre you’re using (or one close to it), and refresh your mind about the different choices you should consider. Consider your purpose, and as you compose, ask yourself if that purpose will be evident to your reader. Pay close attention to the genre conventions. These will help guide you and remind you of certain stylistic principles you need to consider.

Sample Grid | A Framework for Reading Any Text Rhetorically

When you are reading or composing, consider applying the framework of the guided reading to what you’re analyzing or creating. The image below is the grid that we use for the guided readings in this text. It’s a grid that you can use for approaching any text and for evaluating your own compositions.