

Keep an open mind as you choose genres to compose in. Consider collaborating with classmates who have more detailed knowledge of the genres that you're less familiar with. Often students in our writing classes will discuss and figure out together the conventions of specific genres and media (e.g., video or PowerPoint) and go from there. Other times they keep it simple but thoughtful, creating scrapbooks, print-based texts, or audio essays.

## Common Elements

In this book, we ask you to pay attention to the main features of a given genre: the specific elements that are common to most examples of the genre. For instance, most press release writers try to be as brief and objective as possible and to aim at answering the questions who? what? why? where? and when? For those reasons, we consider brevity, objectivity, and thoroughness to be elements of the press release genre. (For an example, see Paul Henderson's press release in [Chapter 3](#) about the Wall Arch collapse.)

## Style

Style refers to the particular ways we communicate. In this book, we pay attention to the techniques that individual writers use — and to what extent these techniques reflect the style of others composing in the same genre. We look at how much detail writers include and how precise that detail is. We listen for tone (seriousness, humor, etc.) and voice (the presence of the author) and analyze how these qualities affect the overall composition. How a writer uses sources is part of style as well. A writer who has cultivated a serious, academic style will probably use serious, academic sources as evidence. A writer with a more casual, chatty style might depend more on conversations with friends for evidence.

As a writer, you use style when you compose. The trick is to make sure that the style you're using is appropriate to your purpose and accessible and persuasive to your audience. For example, the writer and traveler we mentioned in [Chapter 1](#), Gilad Hizkiyah, uses a particular style on his blog. Because he is interested in attracting "accidental surfers" to his blog — that is, people who stumble upon his blog accidentally — he takes a casual and funny approach to his travels rather than a serious, scholarly tone. A serious, scholarly tone would probably appeal to an audience interested in the economics or politics of his travels, but because Gilad's purpose is to share his quirky, funny adventures, his casual, humorous style makes more sense.



But I jump ahead... first of all – thank you all for navigating your browsers to my Blog. If you've read all the way down to this line – I assume you're the "reader" kind of person rather than the "browser" type who's looking for anchor words or just looking at the pretty pictures... so from now on I'll consider my writing as a kind of a monologue, knowing that there's someone out there who actually listens to me babble.

So, dear friends and accidental surfers, allow me to begin with the reasons that brought me to plan and go on that trip.

### Reason #1

#### *Coincidence*

I still have no idea how it happened. One day I was in a middle of a long term relationship (3 year), living in a rented apartment in [Ramat Gan](#), working at a place I'd rather not mention – while studying for my MBA degree.

*Credit: Gilad Hizkiyah.*