



Assignment Sheet: Primary Research Report

Chris Friend • ENC1102 • Spring 2013

1. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

In previous assignments, you have identified the conversation taking place around your research topic, and you have identified what you want to accomplish through this research project. In this assignment, you will put those pieces together and discover how to join the conversation and achieve your desired outcomes. Along the way, you will improve your rhetorical-analysis skills and determine the shape your final project will take.

2. PROCEDURE

For this assignment, the hard work happens before you start writing—creating this report is simply documenting the work you did first. In brief, you need to accomplish these tasks before you can write the report:

- (1) Brainstorm some of the people who might be the most interested in your research question or problem. Choose one or two of these groups of stakeholders to focus on as a possible audience for your final project. (In short, who cares about your opinions? Whom do you need to persuade?)
- (2) Determine the “genre sets” used by that group of stakeholders. (How do those people communicate? What persuades them?)
- (3) Analyze the characteristics of one genre used by your stakeholder. Determine what you need to know to be able to competently write in it for your final project. (Create a genre memo in a group of your peers who chose the same genre.)
- (4) Conduct original research to add to the current knowledge on the topic.
- (5) Analyze the data you collect and present it meaningfully to an audience with little familiarity with your topic (i.e. your peers).

Those steps produce the data you will use to compose your analysis. You may wish to divide your document into Stakeholder, Genre, and Data sections, accordingly, but the overall goal is to analyze the situation in which your primary research exists. What new knowledge have you created? Who will listen to you? How will you get that information to those people?

2.1. Stakeholder Analysis. Write a two-page analysis that outlines all of the possible stakeholders for your project, and then conducts a more focused analysis of one or two of those groups of stakeholders that you would like to focus on for your final project. Consider questions such as these:

- What makes each individual or group a stakeholder in this topic?
- What is their particular interest in the problem or question you are researching?
- What can they do in response to your findings/proposals/ideas?

2.2. Data Analysis. Finally, analyze what you have learned from a data collection of your own. Rather than relying and reporting on the work of others here, you will provide the results of your own research. Because the scenario, methodology, and objective of your project will be distinctive, this assignment sheet cannot provide specific guidance. However, the general process will include:

- (1) Determine what you want to learn. This is best phrased as a non-binary question.
- (2) Determine how you could go about finding the answer to that question.
- (3) Collect the data using appropriate methods (like interviews, surveys, or observations).
- (4) Make sense of that data by analyzing it. What do your results mean? Is your initial question sufficiently answered?

Then, in your written analysis, report on your findings. Explain what you did, what you learned, and what the implications are. This is your chance to present information like the articles you read in your Secondary Research Report.

2.3. Genre Analysis. Consider the environment of the stakeholders you identified in your Stakeholder Analysis. Analyze how writing works in that environment to help exchange or receive information. To avoid guessing, you likely need to conduct interviews and collect samples of unfamiliar texts from members of your stakeholder group. This is an opportunity to “get your hands dirty” for your research. Then, write a two- to three-page analysis of their methods of written communication.

- (1) Identify the “genre sets” used by the primary group of stakeholders you focused on in your analysis. Consider questions such as these:
 - What texts do these stakeholders routinely read and write? Where do they get their information?
 - What information do they find convincing when making a decision?
- (2) Determine which of those genres would be the most suitable for your use when communicating with the stakeholders you chose. Explain why it is the best option. Then, consider questions such as these:¹
 - (a) **What is your genre, and does it affect what content you can or should include?**
Objective information? Researched source material? Your own opinions? Personal experience?
 - (b) **Does your genre call for any specific strategies?**
Profiles, for example, usually include some narration; lab reports often explain a process.
 - (c) **Does your genre require a certain organization?**
Most proposals, for instance, first identify a problem and then offer a solution. Some genres leave room for choice. Business letters delivering good news might be organized differently than those making sales pitches.
 - (d) **Does your genre affect your tone?**
An abstract of a scholarly paper calls for a different tone than a memoir. Should your words sound serious and scholarly? brisk and to the point? objective? opinionated? Sometimes your genre affects the way you communicate your stance.

¹Taken from *The Norton Field Guide*, pages 10–11, quoted in *Genre: An Introduction to History, Theory, Research, and Pedagogy* by Bawarshi and Reiff, pages 195–96.

(e) **Does the genre require formal (or informal) language?**

A letter to the mother of a friend asking for a summer job in her bookstore calls for more formal language than does an email to the friend thanking him for the lead.

(f) **Do you have a choice of medium?**

Some genres call for print; others for an electronic medium. Sometimes you have a choice: a résumé, for instance, can be mailed (in which case it must be printed), or it may be emailed. Some teachers want reports turned in on paper; others prefer that they be emailed or posted to a class Web site. If you're not sure what medium you can use, can you ask your stakeholders?

(g) **Does your genre have any design requirements?**

Some genres call for paragraphs; others require lists. Some require certain kinds of typefaces—you wouldn't use Impact for a personal narrative, nor would you likely use Dr Seuss for an invitation to Grandma's sixty-fifth birthday party. Different genres call for different design elements.

3. EVALUATION

Demonstrate your ability to *analyze* in this document. Show that you have thoroughly examined the potential stakeholders and genres related to your question or problem and the findings of your own research. Craft a detailed textual analysis of the genre you plan to produce for your final project, and demonstrate that it is relevant to the context you have identified. Be sure to support your analysis with well-organized evidence, documented appropriately. Show that you are ready to proceed to your final project and that you know the form of a successful project. See Table 1 for detailed evaluation criteria.

TABLE 1. Evaluation of Primary Research Report

	STAKEHOLDERS	COLLECTED DATA	GENRES
Excellent	Confidently navigates field of stakeholders; selects based on definitive evidence; clearly relates to research	Provides analysis of collected data that contributes to research and convincingly situates results	Thoroughly evaluates potential implications & effectiveness of genre in context of research
Adequate	Considers multiple stakeholders; provides reason for selection; explores relation to research	Reports results of appropriate and legitimate research; implications may be weak or unclear	Explores how the genre could work for purposes of research; implications weak or missing
Poor	Omits or oversimplifies discussion of options; fails to place in context of research	Questionable data collection; may not address original question	Identifies potential genre but does not justify or analyze