



Assignment Sheet: Primary Research Report

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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 create new knowledge that you can then contribute to the existing conversation you reviewed. Along the way, you will improve your rhetorical-analysis skills and determine potential avenues of distributing what you learn to interested groups.

2. PROCEDURE

For this assignment, the hard work happens before you start writing—creating this report is simply documenting the work you did before-hand. Refer to the Module Introduction page in Webcourses for specific details on how to prepare for this assignment. The activities in this Module encourage the thinking and produce the data you will use to compose this analysis. You may wish to divide your document into Stakeholder, Genre, and Data Analysis sections, accordingly, but the overall goal is to analyze the situation in which your primary research exists. Present your answer to these questions: **What new knowledge have you created? Who will listen to you? How could you get that information to those people?**

2.1. Stakeholder Analysis. Write an analysis (likely around 500 words) in which you outline all the stakeholders you have considered for your research interests. Then, conduct a more focused analysis of one or two of those groups of stakeholders that you believe would best benefit from your research findings. 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. 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?

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.

- (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.
- (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.

2.3. 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 research findings like you read in the articles from your Secondary Research Report. What can you contribute to the conversation?

3. EVALUATION

Demonstrate your ability to *analyze* in this document. Show that you have thoroughly examined the potential stakeholders and genres related to your research interests and the findings of your own data collection. 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 and stakeholders you have identified. Be sure to support your analysis with well-organized evidence, documented appropriately. See Table 1 for detailed evaluation criteria.

TABLE 1. Evaluation of Primary Research Report

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