

# MULTIGENRE RESEARCH PROJECTS

---

## How does multigenre writing differ from the traditional research paper?

---

### TRADITIONAL RESEARCH PAPER

- Single, extended prose piece
- Begins with a thesis
- Cohesion imposed from the start
- Writer remains dispassionate about subject
- Approaches topic from a single perspective
- Follows conventions of formal prose writing
- Usually consists of only text
- Usually done as individual assignment
- Handed in to teacher
- Sometimes viewed as drudgery by students

### MULTIGENRE RESEARCH PAPER

- Cohesive series of pieces in a variety of genres
- Begins with an interest
- Cohesion developed along the way
- Writer personally engaged; opinions encouraged
- Helps reader discover lost voices
- Takes many angles on topic
- Broadens the range of acceptable writing styles
- Artwork, graphics, design, and packaging accompany text
- Involves much small-group work, peer response, and sharing
- Can be performed in readers' theater celebration or other museum-like exhibits
- Often becomes students' favorite and proudest achievement

\*\*Special thanks to Ms. R. Mehrens for use of this table

\*\*From [The Teacher's Guide to the Multigenre Research Project](#) by Melinda Putz

## What is a multigenre project?

"Multigenre allows us to 'meld fact, interpretation, and imagination,' into a series of self-contained pieces...that appear in forms that include poetry, prose, drama, and exposition." (Romano qtd. in Grierson 51)

"A multigenre paper arises from research, experience, and imagination. It is not an uninterrupted, expository monolog nor a seamless narrative nor a collection of poems. A multigenre paper is composed of many genres and subgenres, each piece self-contained, making a point of its own, yet connected by theme or topic and sometimes by language, images, and content. In addition to many genres, a multigenre paper may also contain many voices, not just the author's. The trick is to make such a paper hang together." (Romano x-xi)

"Each genre is a color slide, complete in itself, possessing its own satisfying composition, but also working in concert with the others to create a single literary experience." (Romano 4)

### DEFINITION OF MULTIGENRE IN THE SPIRIT OF MULTIGENRE

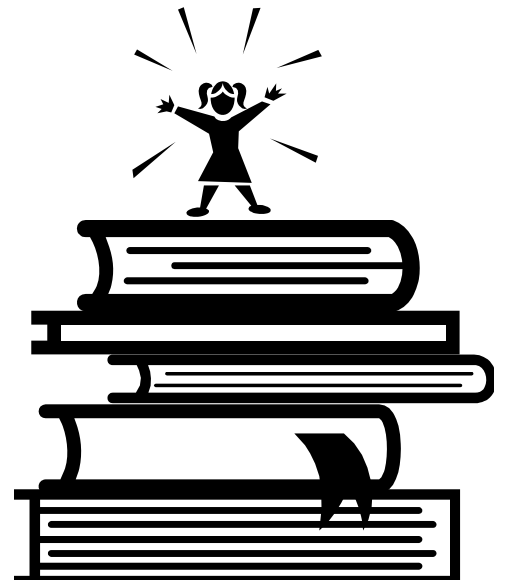
Multigenre pushes convention,  
challenges "This is the way writing is done,"  
and "Hey, wait a minute, you can't do that  
in a piece of writing."

Multigenre speaks, "How come I read imaginative literature but I have to write about it in an essay that is thesis driven, argumentative, and exactly five you-know-whats (each you-know-what, of course, of the 3.8 variety), an essay in which the writer overpowers readers, beats them into submission, and concludes with a summative you-know-what that restates the thesis?"

Not that there's anything wrong with that.

But writing that way is not what multigenre is about.  
Multigenre removes the lid of Pandora's Rhetorical Box.  
Multigenre twirls you and spins you and you hope the steps  
the writer asks you to follow lead to fulfillment.  
Multigenre knows that *feeling* is first.  
Multigenre grooves on pulse, has flushed cheeks,  
hair on the back of the neck that stands on end.  
Multigenre makes readers sit up in their chairs.  
Multigenre is not roast beef; it is ciappino.  
It is less like mashed potatoes,  
and more like red beans and rice.

Tom Romano



## What have students said about multigenre writing?

“[T]his format forced me to be creative and also provided me a way to express my creativity, that I usually suppress behind a logical, grade-based design.” (Grierson)

### Excerpts from Deubrook student self-assessments:

- ▶ Before, I wouldn't have thought about writing from a plate's point of view or trying to combine professional words with individual thoughts, but having to write this with different genres was difficult and definitely made me look at more diverse options.
- ▶ ...it was easy to incorporate different perspectives in my multigenre project...my paper [had] more depth when I added different genres.
- ▶ I was very passionate about my topic. ... I learned that you don't have to just write about facts in order to convey a message and information. I also learned how to write different genres, which is something I usually don't do.
- ▶ ...I really don't understand how a multi-genre paper gets a point across more effectively or informs a person better than a regular research paper.
- ▶ Taking things I knew and taking the things I learned and putting them together was tough but really cool.
- ▶ ...once or twice a week there was a new way to look at something or a new technique to try to make the paper better...I think that this will help me during college because it will give me a variety of ways to display information.
- ▶ ...knowledge and emotions are better communicated through different genres rather than one long, tedious research paper. This project made it much easier for me to speak about my topic in ways that I felt were appropriate, such as through a sitcom transcript or a poem.
- ▶ ...it is tedious and that it works very well to get the point across. Because different people comprehend things differently, it allows me to be understood by more readers.
- ▶ I kind of liked writing in different genres because it was easier to communicate in some ways. For example, in one of my genres I used a lot of dialogue. With writing in different genres it was easier to switch over from me giving information to someone else speaking.

## What types of genres can you write?

- ♦ **Biography**
- ♦ **News article**
- ♦ **Encyclopedia entry**
- ♦ **Transcript of interview**
- ♦ **Documentary**
- ♦ **TV newscast**
- ♦ TV Script (1950s sitcom to point to stereotypical gender roles)
- ♦ Screenplay
- ♦ Rap
- ♦ Haiku
- ♦ Maps
- ♦ Poems
- ♦ Comic strip
- ♦ Political cartoon
- ♦ Will
- ♦ Play
- ♦ Dramatic scene
- ♦ Advertisement
- ♦ Poem for 2 voices
- ♦ Picture book
- ♦ Computer or video game
- ♦ Personal note
- ♦ Diary entry
- ♦ Monologue
- ♦ Action figure ad
- ♦ **Sports story**
- ♦ Short story
- ♦ **Informative essay**
- ♦ **Expository essay**
- ♦ **Persuasive essay**
- ♦ Satire
- ♦ Music
- ♦ Dialogue
- ♦ Eulogy
- ♦ **Obituary**
- ♦ Top 10 list
- ♦ **Legal documents**
- ♦ E-mails
- ♦ Telephone conversation
- ♦ Memoir
- ♦ Txting conversation
- ♦ **Journal article**
- ♦ Bedtime story

## What are some possible topics?

- ➔ Person of interest (grandparent, personal hero, historical villain, etc.)
- ➔ Humanitarian work—looking at a specific family
- ➔ Family relationships
- ➔ Disease—alcoholism, cancer, eating disorders, etc.
- ➔ Social issue (sweatshops, sexual orientation, homelessness, teen suicide)
- ➔ Location (needs to be specific, country is too large)
- ➔ Scientific advances
- ➔ Your future career
- ➔ Tragedy (sexual assault on university campus, school shooting, natural disaster)
- ➔ Literature
- ➔ Gender stereotypes
- ➔ Historical events (Great Depression, Wounded Knee)
- ➔ Teenage rebellion and its possible consequences
- ➔ The possibilities are endless!!

## Requirements:

### I. 6 genres (TOTAL WORDS: 2000)

- ★ 2 fact-based genres with in-text citations (at least 400 words per piece)—see genres in bold from previous page for some suggestions
- ★ Connectors between each piece to create unity (some ideas: pictures, graphs, diagrams, song lyrics, quotations, interesting facts, section titles, fables, stories, etc.)

### II. Research notes coded somehow to reflect:

- ★ Information used in paper
- ★ Personal thoughts and reflections about information
- ★ Possible genres inspired from information



## THINK BEFORE YOU PRINT

### III. Works cited page and in-text citations

- ★ MLA format
- ★ 8 resources (at least half from library resources)
- ★ At least 10 in-text citations throughout paper

### IV. Introductory letter to reader

- ★ What does the reader need to know before reading your paper?
- ★ Why is this topic important?
- ★ How did you choose the topic?
- ★ Include a thesis statement (underlined)

### V. Endnotes

- ★ Rationale for each piece and discussion of resources used (both cited in text and/or for inspiration)

### VI. Self-assessment

1. What surprised you during the process of writing your multigenre paper?
2. What aspect of this paper would you like advice on?
3. What did you learn about writing in different genres as a way of inquiring into your topic and communicating what you know?
4. Describe the strongest and weakest parts of your paper and explain why you categorize those parts as strongest/weakest

5. What grade do you feel you deserve on this paper and why?

**VII. Bonus (up to 10 points on MG paper grade)**

- ★ Read and take notes over a book for your research. Your notes should prove that you have read the book. You also need to use the book as a resource for your paper, so it should be included on your works cited page and in-text citations or endnotes.

## Presentation of your project

- a. Create a digital story or use Prezi.com
- b. 2 minute factual presentation of topic
  - Include images, graphs, or other appropriate aids
- c. Oral interpretation of one piece
- d. Optional: Part of presentation can be delivered “live”

### ◆ What writing skills do you need to develop for the future?

What are your plans for next year? Whether you are going to a post-secondary school, into the workforce, or volunteering to help others, this project can help you prepare for what lies ahead. Those of you who will do more research writing in the future need to pay careful attention to the use of the MLA Formatting and Style Guide. Those of you who will not do more research writing should focus on other aspects of the process such as communicating your ideas clearly and choosing a topic that is related to your future career. Write 3-5 personal goals: What do you want to learn from doing this project that will help you in the next few years?

**\*It is your responsibility to tailor this project to meet your learning needs! You will get out of this what you put into it. \***

#

A “research design” jump-starts your paper and allows you to think about your topic in a concentrated way. You’ll do some initial exploration through writing to discover new ideas about your topic that probably wouldn’t have occurred to you without the free write. I also want to get you to the library early so you find out the information and resources available (interlibrary loans need to be ordered ASAP). The research design must be typed. This is a brainstorming/thought activity—let your ideas flow (sometimes the strangest thought will lead to the best writing).

- 1) Name your topic.
  
- 2) Describe what you know about your topic. Without consulting anything, go to the keyboard and free write what you already know. After about a day, revisit this writing to remove unnecessary information and add details.
  
- 3) Tell what you want to learn about your topic.
  
- 4) Describe the origins of your research. What sparked your interest in the topic? Why do you want to know more about it?
  
- 5) List at least a *dozen* open-ended questions you have about your topic (or twenty or fifty).

**WHO | WHAT | WHEN | WHERE | WHY | HOW**

- 6) Describe your plan for collecting information about your topic.
  
- 7) Provide a preliminary bibliography (works cited).



## Works Cited

- Dickson, Randi, Jon DeGraff, and Mark Foard. "Learning about self and others through multigenreresearch projects." *English Journal* 92.2 (2002): 82-90. Research Library, ProQuest. Web. 15 Mar. 2010.
- Grierson, Sirpa T. "Circling through text: Teaching research through multigenre writing." *English Journal* 89.1 (1999): 51-55. Research Library, ProQuest. Web. 15 Mar. 2010.
- LeNoir, W, David. "The multigenre warning label." *English Journal* 92.2 (2002): 99-101. Research Library, ProQuest. Web. 15 Mar. 2010.
- Romano, Tom. *Blending Genre, Altering Style: Writing Multigenre Papers*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 2000. Print.
- Romano, Tom. "Multigenre Writing." *Multigenre Writing*. University of Miami--Ohio, 2006. Web. 16 Mar. 2010. <<http://www.users.muohio.edu/romanots/index.html>>.
- Slack, Delane Bender. "Fusing social justice with multigenre writing." *English Journal* 90.6 (2001): 62-66. Research Library, ProQuest. Web. 15 Mar. 2010.
- Styslinger, Mary E. "Multigenre-Multigendered Research Papers." *English Journal* 95.4 (2006): 53-57. Research Library, ProQuest. Web. 15 Mar. 2010.

# Multigenre Research Paper Rubric

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Score for Holistic Impact of 100

\_\_\_\_\_ Bonus (read a book for research-up to 10 pts.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Score for Required Elements of 140

\_\_\_\_\_ Total of 240

## Holistic impact of the paper

- A: 93-100 Knocks me off my feet, bowls me over, so informative and emotionally moving is the paper. There is evidence of original thinking, depth, specificity of detail, delights of language or insight. The mgp has excellent writing that includes attention to a pleasing visage of the page, action verbs, varied sentence length, effective word choice, skilled placement of information, strong leads and endings, visual and other sensory imagery. Research is interesting, surprising, and cleverly and creatively incorporated into the paper with properly formatted MLA in-text citations (multiple sources are used for the informational pieces). Paper is at least 2000 words.
- B: 92-89 A good paper. I'm upbeat because of some of the solid moves the writer pays attention to that are mentioned above. I learn things about the topic. While the paper didn't blow me away, I am happy with its competent execution. Research is good; there may be some problems with in-text citations.
- C:75-85 This paper is complete but the writing hasn't much used those qualities that make writing sing. There is a feeling of middle of the road about it. There are likely problems with in-text citations.
- D: 65-74 This is a below average paper. The writing shows almost none of the skills mentioned above. Some pieces seem careless, as if written hastily and never revised. Content shows little depth or insight. More telling than showing. In-text citations are incorrect or not present.
- F:0-64 Project seems careless. Some or all pieces contain plagiarized information. No resources are cited in the paper. An insult to turn in, an insult to the teacher, to the disciplined, creative act of writing, and to your own mind.

## Required elements

\_\_\_\_\_ The paper contains an original, illustrative title

- 10 Original, surprising, piques a reader's interest, imaginative, maybe a subtitle too
- 9 Functional, some imagination
- 8 Title simply names the subject
- 7 Title dull, something like "Lit-Based Multigenre Paper"
- 0 Title missing

\_\_\_\_\_ Introduction/Preface/Dear Reader

- 10 Reader wants to read on, so compelling and interesting is the relevant information and voice. Sets the reader up well for what is ahead. Discusses the importance of your topic, how it was chosen, and includes a thesis statement that gives the paper direction
- 9 Provides useful information, not too brief or too long. May be missing some of the elements that would warrant a "10"
- 8 Provides little useful information, is too long or too brief
- 0 Absent or so brief that it may as well be absent

\_\_\_\_\_ Connectors

- 10 Connectors between each genre are delightfully surprising, fulfilling, and easily recognized, even moving
- 9 Unifying element(s) used with a sure hand, effective
- 8 Element present, though not particularly surprising or inventive
- 7 Element present between some genres, though not effective
- 0 Absent

\_\_\_\_\_ Visage

- 10 Paper is easy on the eyes, text is welcoming, not cramped together or of small print. Font is easily read. Perhaps something creative or inventive done with the way the text appears in some pieces.
- 9 Text is easy to read. Font is appealing. Maybe one or two pieces are hard to read because of poor paragraphing, small type, or difficult type size.
- 8 Text is not particularly appealing to read, but isn't off-putting.
- 0 Little attention paid to the "look" of the text. More than a few pieces hard to read for one reason or another.

\_\_\_\_\_ Copy Editing

- 10 Contains few errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling
- 9 Contains more than a few errors but meaning is not seriously affected
- 8 Contains enough errors to make reader wonder if the writer proofread carefully or wish the writer knew more about punctuation, grammar, and usage
- 0 Contains many errors to the point of distraction

\_\_\_\_\_ Fact-based genre #1 (at least 400 words)

- 10 Vivid, interesting information. Adds insight and depth to the overall paper, is well written with active verbs, specificity, and few wasted words. Several resources are cited throughout the text so the information flows naturally
- 9 Interesting, though not particularly vivid writing. More research needed
- 8 Little interesting information. Writing could be tightened and sharpened
- 7 Rambling, unfocused, fuzzy focus, ho-hum writing
- 6 No in-text citations present. However brilliant the writing is, a "6" will be given
- 0 Absent or plagiarized (some or all of the piece obviously plagiarized from one or more sources)

\_\_\_\_\_ Fact-based genre #2 (at least 400 words)

- 10 Vivid, interesting information. Adds insight and depth to the overall paper, is well written with active verbs, specificity, and few wasted words. Several resources are cited throughout the text so the information flows naturally
- 9 Interesting, though not particularly vivid writing. More research needed
- 8 Little interesting information. Writing could be tightened and sharpened
- 7 Rambling, unfocused, fuzzy focus, ho-hum writing
- 6 No in-text citations present. However brilliant the writing is, a "6" will be given
- 0 Absent or plagiarized (some or all of the piece obviously plagiarized from one or more sources)

\_\_\_\_\_ Genre #3

- 10 Vivid, interesting writing. Adds insight and depth to the overall paper, is well written with active verbs, specificity, and few wasted words. Content enhances paper
- 9 Interesting, though not particularly vivid writing.
- 8 Writing could be tightened and sharpened
- 7 Rambling, unfocused, fuzzy focus, ho-hum writing. Content does not enhance paper
- 0 Absent or plagiarized (some or all of the piece obviously plagiarized from one or more sources)

\_\_\_\_\_ Genre #4

- 10 Vivid, interesting writing. Adds insight and depth to the overall paper, is well written with active verbs, specificity, and few wasted words. Content enhances paper
- 9 Interesting, though not particularly vivid writing.
- 8 Writing could be tightened and sharpened
- 7 Rambling, unfocused, fuzzy focus, ho-hum writing. Content does not enhance paper
- 0 Absent or plagiarized (some or all of the piece obviously plagiarized from one or more sources)

\_\_\_\_\_ Genre #5

- 10 Vivid, interesting writing. Adds insight and depth to the overall paper, is well written with active verbs, specificity, and few wasted words. Content enhances paper
- 9 Interesting, though not particularly vivid writing.
- 8 Writing could be tightened and sharpened
- 7 Rambling, unfocused, fuzzy focus, ho-hum writing. Content does not enhance paper
- 0 Absent or plagiarized (some or all of the piece obviously plagiarized from one or more sources)

\_\_\_\_\_ Genre #6

- 10 Vivid, interesting writing. Adds insight and depth to the overall paper, is well written with active verbs, specificity, and few wasted words. Content enhances paper
- 9 Interesting, though not particularly vivid writing.
- 8 Writing could be tightened and sharpened
- 7 Rambling, unfocused, fuzzy focus, ho-hum writing. Content does not enhance paper
- 0 Absent or plagiarized (some or all of the piece obviously plagiarized from one or more sources)

\_\_\_\_\_ End Notes

- 10 Notes enhance reading of the paper, enlighten the reader about the process of creation and/or additional useful information about topic and research that went into producing the piece (what resources were used and/or consulted). Notes give a rationale (justification) for each piece
- 9 Notes are informative and thorough
- 8 Writer dropped the ball, did not carry through and provide useful information about the genres
- 7 Notes need to be more inclusive, too many questions about pieces left in the reader's mind
- 0 Absent

\_\_\_\_\_ Works Cited/Consulted

- 10 Complete with at least 8 sources, listed in alphabetical order according to the MLA Formatting and Style Guide
- 9 May be only 7 sources listed. Possibly one or 2 minor errors with formatting
- 8 Brief, incomplete, bibliographic style inconsistent
- 0 Absent

\_\_\_\_\_ Self-assessment

- 10 Thorough, detailed answers to all of the questions (see below)
- 5 Self-assessment needs to be more detailed
- 0 Absent

**SELF-ASSESSMENT (this should be the last page of your paper)**

- A. What surprised you during the process of writing your multigenre paper?
- B. What aspect of this paper would you like advice on?
- C. What did you learn about writing in different genres as a way of inquiring into your topic and communicating what you know?
- D. Describe the strongest and weakest parts of your paper and explain why you categorize those parts as strongest/weakest
- E. What grade do you feel you deserve on this paper and why?