

Final Project Intro – “Episode 1”

This is a multi-genre writing assignment. My goal is to assign a project in which several varying styles of writing address a single topic, with the end result being a treatment for the first episode of a television show. The topic for this assignment is something that is reported on at the state, national, or global level, that the student feels is important and that can be researched.

For this assignment I would like my students to focus on three points of view. The first POV must be that of a print media journalist, which would require them to research their topic and gather facts about what it is and what the major talking points would be. In addition, they will be allowed to choose two additional points of view that they feel are relevant to their project. The goal would be for the student to develop an opinion through researching the topic, then write from different points of view addressing this opinion. As noted in *The Multigenre Warning Label*, “the point of a multigenre paper is to convey a unified message through means that reflect the richness of experience, so this unity must be reflected not only in the content of the individual elements, but also by how they work together” (LeNoir 100).

The first day’s lesson will consist of students researching the topic and pre-writing ideas about how they will present the facts to the general public as a journalist, which should be essentially unbiased, and should include each side’s main arguments if applicable. In addition, they will form their own opinions about the topic, choose 2 more POVs to write from, and pre-write for these as well (word-webs, writing notebooks, T-charts, etc.).

The second lesson will consist of two parts: stations in the classroom looking at examples of expository writing and similar subject matter to the topic, followed by time spent drafting their journalistic point of view & beginning to draft their 2nd and 3rd points of view

The third lesson will consist of stations with models involving transitions, various organization techniques, and sentence structure, followed by more time drafting their varying points of view. In addition, we will spend some time addressing any technical issues.

Ideally, once they have one drafting day worth of expository journalistic facts, and two days of drafting their opinions from different perspectives, they will find a way to merge the 3 points of view in a similar way to how an episode of a TV show might move: we are given a piece of a story here, then cut to another piece there, then another, and so on. Tom Romano notes “Multigenre writing calls for students to use the power of narrative thinking, thinking that renders experience, thinking that reveals rather than explains” (Romano 89). During the process, we will utilize peer-review and conferencing as revision techniques, and will aim to create final projects that have life and character, that move adventurously, and that utilize multigenre so that each students’ project will “make a point vividly and powerfully and be pleasurable to read” (Romano 89).

Through this project, students will be exposed to expository writing, creative writing, multiple genres, pre-writing techniques, revision and peer-review, one-on-one conferencing, research techniques, and writing for purpose and audience.

“Episode 1” Multigenre Assignment Sheet

Imagine your favorite TV/streaming show...

How does it move? Whose points of view do we see from? How are we supposed to feel about what we are shown? How do the show’s writers draw us in? For this assignment, you will be creating the first episode of a series using a topic of your choice. The topic must be researchable and reported on at a state, national, or global level. This multigenre project will require you to research the topic, compile relevant information, form opinions about the issues, and present the whole piece as a treatment for a show.

To begin you must:

1. Research this topic – use the internet to find local news reports on the issue. The goal here is to find the facts, not other peoples’ opinions. Do not use Wikipedia, do not use editorials, blogs, or social media discussions. Use news reports, credible news outlets, academic journals, and reputable publications and/or their websites.
2. Decide on points of view – you **MUST** write from 3 different points of view, and...
 - a. One point of view **MUST** be that of a print journalist (newspaper, magazine, etc.) in which you stick to the facts. You must explain the issue thoroughly, providing arguments from both sides.
 - b. Choose 2 other points of view that are relevant to the topic, possibly a child, a real estate agent, a police officer, a prisoner, or a drug dealer. Those are just options; think about your topic and those who may be involved. You will form your own opinion of the issue based on the research you have done and apply it to writing from these points of view.

Your goal for this project should be to use your journalistic piece in conjunction with the two other points of view to create one holistic piece of writing that is part expository fact, part opinion, and reads like a story. Be sure you consider your audience when writing each part. When you formulate the expository, be true to the research you have conducted; when you formulate the opinion-based points of view, be creative in how you present them and be sure your opinion is “shown” but not “told”. Remember that when you are writing an opinionated piece that is essentially a work of fiction, there are no rules about where you go with it, provided you meet the requirements of the assignment. If you were watching this show, what would make it exciting for you? What would make you want to keep watching? Additional requirements of this assignment are that you must:

- Have a title for your piece/show
- Give a brief introduction and background of the topic, then describe the setting of your opening scene (250+ words)
- Write at least one of your opinionated POVs in the first-person
- Contain some form of non-prose poetry
- Contain at least one visual element (drawing, photograph, chart, map, etc.)
- Contain unifying elements
- Contain a bibliography citing at least 5 research sources (MLA format)

More stuff to help get the wheels turning:

Multigenre pieces are just like they sound: they contain multiple genres of writing. So it is important to remember what constitutes “writing”. Is a television script writing? Yes. Is a 1200-page novel writing? Yes, definitely. Is a grocery list writing? Yes. Is a Facebook post or a tweet writing? Yes. Is a comic book or graphic novel writing? Yes (and they contain loads of visual elements). Is music writing? Yes, and quite often it is words, notes, and/or beats...all can be written. Everyone writes all the time, often without even acknowledging they are writing.

The point is, do not confine yourself to thinking that this project must be written in a formulaic style that is consistent with common standards for academia. There is an audience for that, and of course, you can go there if you choose. But I want you to step outside the NEED for that and let yourself invent something. As long as you are following the guidelines of the assignment listed above, there is no “wrong way” to do this. My only expectations are that you do the research, that you have a well-informed opinion, and that you present this piece in a way that makes me really feel and understand your thoughts and opinions.

The term “treatment” is usually used to refer to a summary or synopsis of a film or episodic show for the sake of communicating an overall vision. It is not a screenplay or a script, but those are elements you may use if you wish.