Bring a Text You Like to Class: Bridging Out-of-School and In-School Literacies

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Module Description

This module focuses on helping students understand what they already know about reading and literacy but may not be aware that they know. Drawing on their own curiosity and expertise (hobbies, after-school activities and interests), students bring out-of-school texts that are meaningful to them into the classroom for exploration, appreciation, and study. Bringing texts from their personal lives into the classroom helps students make conscious connections between in-school and out-of-school literacies and encourages them to see how having a literate identity actually bridges in-school and out-of-school worlds.

The out-of-school literacies students tend to share in the context of this module represent a wide variety of text types (from poetry, maps, origami instructions and science experiments to blog or Reddit posts and magazine articles about skateboarding and dance), and that is part of the fun. Because some texts are extremely specialized and complex, they may even be challenging for peers and teachers to read; that too is part of the fun. As students collaboratively explore the texts they bring to class to share, they also analyze the various genres with which they’re familiar, characterizing their textual features, conventions, and purposes. These are ways of looking at out-of-school texts that will likely be new to students since they often do not even consider these types of reading to be “real reading.”

In the latter half of the module, students find and bring to class one scholarly article about the same topic covered by the first text they brought to class to share. The purpose of working with this second text is twofold: 1) it helps students become aware of the wide variety of genres authors can choose from to communicate with readers about a particular topic; (They might be surprised to discover that scholars write about skateboarding and gaming, for example.) and 2) it strengthens connections between out-of-school and in-school literacies, thereby broadening conscious conceptions of what counts as “literacy” or “reading.”

Bring a Text You Like to Class honors students’ life experiences, background knowledge, and out-of-school reading expertise as well as their conversational command about topics and activities they already know and care about. In so doing, this module bridges literate worlds where students already feel comfortable with new and different literacies we want them to learn about, understand, and enjoy (including the texts valued by people in the literate world of academia). Students are...
familiar with many kinds of texts outside the classroom and already read them well (e.g., lyrics to popular music, social networking posts, video game instructions, online multimedia, hobby-related reading). Bringing these out-of-school literacies into our classrooms for collaborative analysis can provide students with a more conscious understanding of their own knowledge and expertise and boost confidence about their own reading. As students recognize that they are knowledgeable experts in particular literate contexts, their views of themselves as readers and thinkers change in ways that support literacy as a vital element of classroom culture.

In service of the goals described above, students are guided through a series of metacognitive activities—some of them unique to this module, including the Reading Habits Survey (Activity 1), thinking aloud (Activities 3-5), and a modified KWL chart (Activity 14). Another noteworthy feature of the module is its abbreviated nature: some of the elements of the ERWC template have been combined or omitted in order to give students more responsibility for applying strategies with which they should by now be practiced and to avoid weighing down the experiential nature of this unit. The final writing task, also a new feature of the module, is a creative multi-genre portfolio with a reflective introduction (Activity 15). A key aim of this module is to build a sense of literate community in our classrooms by welcoming students’ out-of-school literacies and collectively exploring students’ inner experiences of reading through metacognitive conversations about texts they have chosen to share.

Modeling How to Work with Challenging Texts

It is sometimes a revelation to students that we, their teachers, struggle to read texts with which we are unfamiliar. Once students have chosen texts they feel comfortable with, teachers can model thinking aloud with student-chosen texts. In doing so, we externalize our thinking processes, showing students how we make sense of text. This helps students see how skilled readers bring background knowledge—about subject matter, genre, text structure, and written language conventions—to bear on the reading process. Seeing how good readers work with challenging texts gives students unusual opportunities to witness strategic approaches to solving their own comprehension problems with difficult texts.

Over time, as students make connections between out-of-school and in-school literacies, they often become more willing to work with academic texts because they have come to understand that they already have some of the knowledge and skills necessary to tackle them. This process can help students see how reading for different purposes (for pleasure, for information, for guidelines on a process) can change the experiences and outcomes of reading. Ultimately, bridging in-school and out-of-school literacies promotes academic success and can help close the achievement gap.

Module Objectives:

In addition to the focus on Common Core State Standards, the module targets the skill areas listed below.

Students will be able to

• Reflect upon and share their out-of-school reading expertise
• Build awareness of and be able to explain how different genres make unique demands on readers
• Link the expertise they possess with more familiar types of texts to their work with expository texts like those they are likely to encounter in college, at work, and in their communities
• Further develop their awareness of how purpose and audience shape texts of various expository genres
• Strengthen their awareness of and ability to strategically apply rhetorical and metacognitive strategies to comprehend and produce a wide variety of genres

Note: The activities for students provided in the Student Version for this module are copied here in the Teacher Version for your convenience. The shaded areas include the actual activities the students will see. The use of italics in the shaded areas generally indicates possible student responses and may be interspersed with notes to the teacher that are not shaded. If there are notes to the teacher within the shaded areas, they are indicated by italics and parentheses.

Rhetorical Grammar for Expository Reading and Writing

Because there is not an assigned text that all students will read, there are no grammar activities that accompany this module.

Reading Rhetorically

Text—Individual Student Choice

Prereading

Getting Ready to Read

This reading survey is the first of several metacognitive activities embedded into this module. It asks students to consider their uses of literacy in daily life. (They read more than they might think.) Survey responses will serve as the basis for future activities and also offer you insight into what they read outside of school. For a few key portions of the survey, such as the section that asks about the types of texts students read more or less frequently, you might consider collecting everyone’s responses and putting them on a poster for the class to view.

Activity 1: Reading Habits Survey

You and your classmates come to school knowing a lot more about reading than you might think. This survey will help you and your teacher understand the kinds of reading you do outside of school.

1. Which of these do you read? Put an F, O, or N next to each of the following types of text to indicate how often you read each one. (F=Frequently; O=Occasionally; N=Never)

   Online Newspapers
   Internet Websites
   Internet Social Networking
   Blogs
   Twitter
   Reddit
   Reference Books (dictionaries, encyclopedias)
   Poems
   Song Lyrics
   Autobiographies/Biographies
   Comics

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy

Unless otherwise specified, all standards are for grades 11-12.

The strategies in this section of the ERWC are designed to prepare students in advance of reading increasingly complex and sophisticated texts. These brief, introductory activities will prepare students to learn the content of California’s Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts (ELA) and Literacy in the sections of the module that follow.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>Graphic Novels</th>
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<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>Manga</td>
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<tr>
<td>Print Magazines</td>
<td>E-mail or Instant Messages</td>
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<td>Online Magazines</td>
<td>Chatrooms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td>Text Messages (on your cell phone)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short Stories</td>
<td>Photos (on your cell phone or elsewhere)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fan Fiction</td>
<td>Instruction Manuals (of any kind)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essays</td>
<td>Self-help Books</td>
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<td>Drama/Plays</td>
<td>Textbooks/School Assignments</td>
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<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>Work Documents</td>
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<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>Credit Card or Utility Bills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Other ________________________________</td>
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(on topics that interest you)

Look back over the list of texts you read outside of school, and tally the different kinds of texts you read: How many do you read frequently? _____ Occasionally? _____ Never? _____

2. On a scale of 1-10, circle the number below that best represents how confident you feel as a reader. The number 1 = “I’m not a confident reader” and the number 10 = “I’m a very confident reader.” I would rate myself:

   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

   In a sentence or two, explain why you circled the number above to represent your confidence level as a reader.

3. From the texts listed above (in #1), which types of reading do you enjoy the most?

4. Which types of reading are most difficult for you?

5. Fill in the blank below with an adjective that describes you as a reader:
   I would describe myself as a ________________________ reader. Explain your response in a sentence.

6. The best book I have ever read was ________________________________.

7. Why did you like that book so much?

8. What was the last book you read on your own (not for school), and when did you read it?

9. Decide whether you agree or disagree with the following statement:
   
   Reading is something you either can or cannot do well.

   (In other words, do you think some people are naturally good at it while others are not? Or do you think everybody has the potential to read well if given opportunities to learn how?) Explain your response.

   Agree   Disagree
10. Write down three strategies you use (three things you do to help yourself) when trying to understand a challenging or complicated text at school, at work, or at home.

A.
B.
C.

11. Which of the following three statements best describes you as a reader in school? Check one.

___ With enough effort, I can understand anything I try to read, and I am confident about my reading abilities at school.

___ Even when texts are difficult, I always try to read them, but sometimes I give up if reading for school is too hard. I understand a lot of what I read, and my reading abilities are adequate.

___ Reading at school is hard for me. I rarely feel like I understand what the writer is saying, and even when I feel like I understand it, sometimes I worry that I’m not getting it.

12. Check the statement below that most closely matches your belief about the importance of reading:

___ Reading is crucial to being successful as an adult in my community.

___ People need to read well in order to be successful in college.

___ Most jobs require good reading skills.

___ Reading is more important now than it ever has been.

___ Reading is less important now than it ever has been.

13. I expect the reading I do for school to be (circle all that apply):

Interesting  Difficult  Useful  Boring

14. Put a check next to all the activities you do while you read assignments for school:

___ I have my cell phone on while I read.

___ I eat/drink while I read.

___ I lie in bed while I read.

___ I listen to music while I read.

___ I have the TV on while I read.

___ I sit in a comfortable chair while I read.

___ I sit at a desk or table while I read.

___ I sit on the floor while I read.

___ I read in a room with other family members or friends present.

___ I sometimes use pens, pencils, and/or highlighters while I read.

___ I sometimes take notes on a separate piece of paper while I read.

___ Other

Exploring Key Concepts

This activity is a follow-up to the reading survey and asks students to consider the characteristics of some of the genres they read regularly. This reflection deepens their awareness about their own reading habits and helps them connect the literacies they already command in their personal lives with the new ones they are developing at school.

Activity 2: Exploring Key Concepts—Anticipation Chart

Using the space below, think about five kinds of texts you read on a regular basis that you could bring in to share with the class, comment on what the characteristics or features of each text type are, and list some descriptors for the audience you imagine each type of text was written for.

Exploring Key Concepts Anticipation Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Type and Topic</th>
<th>Textual Features</th>
<th>Audience</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the text about?</td>
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<td>1.</td>
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Getting Ready to Read

Read aloud the challenge to “Bring a Text You Like to Class,” and discuss the kinds of texts your students wrote about in Exploring Key Concepts.

To help students choose a text that will work for the activities that follow, discussing the knowledge base they already have about out-of-school texts may be helpful. This might be knowledge of a particular subject (i.e., knowing a whole lot about exotic lizards), knowledge of jargon (i.e., knowing the names of tools and engine parts), or knowledge of genres (i.e., knowing the cues and conventions of mystery novels).
Both you and your students will think aloud about these texts, analyzing them for main ideas, authorial choices that position the reader in particular ways, assumptions about audience, key vocabulary, text structure, and other genre conventions. Pieces that are too short or completely decontextualized will be harder to work with. For this reason, emphasize the part of the instructions suggesting a one- to three-page text with context or format intact. Intact formatting means, for example, a magazine article that’s still in the magazine or an online blog printed with all the original headings and graphics. Talking about the features of a text when the features aren’t there is difficult!

Finally, clarify for your students what would condemn a text as inappropriate for your classroom (inappropriate language or images, etc.).

**Activity 3: Challenge Your Teacher to a Reading Match**

You have just filled out a survey about your reading habits and answered questions about the types of texts that you like to read outside of school.

Tomorrow, bring a text to class that you can read expertly but that you think your teacher (or other people you know) might have difficulty understanding. In other words, bring in some specialized text that you read comfortably and confidently so you can challenge your teacher to a reading match! Use the ideas you came up with when completing the Reading Habits Survey and the Anticipation Chart to help you decide what text to bring in to share. Bring in something you personally enjoy reading that you also think might challenge your teacher as a reader. Perhaps it’s on a topic you don’t think he or she knows much about, or perhaps the text structure is very specialized and you need to be an insider of a particular community to read this kind of text well.

Please make sure your text is at least a paragraph long; one to three pages would be ideal. The text should have its original formatting.

Also, remember that your text must be appropriate for the classroom. Your teacher will let you know specifically what that means.

**Surveying the Text, Making Predictions, and Asking Questions**

Since students are already familiar with the texts they have brought to class, they will not survey the text to make predictions. Rather, students will consider why the text appeals to them and what background knowledge allows them to understand or appreciate it. Once students have analyzed the texts they brought to class, small groups of students will use their collected insights to decide which texts would be most likely (and least likely) to challenge you, their teacher, in terms of comprehension.
Activity 4: Choose the Challenge Text and Make Notes

In this activity, you will have a chance to compile some notes about the basic characteristics of your text. As you do, consider which of your responses help explain why you read this text with confidence.

Individuals

On a separate piece of paper, choose any six of these questions to answer about the text you brought to class to share. Choose the questions that will have the most interesting answers because they will reveal the most about the text itself and about your relationship to it (what makes you an expert reader of this kind of text).

- Why did you choose this particular reading to bring to class?
- What do you like about this text?
- What do you know about the author?
- Have you read anything else by this author?
- What do you think the author’s purpose was for writing this text? (Does the writer aim to persuade, scold, instruct, amuse, explain, describe, or perhaps change readers’ minds about something?)
- Why did you first read this?
- When was this text written?
- What are the main topics or ideas in the text?
- What else have you read that contributes to your understanding of this text?
- If your peers enjoy reading this passage, is there another related text you would recommend to them?
- Will this text ever be considered outdated? Why or why not?

Small Groups

Once you have completed your notes, your teacher will organize students into small groups. Each group’s job will be to have a discussion to decide which text, from among those that individual students in your group brought, will be the most difficult for your teacher to understand and which will be the easiest. In your groups, you will have time to look at each text in turn and consider its unique features, its audience, and its purpose.

Begin by introducing one another to your texts: take turns reading the first two to three paragraphs of your texts, and then share the notes you have written so far. Once every group member has shared notes, use the following questions to help determine which reading is most likely to challenge your teacher’s comprehension and which one is least likely to do so. Prepare to share your reasoning with the class.

1. Do you think the subject of this reading falls outside your teacher’s experience or knowledge of the world? Who would be unfamiliar with this kind of text? How might unfamiliarity with the topic affect a reader’s ability to comprehend it?
2. Look at the language this writer uses and predict which words or phrases your teacher or classmates might not know. Are there any words or
expressions you yourself are unsure of? Make a list of some of the most challenging words or phrases.

3. What background knowledge, information, or life experience do you think readers would need in order to understand this text well?

4. Where did this text appear? What does the publication information suggest to you about the audience the author seems to expect? Do you think your teacher is a member of the intended audience?

Reading

Understanding Key Vocabulary and Key Concepts—“Thinking Aloud” as a Reading Comprehension Tool

In Reading for Understanding (1999, 2012), the authors discuss reading as a kind of problem solving. In daily life, for example, we have various tools and strategies for solving the problems we come across: repairing a blown bicycle tire; coaxing a temperamental television or kitchen appliance to work; balancing a check book or doing our taxes; conducting a library search on an unfamiliar topic; or solving a problem set in math or science. In the same way that all these particular situations require certain tools and strategies, so too does reading.

Using think alouds to do close reading can help readers negotiate difficult texts of all different kinds. The think-aloud process may seem slow and cumbersome, and it’s not the sort of strategy we would want to use all the time, but it’s a handy tool for moments when a text in any genre or discipline seems inaccessible.

Modeling with Student-Selected Texts. Once students have had a chance to share their texts in small groups, each group can choose one text that they imagine might be challenging for you to read. When each group has offered you a text, you can choose two or three from the whole class that you would like to work with to model thinking aloud for the class. Consider picking one easy text (that you feel completely comfortable with and have a lot of background knowledge for), and a couple more challenging texts that may have more complex structure, language, or genre conventions that are less familiar to you. You’ll want to spread out the modeling of these think alouds over a couple of class periods so that students have repeated opportunities to observe and listen to your thinking process with novel texts.

Since you are the expert reader in the room, this think-aloud process offers students access to the strategies you as a skilled reader use to make sense of unfamiliar text. Modeling your process helps students understand that every reader, even expert readers like their teachers, sometimes encounter texts that present challenges. They also come to see that reading challenging material is not insurmountable; rather, we can use the kinds of metacognitive and rhetorical strategies woven throughout the ERWC to help us comprehend challenging texts.
**Tips for Modeling Think Alouds.** During think alouds, as you externalize your sense-making process by reading and commenting on what goes through your mind while reading, ask students to use the checklist below to keep track of what they hear you doing. For the “easy” text, be sure that your think aloud reveals background knowledge, not just about the content but also your knowledge of text structure and genre. (For example, if a student presents you with a romance novel, what cues in the first chapter do you notice regarding character? Is conflict foreshadowed? Are there archetypes being developed or manipulated?) For the difficult text, try to be clear about what stumps you. Letting students see what’s difficult for you as a reader helps them understand that even highly skilled readers don’t know everything. After modeling the think-aloud process with at least one easy text and one or two difficult texts, students will then have an opportunity to try thinking aloud for themselves with the texts their classmates brought in to share.

Below is a checklist you and students can use to keep track of strategies you are applying to your reading while you are listening to someone else’s think aloud. As each reader thinks aloud, students can put a check mark next to any of the items in this list that they hear fellow readers doing while reading.

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**Activity 5: Think Aloud Instructions and Checklist**

**The Teacher Thinks Aloud**
- Listen as your teacher models how to do a think aloud.
- Use the checklist your teacher provides to keep track of what you hear your teacher doing while reading.
- After listening to your teacher model think aloud, try this strategy out with a classmate.

**The Students Think Aloud**
The purpose of this activity is to become more aware of the different kinds of strategies that we use to repair and deepen our comprehension when it breaks down. There is no “right” way to do this; the checklist is simply a way to help you think about some of the many tools good readers use to comprehend text.
- After your teacher has modeled the think-aloud process, trade the text that you brought in with a partner, and take turns thinking aloud.
- When you are thinking aloud, slow down so you can really notice what your mind is doing.
- When you are listening to your partner think aloud, use the checklist, putting a check next to each strategy your partner uses. (You can mark items more than once.)
- After you’ve had a chance to think aloud with a partner, discuss what you discovered about each other’s strategies and choices.
- Finally, pick one new strategy you’ve never used before to try out next time you read.
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Checklist for Listening to Think-Aloud

Noticing Text Structure and Conventions
The title is...
There are headings and subheadings...
The text is organized...
There seems to be a pattern...
Certain words are bolded, italicized, capitalized, put in boxes...
I noticed that punctuation...
Other?

Predicting
I predict…
I think…
In the next part I think what might happen is…
I imagine...
I wonder...
Other?

Picturing
I picture…
I have an image…
I can see…
Other?

Making Connections Between the Known (something the reader remembers, read, saw, or heard about) and the New
This is like…
This reminds me of…
This is reminiscent of…
I can relate this to…
There is a parallel here to…
Other?
Identifying a Problem
I got confused when…
I’m not sure…
I didn’t expect…
I was not clear about…
Other?

Fixing and Adjusting Pacing
I think I’ll have to…[reread this sentence or section; look up a word I don’t know…]
Maybe I’ll…[read on to see if it makes more sense]
I had to slow down when…
I will try…
Other?

Formative Assessment

Activity 5 provides you and your students with an opportunity to survey reading strategies together. Following the think aloud activities, ask your students to complete a quickwrite in which they summarize the strategies that they use and those that are unfamiliar. Then have students identify a strategy they believe would enhance their capacity for comprehension and the reasons they believe it would. Collecting and reviewing these quickwrites could provide you with an opportunity to assess your students’ progress in their use of effective strategies, and class discussion about these strategies could promote your students’ metacognitive development and their proficiency as readers.

Reading for Understanding and Noticing Language

This task is intended to focus students on the author’s choice of key words. Students will discuss how both the denotations and the connotations of these words contribute to the meaning of the text.

Note: The instructions for Activities 8-10 are written as though students brought in a short text, like a blog, a magazine article, etc. However, it is entirely possible that some students will have brought in books, poetry, fiction, or nonfiction, as examples of what they read outside of class. If that is the case, modify the instructions for them by asking them to choose one section of text to work with. For example, this could be the opening few pages or the climax of the book.
Students begin by identifying three to five key words in their own text. Then, in groups, students will brainstorm the synonyms, connotations, and associations of those words. Finally, examining those brainstorms in relation to the context of the article, students will decide which meanings are probably intended and which are probably not intended by the author.

Activity 6: Analyzing Key Words in the Texts You Brought

This task asks you to examine the author’s choice of key words as you consider how both the denotations and the connotations of these words contribute to your text’s meaning.

As Individuals

1. Choose three to five key vocabulary words from your text. These should be words that are central concepts to the text. In other words, to explain this text to someone else, it would help to use these words to do so!

As a Group

2. Start with the words from one of your group member’s texts. Divide up the word choices to members of the group, so that each person is working with one word from the article at hand.

3. Put the key word in a circle in the center of a page. Next, outside the circle, list some synonyms (words that would be in a thesaurus), connotations (between-the-lines meanings), and associations (other things that come to mind). These can be words or phrases.

4. With the article’s owner taking the lead, begin by crossing out three of the brainstormed words or phrases that you believe are NOT meanings intended by the author. Discuss with one another the grounds for your choices, and use your background knowledge and the text to explain them.

When one author describes a reduction in the Canadian reindeer population, he is not alluding to Rudolph or Santa Claus. Even though these associations may come to mind, the situation is a real problem centered in a national park, not in Santa’s Workshop at the North Pole.

Next, your group should circle the three brainstormed words or phrases that, based on the context, contribute significantly to the text’s meaning. Once again, defend your choices using your background knowledge and the text to explain them.

When the author describes the reduction in the reindeer population as “a decimation,” he probably means to imply “devastation” since the reduction he describes is drastic enough to harm the whole ecosystem of the park. He also probably wants to suggest that it is “an act, a result of people’s actions.” Maybe the choices people are making aren’t conscious, but the author’s point is that the problem could be prevented if the national park were to make different decisions about how to develop the land and make it accessible to more visitors.

Once you have analyzed the words from one group member’s text, begin the process again cycling through steps 2-4 above with each group member’s text.
research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.

b. Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.

c. Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.

d. Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

Postreading

Summarizing and Responding

Informed by the analysis they have done so far, up to and including the attention to word choices in the previous activity, students will now be asked to write a brief analytical summary of the text. This is an opportunity for them to show off their expertise with and rich understanding of a text with which they feel very comfortable.
Remember that you may need to adapt the instructions slightly for students working with a fictional text; if they cannot make a sensible statement about the author’s worldview, perhaps they can comment on a character’s value system instead.

**Activity 7: Write a Brief Analytical Summary of Your Text**

Write a concise analytical summary of the text you brought in. The summary should convey what you believe to be the text’s main idea and explain the author’s purpose, as you understand it. Your summary should also include a reference to some element of the text that you believe indicates something about the author’s worldview or value system. Underline at least two keywords and at least three of the synonyms that your small group brainstormed, and describe any connotations or associations that you circled as most relevant.

In John Smith’s article “Save the Reindeer” (2012), he condemns the policies that a Canadian National Park is using to expand itself because they are contributing to a decimation of the reindeer population. He hopes to persuade environmentalists to put pressure on the park to change its policies before the devastation is irreversible. He seems to believe that if there is a choice between making humans happy or keeping ecosystems intact, the ecosystems should win.

In the preface to Stephanie Meyers’s Twilight (2005), the author flashes forward to the climax of the book, when the main character is threatened by a vampire who’s been hunting her. Meyers is foreshadowing key themes in the book; not only death, but the paradox of some vampires who really are friendly, and the question of whether or not it’s possible for the undead to actually be noble. Her reflection about dying “in the place of someone I love” indicates she values love above all else, and that is certainly a theme in this book.

**FA Formative Assessment**

Collect the brief analytical summaries for Activity 7 as an exit or entrance ticket. You can calculate a quick score for the summary and provide students with feedback about their performance on it by assigning one point for each of the following elements (with a maximum score of 5): (1) the text’s main idea, (2) the author’s purpose, (3) a reference to something in the text that reflects the author’s worldview or value system (i.e., ethos), (4) two keywords and three synonyms that the student’s small group brainstormed, and (5) any connotations or associations that the student identified as most relevant. From your students’ performance on this task, you can determine what additional instructional time they need on summaries.
Thinking Critically

To respond to these questions, students must think critically about the text they brought to class.

Before students begin responding to these questions, remind them that their answers can include knowledge about genre conventions and specialized vocabulary, not just subject matter knowledge. When a mystery novelist writes a book, for example, what does she count on her readers to notice? When a sports journalist writes an article about the home team, what does she assume her readers already know?

Activity 8: Does Your Author Depend on Your Expertise or Attitudes?

• What does the author of this text assume that expert readers like you will know and/or believe prior to reading?
• To comprehend this text, what background knowledge is absolutely necessary?
• Why might some readers fail to appreciate elements of this text? Are there subtleties in its style or its message they might miss?
• Why might some readers reject this text’s ideas? Does the text rest on any assumptions, knowledge, or values not all readers will share?
preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.

b. Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.

c. Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.

d. Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.
A Note on Pacing

The remainder of this module includes two main sections: 1) working with a scholarly article and 2) creating a multi-genre portfolio. You might consider teaching these sections concurrently. At this point in the module, you could begin the multi-genre portfolio. Once students are asked to begin writing the pieces for their portfolio, they can continue working on those at home while in-class time is spent focusing on the academic text. At about the same time they are finished reflecting on the academic text, students should be ready to use class time for peer-reviewing the various pieces of their multi-genre portfolios.

Text—Scholarly Article Found by Students

Prereading

Getting Ready to Read

Your students have just worked with one another to analyze the types of texts that they read by choice; now each student is going to find a scholarly article related to that same topic, the subject or genre they choose to read outside of school. The activities associated with this text are meant to create a bridge between the literate worlds where students already feel comfortable and the academic world that we hope to help them enter with confidence. To do this, encourage students to use a combination of their topical background knowledge along with the strategic reading skills that they have been practicing throughout the course.

• As a first step, students will be asked to find a scholarly article about the same topic they explored with the text they brought to class. If your students are unfamiliar with the features of scholarly articles, you might want to show them the 90-second video from Cornell University’s library called “Research Minutes: How to Identify Scholarly Journal Articles” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uDGJ2CYfY9A>.

• You may also want to introduce the idea of “peer-reviewed journal articles,” explaining to students how experts in a discipline determine whether an article written by professional peers is suitable for publication. What makes scholarly articles valuable to researchers is that they have gone through a “quality-control” review process conducted by other scholars knowledgeable about the topic.

• Searching the Internet for peer-reviewed texts can be challenging. If your school subscribes to online databases like EBSCO or ProQuest, then students can learn how to use the advanced search features to limit their results to scholarly articles from peer reviewed journals. This will provide students with an enormous bank of current articles.

• If you do not have access to a subscription database, then DOAJ.org is an international database of open-access, peer-reviewed journals where students will be able to print full-text articles for free.
Note: The reading portion of the template may seem especially abridged in the upcoming section. The intention of this section is not to guarantee all students’ deep understanding of the scholarly texts they find, but rather, to help them intentionally and independently use their rhetorical reading strategies to find and evaluate an academic article on a topic of interest. Students will also consider what next steps they might take to more fully understand the scholarly piece they found.

Activity 9: Finding a Scholarly Article Related to Your Topic

Your task is to find a scholarly article that relates to the text or topic you have already been working on in class. For example, the text you brought to class might have been the lyrics to a Black Eyed Peas song. If it was, a related academic article could be a researched analysis of the group’s appeal to tweens or an academic essay on hip-hop as a tool for teen rebellion or an essay about how teachers are using hip-hop to teach language and history in American high schools. Here’s another example: Perhaps your group has been analyzing an article from a skateboarding magazine. You might find published research on skateboarding injuries, or you might find an analysis of skate culture’s influence on the rise of extreme sports in the 1990s.

Scholarly articles often have features like an abstract, a list of works cited, and some indication of the author’s credentials, among other things. By the time you are done examining the article you find, you should know much more about this type of text.

If you are looking for scholarly texts, using a regular Internet search engine like Google might get you literally millions of unhelpful results. When hunting for academic articles, here are some of the keys for effective searching: consider a variety of search terms that might help you find likely material; use search tools and terms that limit your results to just scholarly texts.

1. To get started, come up with at least five different search terms that could help you find a scholarly article related to your topic.

   (A student who brought in Cosmopolitan Magazine might come up with search terms like “fashion,” “style,” “designer,” “trends,” “beauty”; a student who brought in an article about architecture might come up with search terms like “architecture,” “modernism,” “green design,” and the name of her favorite architect.)

2. Use the advanced search functions in an online database to limit your results to scholarly articles from peer-reviewed journals. Your teacher or librarian can show you how to do this. If your school does not have access to an online database like EBSCO or Proquest, you may search DOAJ.org for articles in open-access, peer-reviewed journals. As you hunt, make sure you are looking at full-text articles and not just the abstracts.

3. When you find a full-text article that looks interesting (and isn’t too long—maybe three to five pages), print it, and bring it to class.
Exploring Key Concepts, Surveying the Text, Making Predictions, and Asking Questions

In the earlier portions of this module, when students examined the texts that they themselves brought in to share with the class, module questions prompted them to consider the conventions and cues of those texts. Now is the time for students to consider and record the genre markers of the academic texts they have found.

Ideally, your students will each analyze the academic text that they found related to their own topic. Alternatively, students can work in small groups they have already been working with to examine a single scholarly article that relates to one group member’s topic. This might be especially helpful if you had students who were absent or who simply did not find scholarly articles related to their topics.

In order to make some initial observations, predictions, and annotations, ask your students to survey their texts, making special note of features and cues related to the scholarly articles they found.

Students may also benefit greatly at this point from listening to you do another think aloud—this time modeling your process for reading an academic text. It is not necessary to model a response for every question in the series; rather, using the think aloud again at this point can encourage them to be specific when making predictions and inferences and asking questions about unfamiliar texts. The sample think aloud process presented below is based on a text you can find at DOAJ.org called “Intertemporal Model of Co-Existence of Two Rival Species: A Case of Vampires’ and Humans’ Co-Habitation,” originally published in the journal *Modern Economy* (2012).

1. In scanning the text, what do you expect the main topics and ideas will be? What question do you believe the text will try to answer? What clues make you say so?

   The title talks about vampires’ and humans’ “co-habitation.” I suppose this means it is going to be about vampires and humans living together or getting along. It was published in an economics journal, which confuses me, but in the list of keywords are “predator-prey system” and “mathematical modeling”; maybe they are using mathematical formulas used in ecosystems with predators and prey to imagine how humans and vampires would interact or maybe kill each other off. That prediction seems reasonable because there are charts and graphs about changes in human and vampire population. The abstract says the article “presents a serious analysis of a ridiculous subject.” I can’t tell if this is a joke paper or not. The “references” section, which looks like a works cited page, includes sources like Karl Marx and the U.N., but it also lists books like *Twilight* and *The Devils and Evil Spirits of Babylonia*.

2. What is the structure of this text? Is it written in sections? Are there headings and subheadings? How is it organized? What does this tell you?
The paper has an abstract, an introduction, a body, a conclusion, and a references section, along with lots of formulas and captioned graphs. The body is divided into three sections, and each includes the names of authors who wrote about vampires. For example, the first section is called “The Stoker Model.” I think the authors of this paper are going to use maths to imagine whether humans and vampires could get along in different scenarios, depending on if humans are trying to coexist with Dracula vampires or Twilight vampires or Buffy vampires.

If you have a preference about where students make their annotations, whether in the margins of the article or on a separate piece of paper, amend their instructions accordingly.

Activity 10: Using Genre Features and Background Knowledge to Make Predictions

In the next series of activities, you are asked to examine a text on a familiar topic, but presented in a less-familiar genre—the scholarly article. Remember, academic writing is simply one more genre with one more set of rules. Just like it would seem silly in a text message to write out “laugh out loud,” so too are there expectations in academic texts about what should be included and how they should be presented.

Now, it’s your turn to take on the challenge! Make sense of this text by using your background knowledge on the subject matter along with the reading strategies you have been practicing since the beginning of the course.

Scan the various features of the text. Then, read the first two or three paragraphs of the text and the conclusion. Once you have done so, make some initial observations, annotations, and predictions.

From there, move on to the questions below. Respond to any three questions (from 1-5), choosing the ones that will have the most interesting and revealing answers. Then work with your peers to respond to question 6. Write down your responses, whether in the margins of the article or on a separate sheet of paper. (Keep in mind that this series of activities is going to culminate in a reflection about how background knowledge and reading strategies helped you comprehend this text—so all the notes you make will not only help you to understand the text now, but will also help you to reflect upon the experience later.)

Individually

1. In scanning the text, what do you expect the main topics and ideas will be? What clues make you say so?
2. What is the structure of this text? Is it written in sections? Are there headings and subheadings? How is it organized? What does this organization suggest to you as a reader?
3. Where was this text published? Can you infer anything based on this information? How could you find out about this publisher or about the journal?
4. What kind of audience does this author seem to be expecting? What is the author’s own field of study? Besides the author’s own academic field, are there researchers in any other fields who might be interested in this research?

5. What do you already know about this subject matter that might help you understand the article?

In Groups

6. Compare your scholarly article to those articles found by a few of your peers. What are some of the features of these academic articles that seem different from other written genres with which you are familiar? What information do these features communicate? Why would this information be important and useful for an audience of people doing research?

Understanding Key Vocabulary and Considering the Structure of the Text

In this activity, students are asked to consciously examine more genre conventions in scholarly articles, including figures, abstracts, and jargon. Misunderstanding the cues and conventions of any genre can not only be an obstacle to basic comprehension but also a missed opportunity for enhanced comprehension—simply because a reader doesn’t know the rules!

Activity 11: Jargon and Figures in Scholarly Texts

You have already pointed out some features of a scholarly text that are generally not present in other genres. These include the abstract, the works cited section, and information about the authors. There are other features to consider as well, such as specialized language or jargon—words that are familiar to those who work in the field but not necessarily to the average reader.

1. Are there any images, tables, or charts that are labeled as “figures”? If your text has none, work with someone who does have figures in his or her article; find where in the body of the article those figures are referenced. What seems to be the purpose of labeling “figures” this way? Do the figures seem to enhance the information provided in the article in any way? Why do you think the author wanted to include them?

The “figure” label is like a key so you can find which picture or chart you should look at. It will tell you in a paragraph “See Figure 1” or “See Figure 2.3.” Sometimes the picture is repeating the idea in the text in another form, like a graph or a chart. Other times it seems like the figures provide additional support for a claim made in the paragraph.

2. Go back to the abstract and read it all the way through. This can help you focus on main ideas when you are reading. Are there any unfamiliar words in the abstract that seem key to understanding the text? If so, circle them in the abstract; then look them up in the dictionary and write the definitions in the margin of your text. Do any of the unfamiliar words
domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

**Prerequisite Grade 8 Standard: Reading – Informational Text**

5. Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept.

**Grades 11-12 Reading – Informational Text**

5. Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.

**Speaking and Listening**

1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

   a. Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that
Reading

Reading for Understanding

With your students, call to mind the times that you and your students have already thought aloud with texts. Your students might also benefit from a brief brainstorm on the types of reading strategies your class has learned—for example, strategies that help readers set a clear purpose for reading or help them to read with the grain. Keep in mind, however, that students may not have the background knowledge to completely understand their scholarly text; for that reason, keep this activity brief and centered on the conscious application of reading strategies.

Activity 12: Think Aloud with a Scholarly Article

As you move from previewing the scholarly article to a close reading, plan on applying a variety of reading strategies thoughtfully and thoroughly. Use your whole reading toolbox! Previously in this module, you thought aloud with a text that one of your peers brought to class. For this activity, you and a partner will take turns doing another think aloud in three stages.

Think-Aloud Stage One

Reader: Catch your partner up on all the strategies you have already used to preview the text. Explain to your partner the predictions you made about the text and what clues you used to do so.

Partner: Take notes on all the strategies your partner has already used to preview the text.

Think-Aloud Stage Two

Reader: Tell your partner what are you looking for as you read this text closely for the first time, and explain how you set your purpose. Then, think aloud while you read the first page or so of your scholarly article. Use strategies that will help you find what you are looking for in this first read!

Partner: Take notes on all the reading strategies that your partner uses to comprehend the text.

Think-Aloud Stage Three

Reader: Collect from your partner the list of reading strategies that you used; add any that he or she may have missed.

When one partner is finished as the “reader,” switch roles, and go through the process again.
Annotating and Questioning the Text, and Summarizing and Responding

If one aim of this module is to allow students to independently demonstrate new competencies with the reading and annotation strategies they have been practicing since the beginning of the ERWC course, then this activity is an opportunity for your students to shine. Establish your high expectations for them here—not for complete and utter comprehension, but for persistence and thoroughness in their attempts to achieve it. Although underlining and highlighting the text are good places to start, they are not enough! Underlining, circling, highlighting, arrows, and brackets can all be accompanied by annotations. The annotation process encourages students to reformulate the language of the text in their own words. Such reformulation is also a kind of invention; it expands and stretches students’ ways of thinking. Put another way, as students come to understand the words of other authors by writing rhetorically about other authors’ ideas, students are simultaneously building new habits of mind and extending their repertoires for skillfully comprehending and writing texts.

Activity 13: Annotating the Scholarly Article

Don’t just think your thoughts; write them down. The annotations you make are the visible signs of your thoughtfulness. The prompts below will encourage certain kinds of annotations, but don’t limit yourself to those. Show off a little bit, why don’t you?

For each prompt below, there are directions for how to annotate and then a follow-up question to answer. Based on the understandings you attained while thinking aloud about your text, make your annotations first (including your self-directed ones!). Then go back, and respond to each of the follow-up questions. Share your responses to the follow-up questions with a partner.

- Highlight a few spots where the author makes claims that seem central to his or her argument; then summarize those spots in the margin. What is the main idea of this text? Paraphrase it in the margin.
- Using a highlighter, mark a few different spots where the author is providing evidence for main claims, and comment on (annotate) the significance in the margin. What kinds of evidence seem to be valued in this field of study?
- Underline sections where you are confused or where you have questions for the author; express your confusion or question in the margin. What steps could you take to sort out this confusion or get answers to your questions?
- Note examples, if there are any, of specialized vocabulary—words that seem specific to this field. What can you infer about this author’s intended audience based on the use of these key words?
- Note at least three spots where you have trouble understanding the text because you lack some background knowledge (besides specialized vocabulary), and explain, as best you can, what type of information you seem to be lacking. Alternatively, if, because of your expertise in the subject matter, you fully understand every section of the text, then note three spots where comprehension depends on background knowledge that less expert readers might lack.
Postreading

Reflecting on Your Reading Process

This portion of the module places a value on reflective learning because we know that students’ awareness of their own reading and writing processes contributes to a mental flexibility that allows them to transfer their learning to new and different situations—inside and outside of our classrooms.

Throughout this module, students have been asked to consider how knowledge of content, genre conventions, and reading strategies can all contribute toward rich comprehension of texts. This activity (as well as the introduction to the multi-genre portfolio that appears later in this module) explicitly extends that metacognitive awareness. This is an appropriate mid-year stepping-stone as students move toward the culminating reflections at the end of this course.

Activity 14: Reflecting on Your Reading Process

This module began by asking you to analyze a text that you brought to class—the subject matter and genre should have been familiar to you. Now you have just read a scholarly article. The subject matter of the article may have been familiar to you too in some respects; however, the conventions of the academic genre might have posed some reading challenges. It may help you to compare and contrast those experiences as you prepare to write the reflection below. The notes you and your peers have taken during the reading process should also help you develop a thoughtful response. At this point in the school year, having spent so much time practicing and applying reading strategies, you should have a lot to say!

For this reflection, respond to some or all of the following questions: What do you now know about the purposes of reading? The process of reading? The various types of reading? And how can you use this knowledge to support yourself in the future when you encounter a text that challenges you?

Use the graphic organizer below to reflect specifically on the experience of independently reading and annotating the scholarly article.

Reflecting on the Scholarly Article

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific Area</th>
<th>Your Reflection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Background Knowledge</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain two elements that helped you comprehend the text (for example, your familiarity with subject matter and/or genre conventions).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What I Understood</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraphrase two key ideas from the text and explain how each one contributes to the author’s argument.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Connecting Reading to Writing

Discovering What You Think

Considering the Writing Task and Getting Ready to Write

For the culminating assignment of this module, students will be composing a portfolio consisting of works that represent a variety of genres all written about the topic of the text they brought in at the beginning of this module to share with the class. An important element of the portfolio is a reflective introduction.

If one way to define literacy is the ability to comprehend messages and join in conversations with strategic and skillful command of various genres' forms and requirements, then a key aim of this activity is to give students another opportunity to recognize the literacies they have developed and may have already mastered on their own. Ultimately, these out-of-school literacies can serve as bridges to academic literacies—genres with unique rules and conventions. By attempting to demystify academic literacy, this module aims to encourage students’ persistence in tackling it.

Beginning the Multi-Genre Portfolio. In the following activity, students will begin the multi-genre portfolio assignment. To start, have students read the assignment description, including Putting Together the Multi-Genre Portfolio and Writing the Introduction. Then your students will need to come up with a message that relates to their topic. Reassure students that their “topic” is not the scholarly article they just annotated; their “topic” is the subject that, at the beginning of this module, they said they read about by choice (e.g., snowboarding, working out, cooking, philosophy, origami, architecture, exotic lizards). The message can be very simple (“Snowboarding is exciting”) or more complicated (“Exercise benefits mind and body”). In some cases, at the beginning of this module individual students may have identified genres that they read (i.e., “I read mystery novels on my own”) rather than specific subjects.

Next Steps I Could Take

Explain one place that confuses you or provokes a question. Then suggest a strategy you could use to address your confusion.

Formative Assessment

Reviewing these graphic organizers will help you understand what your students know, what they need to know, and where to focus your attention in class.
Those choices can be honored, but you may need to help students think creatively about how to come up with a message. For example, could mystery readers develop a claim about puzzles? Problem solving? The unknown?

Once students have come up with their message, give them a chance to discuss the various possible genre choices for the portfolio assignment. Discuss the ones they are very familiar with, and be prepared to introduce them to potentially unfamiliar ones like Found Poems, Very Short Stories, etc. For the multi-genre portfolio, students should be welcome to choose forms in and out of their comfort zones, as long as they are willing to research and experiment with the unfamiliar ones.

Encourage students to think creatively: one could communicate “snowboarding is exciting” via a map labeling all the best jumps on a black diamond slope, a recipe for an exciting winter day, a review of a top-of-the-line snowboard, instructions for how to do the half-pipe in powder, a biographical sketch of Shaun White, etc!

Activity 15: Beginning to Work With Multiple Genres

For your final assignment, you will compile a portfolio that includes several different kinds of writing about the same topic. You will write four or five texts of varying genres first; then you will write a reflective introduction to those pieces. Begin by reading the assignment description.

Writing Task: Multi-Genre Portfolio

Putting Together the Multi-Genre Portfolio: What is something interesting or important about your topic? Your response to that question will be your message, and you will need to shape that message for several different audiences. For each audience, choose a genre that you think would appeal to them. Choose four or five different text types from the categories below (at least one from each quadrant). Keep your audience in mind as you compose each text, paying special attention to use the text structure, style, and vocabulary that characterize each genre.

Categories of Text Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poem</th>
<th>Image or Photo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Haiku</td>
<td>Drawing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prose Poem (free verse poem)</td>
<td>Comic Strip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Found Poem</td>
<td>Print Advertisement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song Lyrics</td>
<td>Map</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spoken Word Poem</td>
<td>Public Service Announcement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Short Story</td>
<td>Meme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Writing the Introduction to your Multi-Genre Portfolio (400-500 words):
Once you have completed composing all four or five texts for your multi-genre portfolio, write a reflective introduction that orients your readers to each of the pieces you have chosen to include. Explain the message all your pieces have in common. Then devote a paragraph to each of your texts that explains: 1) who the imagined audience is; 2) how the piece you wrote accommodated your audience’s needs and expectations; and 3) how each particular genre required you to use text structure, style, and vocabulary. Finally, write a conclusion to your introduction that thoughtfully explains your experience of putting together this multi-genre portfolio. What did you learn or discover about yourself as a reader or about the demands of reading different genres? How can this new knowledge support your reading and writing in the future?

To get started with the portfolio, take the following steps:

1. **Determine your message.**
   The first step of the assignment asks you to answer this question: “What is something interesting or important about your topic?” For this portfolio, your “topic” is the one you brainstormed at the beginning of this module, about the kinds of things you choose to read outside of school (e.g., snowboarding, architecture, fashion, philosophy—you do not have to write about your scholarly article). What idea would you like to convey about your topic that might interest several different audiences?

2. **Consider your genre choices.**
   Once you have decided on your message, you will need to choose wisely the genres you will use to address the audiences you want to engage. Your choices of genre can be creative! For example, you might choose to write a recipe—but it doesn’t have to be a recipe for food! Maybe your message is that your city should build a public recreation center; you could write a “Recipe to Keep Kids Healthy.”

   If you did this, your recipe would need to follow formatting conventions, like a list of ingredients and the steps of the process for putting them all together. Sometimes recipes include nutritional information; your recipe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tweet</th>
<th>Magazine or Newspaper Article</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instant Message</td>
<td>Op-Ed Piece</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>Radio Spot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reddit Post</td>
<td>Biographical Sketch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blog Post</td>
<td>Movie Scene Script</td>
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<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>Dialogue</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review</td>
<td>Instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wikipedia Entry</td>
<td>Recipe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Letter</td>
<td>Diary Entry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
could include the healthy benefits of building a recreation center. A recipe would also need to include the jargon of cooking—recipe-words like “blend,” “mix,” “add,” “combine,” “simmer” “let rise.”

Recipes also have stylistic conventions. Sometimes they are written straightforwardly, with just the facts. Other times, recipe-writers allow their personalities to come through, as though you are in their kitchen and they are personally showing you each step. In a recipe, you might even include an appealing picture of the finished product—your recreation center!

Are you deeply familiar with the rules and expectations of some of these genres because you use them frequently? If there are specialized formatting and/or vocabulary elements, do you know what they are? What are the different reasons each of these genres can be effective? Are there genres listed that appeal to you, but you are not expert in? If so, how can you find out more about the genres that are unfamiliar to you?

3. **Consider your audiences.**

Your choices of genre should be purposeful—each choice can be an effective way to appeal to a particular audience. Think of it this way: for any genre you choose, who should receive your message in that form? Who would understand or appreciate your message if you wrote it in a poem versus if you wrote it in a tweet? What kind of reader would each of these genres appeal to?

Identify the audience for each text as specifically as possible. For example, you might write a poem to submit to a particular online literary magazine that targets tween girls. An email you write is likely addressed to a specific person. On the other hand, a tweet would be read by all your followers, so how would you characterize them as a group? Each of those audiences has different expectations that you will consider as you compose. The clearer you can be about those expectations, the better your chances are of being understood by the audience you are trying to reach.

Finally, decide how you will have to adjust your message slightly for different audiences. For example, if your message is “Everyone should exercise,” might you pitch it differently for your 10-year-old kid brother and your 90-year-old great-grandmother?

4. **Gather your planning into a chart.**

In a graphic organizer set up like the one below, begin the process of creating your portfolio by outlining the choices you have made. For now, fill out just the boxes about your main idea, the genres you have chosen, the audiences you will address, and, if necessary, any adjusted messages.

*Note:* You will complete this graphic organizer—the boxes about textual features and effective use of the genre—in Activity 16.
### Planning Your Portfolio

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre Choice</th>
<th>Appropriate Audience</th>
<th>Adjusted Message?</th>
<th>Textual Features</th>
<th>What can make this text-type effective?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quadrant 1</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Quadrant 2</td>
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<td>Quadrant 3</td>
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<td>Quadrant 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quadrant 5 (Optional)</td>
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**FA Formative Assessment**

Ask your students to submit their graphic organizers with a) their rationales for selecting genres and b) their questions about structure, rules, and conventions of the genres they selected. Reviewing your students’ planning process will provide you with insights into their needs in this area for future class instruction and discussion.
Writing Rhetorically

Entering the Conversation

Considering Structure and Composing a Draft

In this activity, students are being asked to verbalize genre-based conventions. To do this, the activity once again taps students’ own literacies, the worlds of communication where they feel comfortable and in command.

Your role is to encourage them to delve deeply into their background knowledge. Help them surprise themselves with how much they already know about a variety of text types and about making themselves understood in the 21st century.

Grouping by Genres. If possible, structure this activity to allow students to group themselves around genres—in other words, get together the students who plan on writing a comic strip, a review, an email, etc. This will mean switching groups several times during the course of the class period, as students brainstorm textual features for each of the genres they want to write.

Exploring and Problem Solving Genre Choices. Some of the genre choices may be unfamiliar to your students yet intrigue them. You might work together as a class to determine the textual features of some of these. For example, in the Very Short Story genre, a key feature is that the story is six words long! But, less obviously, it means that the key elements of the narrative—like characters, conflict, plot, resolution—are mostly implied!

As students move to composing their pieces in multiple genres, they may ask formatting questions. If they choose to create a drawing, can it be freehand? Can they find a photo or are they supposed to take a photo? Are they supposed to imitate an Instagram on the page or get a screenshot of the real thing? For the final drafts, can they put more than one genre piece on a single page? As you make these decisions, keep in mind that a key element of the assignment is for students to employ the features of their chosen genres, including stylistic choices and formatting, when creating original texts of their own. But there will doubtless be situations where flexibility is warranted—like the student who is communicating a message about snowboarding but can’t take his camera to the nearest ski slope!

Activity 16: Considering the Features of Various Genres

For this portfolio, it is important for you to consider the different features that your texts will employ because your texts are written in different genres. Try to make sure that you are following the unwritten rulebook for each text type. These “rules” include elements like structure, vocabulary, and style.

Hash tags, line-breaks, emoticons, text-speak, and thought bubbles are all conventions found in different types of texts. Each of the genres you have

Writing
1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
   a. Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establish the significance of the claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that logically sequences claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
   b. Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while point out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience’s knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.
   e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.
2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
chosen has formatting, vocabulary, and style decisions to be made in order to make your message look and sound right when it’s finished. On the graphic organizer that you have already begun, finish your initial analysis of each text by listing as many features of the genre as you can.

For each genre, also consider what makes a text of that type effective? When you look at Very Short Stories, for example, what makes some of them “better” than others? What makes some memes go viral? What makes some emails worth forwarding and some images or video clips worth saving?

Use the table that you began in Activity 15 to collect your thoughts for each of the text types that you will be creating for your portfolio. Once you have completed your planning, begin creating your various texts.

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**FA Formative Assessment**

At the end of this activity, ask students what they have learned about reading and writing as a result of planning the pieces for this multi-genre portfolio and what concerns remain. Then have them share their observations and concerns in small groups while you circulate to assess what additional instruction they need to progress to the next step in their own writing as individuals and as a class.

After you receive their statements, you can provide students with various forms of supportive feedback, including encouragement for exploring the topic they selected, suggested readings, questions to consider, and advice on their “biggest concern” about the portfolio.
orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.

b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

c. Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome (e.g., a sense of mystery, suspense, growth, or resolution).

e. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task purpose, and audience.

Language

3. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.
Revising and Editing

Revising Rhetorically and Considering Stylistic Choices

In this activity, students will peer-review one another’s pieces. An important part of this process is the discussion surrounding the conventions that define one text as a map and another as a recipe. Equally important is the conversation about the relationship between genre and intended audience.

At this stage, students might realize that some text types are simply inappropriate for the message they are trying to send. For example, a complex idea about your philosophy of life may not be adequately expressed in a text message or tweet (although it’s not impossible). During this review process, some students may realize the need to adjust their message or change one or more genre choices.

For peer reviewing, make explicit for your students how many reviewers you want them to visit. Will they partner up with one person who will review all four or five pieces? Or will they move from reviewer to reviewer, one genre piece at a time? Or will you gather students into groups who have worked with similar types of genres?

Activity 17: Peer-Review of Genre Pieces

At this point in the process, you will be giving feedback to peers on the drafts of their multi-genre texts, and they will do the same for you.

You will receive a modified version of the graphic organizer that you used to plan your multi-genre portfolio pieces; now you will use it to gather feedback from your peers. The form is intended to help you keep track of the comments they make, so you can use the ones you find helpful to guide your revisions.

The following questions will guide the exchange of feedback between you and your peers. They are presented as yes or no questions, but you are always expected to explain your answers. Start by simply discussing the questions; then concisely capture your ideas in the appropriate boxes of the form.

• Is the message clear in each text?
• Has the author chosen an appropriate genre and message for each intended audience?
• Has the author used the features of each genre well? Are there any misused features? Or important ones ignored?
• Will the audience feel that their needs and expectations have been met in terms of style? language? formality? tone? politeness?
• Has the author used longer forms (like email and movie scene scripts, for example) to communicate information with more depth?
• In short forms (such tweets, poems, and Reddit posts) has the author used powerful words, images, or syntax to communicate as much as possible in a small amount of text?
• Are images well created (or well chosen) to help communicate the message?
• Is there anything else you notice that has not come up yet?
• Which of your comments, in your own opinion, is the top priority for revision?

Why is the message/genre appropriate for the intended audience? Does the message need adjustment? Take notes on feedback from peer reviewers below.

**Feedback from Peer Reviewers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre Choice and Audience</th>
<th>Form and Features: Met expectations? Any missing?</th>
<th>Effectiveness: If so, why? If not, how could it be more effective?</th>
<th>Appeal to Intended Audience: Does it? Why or why not?</th>
<th>Appropriate for Intended Audience: If so, why? If not, how should it be adjusted?</th>
<th>Name of Peer Reviewer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quadrant 1</td>
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<td>Quadrant 2</td>
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<td>Quadrant 3</td>
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<td>Quadrant 4</td>
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<td>Optional 5</td>
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Reflecting on Your Writing Process

Once students have revised their multi-genre texts, they should reflect on the process they have gone through by writing an introduction to their multi-genre portfolio. Ideally, this exercise will help students think about their entire experience with this module, from reading the text they brought to class through writing the portfolio. Their insights are meant to encourage a richer understanding of genres and convey the idea that these are simply text types with their own rules, features, and functions. The implications of this are hopeful: all genres are open to you if you are willing to learn their rules.

This module has revolved around a combination of metacognitive and rhetorical tasks, with the multi-genre portfolio introduction culminating this work. Because it is important to set high expectations for students, we encourage you to challenge them, especially regarding the introduction’s final paragraph, to ask themselves the follow-up questions that will deepen this reflection process.

However, if students get stuck, these follow-up questions might be helpful:

- What have you learned about your own literacies in school and out of school? How are they different? How are they similar?
- What did you learn by juxtaposing the experience of reading a familiar text against reading a scholarly text on a related topic?
- What did you learn by trying to send the same message by writing in multiple genres?
- What did you learn about genres in general?
- What did you learn about some genres in particular?

If you think students might benefit from a planning tool for the portfolio’s introduction, there is a graphic organizer you can provide. This would be a good time to pass out the assignment rubric, as well, which will also be used for self- and peer editing. See that rubric in Activity 19.
Activity 18: Writing the Introduction to the Multi-Genre Portfolio

The introduction to your Multi-Genre Portfolio should be 400-500 words long. Once you have completed composing all four to five texts for your portfolio, write an introduction that orients your reader to each of the pieces you have chosen to include. First, explain the message all your pieces have in common. Then devote a paragraph to each of your texts that explains 1) who the imagined audience is; 2) how you accommodated your audience’s needs and expectations; and 3) how the particular genre required you to use text structure, style and vocabulary. Finally, write a conclusion to your introduction that thoughtfully explains your experience reading a variety of genres and putting together this multi-genre portfolio. What did you learn or discover about yourself as a reader or about the demands of reading different genres? How can this new knowledge support your reading and writing in the future?

If you choose, you may use the table below to begin organizing your thoughts.

Graphic Organizer for Structuring the Multi-Genre Portfolio

| 1) Introduction: In your introductory paragraph, explain the message all your pieces have in common. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2) Body paragraphs (one for each piece in your multi-genre portfolio) | Notes on intended audience | Notes on how you accommodated the audience’s needs and expectations | Notes on how you met the requirements of structure, vocabulary, and style for the genre |
| Piece 1 |  |  |  |
| Piece 2 |  |  |  |
| Piece 3 |  |  |  |
| Piece 4 |  |  |  |
| Piece 5 (Optional) |  |  |  |
| 3) Concluding paragraph: What did you learn or discover about yourself as a reader or about the demands of reading different genres? How can this knowledge support your reading and writing in the future? |
Editing the Draft and Responding to Feedback

For the final element of this module, have students review portfolio introductions—their own as well as someone else’s. Students can use the Self and Peer Evaluation Rubric to guide their feedback as well as their own revision processes.

Activity 19: Self- and Peer-Review of the Portfolio Introductions

Your teacher has provided you with a rubric for evaluating this assignment. Now, you will use that rubric to review your own portfolio and to offer specific feedback to peers.

Use the rubric below as your guide for peer review.

1. Did the writer describe an adequate number of pieces in the introduction?

2. Does the author use a title that clearly indicates what the particular message is that all four or five of their portfolio texts share? Write the title here:

3. For the descriptive paragraphs about each of the four or five different genres written, does the author adequately identify the audience for whom the piece was written and how that particular piece accommodated the imagined audience’s needs as readers? Write down the intended audience for each piece included here:

   Piece 1.

   Piece 2.

   Piece 3.

   Piece 4.

   (Optional) Piece 5.

4. For each piece included in the portfolio, does the author clearly explain how text structure, style, and vocabulary were strategically used to enhance the text’s appeal to their readers? Jot down what aspects of style, structure, and language conventions the author explains in the paragraph describing each of the four or five pieces?

   Piece 1.

   Piece 2.
5. Has the author thoughtfully reflected on the demands of reading different genres? Has the author explained how this new knowledge could support future reading and/or writing?

6. Is the draft free of grammar and mechanical errors?

7. Is the draft free of run-ons and fragments?

8. Are words well chosen?

9. Is there anything that this author could improve on? Explain.

10. What has this author done particularly well?

**Evaluating the Introduction**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 Needs more work</th>
<th>2 Adequate</th>
<th>3 Good</th>
<th>4 Outstanding</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Included adequate number of pieces in portfolio (four or five).</td>
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<td>The title appropriately describes the introduction's content.</td>
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<td>Each paragraph discussing a genre specifically identifies the audience and clearly describes the anticipated audience's needs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Each paragraph describing a genre clearly explains how text structure, style, and diction were strategically used to appeal to readers.</td>
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<td>Comment</td>
<td>Score</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author has thoughtfully reflected on the demands of different genres.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author has explained how this new knowledge will inform future reading and writing.</td>
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<td>The introduction is free of grammar and mechanical errors as well as run-ons and fragments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The introduction utilizes an appropriately academic tone to discuss the author’s portfolio.</td>
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<td>Is there anything the author could improve on?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What has the author done particularly well?</td>
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Now is the time for your students to incorporate their analyses and others’ feedback into their final drafts.

**Activity 20: Incorporating Analysis and Feedback into a Final Draft**

Considering your own analysis of your writing and others’ feedback, incorporate the needed changes into your final draft. You may want to review the feedback with a partner to decide the most important changes to make.