

MAJOR PAPER 1 RELOADED: RECONSTRUCTING THE NEWS

Assignment

One of the ways of establishing stakes for an argument is to consider who would be interested in the findings of your research. In your major paper, you made a complex claim about the ways in which a current issue is constructed in the media and wrote a paper for an academic audience. Now I'd like you to present the same argument to a public audience outside the university. Your task for this assignment is to locate an audience that could benefit from the argument you made in your first paper, to determine the best way to reach that audience, and then to rewrite your major paper for this new context.

Ideally, you'll learn more about your claim and argument as you repurpose them for another audience, so you should, even as you write the new paper, consider this a revision exercise for the original one.

Steps

The first part of this assignment involves choosing and analyzing your new audience and publishing venue, and determining the writing strategies that would be effective in this context. Once you've completed the attached sheet, you'll be ready to write and make deliberate choices about the following rhetorical features:

- Tone
- Register and diction
- Length of sentences
- Argument structure
- Presentation of evidence (e.g., is it more important to be rigorous in documentation or attention-getting in presentation?)
- Ways to communicate stakes
- Necessary background information (more or less than what an academic audience requires?)

Format

Your assignment should be an appropriate length for your audience and publishing venue. Please use the usual double-spacing, one-inch margins, and 12-point font. Use **MLA format** for in-text citation and a works cited page (even if the audience you're writing to would not ordinarily require one; this keeps me up to date on the sources you use for evidence).

MAJOR PAPER 1 RELOADED: AUDIENCE AND VENUE ANALYSIS

Brainstorming

Start by brainstorming as many possible audiences and publishing venues as you can think of for the argument you made in your first major paper.

AUDIENCE

Consider the stakes of your argument. Who do you think these stakes would be relevant for? Make a note of why each possible audience would care about the media representations of your issue.

PUBLISHING VENUE

Think about “publishing” as *making public*. What would be the best way to make your findings public?

Analysis

Now that you've brainstormed, select an audience and a publication venue that would be an effective way to reach that audience. Your next task is to analyze your audience and research your publishing venue.

AUDIENCE: _____

What values, beliefs, and assumptions about your topic do you anticipate your audience having? (Note that these might not be homogeneous.) What would be your audience's objectives in reading about media representations of this topic? Why would they care?

PUBLISHING VENUE: _____

At this point you need to narrow your venue beyond a general category and choose a specific venue – if you've identified *magazine* or *website*, decide *which* magazine or which website. Browse several writing samples from this venue. What topics, issues, ideas, questions, etc. do they address? What are the writers' purposes in writing them?

RHETORICAL STRATEGIES OF YOUR PUBLICATION VENUE

These questions may remind of the ones you answered to analyze the editorial genre. They're aimed at helping you identify the communication patterns that will make your writing effective in the context you've selected.

- Does writing in this context tend to be detailed, technical, and complicated, or simple and direct?
- What kinds of speaking voices (tones) do writers adopt for this context: for example, do they sound informative/educational, persuasive, aggressive, edgy, enthusiastic, or diplomatic and carefully balanced?
- What language features suit this context? Consider length of sentences and paragraphs, diction, and register.
- What other rhetorical features strike you as especially relevant for this context?