

Understanding Scenes of Writing

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You are an actor. Each day of your life you play a variety of roles or “parts”—as son/daughter, sibling, friend, student, teammate, employee—and you act out these parts in a variety of scenes, whether at home, in school, in the gym, in the workplace, or in your neighborhoods or communities. As in the scenes of a movie or a play—where actors take their cues from co-actors and directors, the stage and surrounding sets, and the time and place of the action—you take your cues for how to act from the scenes you act within. As students, you constantly negotiate among scenes: from dorm room, apartment, or home to cafeteria, classes, or work; from meetings of clubs or organizations to dinner with friends; from a date on Friday night to a party on the weekend, to the football game on Saturday, and to visits with your extended families on occasion.

Each of these scenes is different; each requires you to play a different role, which involves different strategies for acting and communicating within it. How you dress, how you present yourself, how you interact with others, what you talk about—all these behaviors depend in large part on the scene in which you find yourself. You are constantly coordinating how you act with the scenes in which you act. Within familiar scenes, this coordination becomes so habitual that it seems intuitive and effortless. When you enter new or less familiar scenes, however, you need to make more conscious, less automatic decisions about how to act.

Entering New Scenes

Think about what you do when you enter the scene, say, of a social get-together at your college or university and you do not already know the people attending. What do you do as you walk into the room? How do you decide where to go in the room and what to do there? In all likelihood, one

of the first things you do is look around. As you begin to observe the room, what do you look at? What do you look for? You might pay attention to what people are wearing. Are they dressed formally? Are they dressed to impress? You might also take in the way the room is structured. Are people standing around? Is there space to walk, or is the room set up in such a way that forces people to sit? You almost certainly would focus on how people are interacting with one another. Is the room buzzing with conversation, or are people shyly avoiding one another? You might discover that some are talking in groups while others are engaged in one-to-one conversations.

READING SCENES

You might notice these things and others as you begin to look around the room. But you don't just passively absorb these images; chances are you also begin to analyze or "read" them to help you decide how to act. That is, you begin to think about what these images tell you about this scene, how people are acting within it, and how you might act. For example, what people are wearing and how they are interacting can tell you whether the scene is formal or informal and whether you will fit in comfortably. (Did you wear the "right" thing? Will you be able to tell raucous jokes or have intellectual discussions?) Drawing from your past experiences with how people present themselves on various occasions and how they interact, you begin to form assumptions about what sort of scene you have entered and how best to position yourself and act within it.

Say, as you make your way around the room, that you decide to join a group conversation. Once again, you probably begin by observing or "reading" the group. You might observe the group dynamic: Is everyone engaged in the conversation or is one person dominating the conversation? Are people interrupting one another or are they taking turns talking? Is it women or men who are interrupted most frequently? You surely also pay attention to the topic of conversation: Is it a topic you know something about? Is it something you are interested in? Is it a topic that must be treated seriously, or is there room for joking and banter? How far along is the conversation? Has it just begun, or has the group already covered much of the topic? Should you listen, or can you contribute something to the discussion? And if you can contribute, when would be the best opportunity to do so?

Timing may not be everything, but it does count quite a bit, as the ancient Greeks understood well. They referred to this notion of rhetorical timing and opportunity in communication as *kairos*. If you want to get people's attention—if you want to persuade them of something, or get them

to cooperate with you, or have them identify with you or something you believe in—your timing must be right *given the conditions in which you are operating*. Have you ever known someone whose timing was off, who always made comments a topic behind or leaped ahead to new topics when others were still discussing something introduced and "covered" earlier? In order to get the timing right, you must be able to read the scene effectively.

In addition to paying attention to the group interaction and its topic of conversation, you might also observe *how* the group is handling the topic: What is the style of conversation? Are people having a calm discussion, or is their tone animated? What kind of language are they using to discuss the topic? Is their language elevated or full of jargon and expressions that only they would understand? Are people making declarations, or are they hemming and hawing, qualifying what they say? Are some asking questions? What sorts of things are people using as evidence to support their views in this group: facts, citation of authority, personal experience, gossip, etc.? These are just some of the questions you could, and probably often do, ask unconsciously in order to make effective decisions about how to communicate and behave in an already existing scene.

Writing Activity 1.1

Describe the scenes you experienced yesterday. What different places were you in, who did you interact with, and what roles did you play?

Collaborative Activity 1.1

Make a list of all of the different scenes that you participate in at college. Compare your lists in small groups, and select one scene to analyze or read, as in the example of the social get-together we "attended" earlier in this chapter. Describe the various clues to how participants are expected to behave and interact within the scene your group selected. You might consider the kinds of clues we observed in our social get-together:

- How the place or setting of your scene is structured
- Who is participating and how they present themselves
- What style of communicating is common
- What people are communicating about
- How people are timing their contributions
- Any other elements especially important to the particular scene you are analyzing

MAKING RHETORICAL CHOICES

Observing a scene and reading it by the process described above help you make more effective choices about what to say, how to say it, to whom, and when. Scholars who study the art of communication refer to these choices as rhetorical choices. **Rhetoric** is the use of language to accomplish something, and **rhetorical choices** are the decisions speakers and writers make in order to accomplish something with language. Rhetorical choices include

- What sort of tone and language to use;
- How to engage and address others;
- How to develop, organize, and present one's ideas so that others can relate to them;
- What kinds of examples to use when communicating;
- When and how to start talking and when and how to stop.

The more appropriate your rhetorical choices, the more likely you are to communicate effectively.

The scene in which you participate helps determine which choices are appropriate. Whatever their writing tasks, writers are always making rhetorical choices as they ask themselves questions such as

- “What should I write about?”
- “How should I organize it?”
- “What should I include?”
- “How should I begin?”

In fact, “How should I begin?” is perhaps the most significant—and challenging—question a writer can ask himself or herself. Yet answers to this question and others like it do not need to be as mysterious or elusive as they are sometimes imagined to be. Imagine how differently you would answer such questions if you were in your home writing in your diary rather than in a classroom writing an essay examination. You can develop answers to such questions by examining the context of your writing, what we in this book are calling **scenes of writing**.

Just as you make decisions about how to act based on your knowledge of the social scene you are acting in at any given time, so too writers make decisions about how and what to write based on their knowledge of the rhetorical scenes they are writing in. *The more effectively you understand the scene you are writing in, the more effectively you will com-*

municate. Working from this premise, our goal in this book is to teach you how to make more effective writing choices as you function within and move from one scene of writing to another.

Writing Activity 1.2

Begin keeping a list of all the things you write in a day, including such small texts as notes or e-mails as well as longer texts like letters or reports. For each thing you write, describe the writing scene in which it functions—the location or context (workplace, classroom, academic discipline, dorm room, etc.), your role as a writer, your reader(s) and your relationship to them, and your purpose for writing it (what you were trying to accomplish/respond to).

Defining Scene, Situation, Genre

The four chapters that make up Part I of this book introduce you to the idea of “scenes of writing” and teach you strategies for understanding how to read them and how to write within them. Before we show you how to analyze and then write within different scenes of writing, we begin by defining what we mean by the word *scene* and identify its key components, *situation* and *genre*. These three terms—scene, situation, and genre—figure prominently throughout this book. Indeed, they are the building blocks of all that follows.

Each of these terms receives explanation and examples in what follows, but here are brief definitions of each concept. A *scene* is the overall setting, a place where communication happens among groups of people with some shared objectives. A writing classroom is a scene; so are a restaurant kitchen, a chat room, and an editorial page. A *situation* is the rhetorical interaction happening within a scene. For example, students and teachers discuss readings and respond to each other's writings, cooks and servers discuss food orders, chatters explore topics that interest them, and editorial writers convey their opinions on current issues. A *genre* is a common way of responding rhetorically to a situation, including class discussions and writing prompts, restaurant meal orders, chat room postings, and editorials.

We begin with scene because it is the overarching term. *Scene is a place in which communication happens among groups of people with some shared objectives.* Examples of a scene range from a large tax accounting firm to a small business, from a classroom to a sorority house, from a doctor's office to a peace rally, from a baseball game to a bar to a criminal trial—to name but a few. In this book, we will help you explore the

way communication happens in a variety of scenes, from academic scenes to workplace scenes to public scenes.

Certainly, not all scenes are so obviously physical as a doctor's office or a ball game. The "place" of a scene can extend across well-defined physical spaces. For example, the college or university you are attending is one scene, a clear physical place. But it also participates in a larger **academic scene**, a "place" of academia that reaches across colleges and universities throughout the world. Within the larger academic scene, there are a number of different disciplinary scenes, such as English, history, geography, and chemistry. These scenes consist of groups of people who have their own bodies of knowledge, facts, and theories; their own research methods; their own ways of communicating with one another—all of which reflect their shared objectives: to advance and convey understanding of a subject matter. You may learn to write case studies in your psychology class, lab reports in your biology class, and profiles in your sociology class. Each piece of writing will reflect its scene and should meet special expectations in terms of use of evidence, special terminologies, special styles and formats.

To illustrate, suppose you are taking a class in architectural history. This class will familiarize you with a specific subject matter: styles of architecture throughout the ages, landmark buildings, and ideas of influential designers like I. M. Pei and Frank Lloyd Wright. You will also gain knowledge of the economic and social forces that have shaped architectural structures—as well as the beliefs and values of architects and others who participate in the larger architectural scene, such as their struggles with the social and ethical issues of preservation. In order to feel comfortable in this scene and function effectively in it, you will need to become familiar with the participants' language—their use of terms such as *rectilinear design* or the distinctions between concepts such as *shingle style* versus *stick style*. Finally, you will need to become familiar with the methods of communicating within this scene—perhaps by writing architectural descriptions of buildings, following guidelines set by the National Register of Historic Places. To participate effectively in this academic scene, you must participate in its **rhetorical practices**—practices which reflect the group's shared objectives.

Like the academic scenes with which they overlap (as students move from architecture classes, for example, to architecture firms), **workplace scenes** are also places where communication happens among groups of people with some shared objectives. Your ability to succeed in the workplace depends on your ability to use the language of the scene in *appropriate ways*, to achieve its shared objectives—whether you are asked to write an e-mail to your coworkers to promote the company picnic or a sales letter to clients to promote a new product.

As in academic scenes, with their specialized disciplines, workplace scenes are also made up of smaller scenes: various departments and social organizations whose specialized ways of communicating reflect their own shared objectives. An engineering firm, for example, represents one workplace scene; its departments (human resources and design, for example) represent smaller scenes. (The profession of engineers represents another, larger scene.) With engineers' emphases on form, precision, and technical detail, an employee in an engineering firm will need to know how to produce an organized and detailed technical report—with title sheet, table of contents, list of figures, definition of the problem, design presentation, letter of transmittal, and closure—and will need to be familiar with the information that should be contained within each section of the report. As we saw with the language of architecture, the shared technical knowledge of engineers is expressed through a shared language. A mechanical engineer is likely to be familiar with a *gear box design*, which may involve terms meaningful to other members of this scene (terms such as *input/output RPM*, *torque*, and *HP capacity*) but mostly meaningless to those of us outside this scene.

Outside of and often interacting with academic and workplace scenes, groups exist at various levels in civic or **public scenes** to achieve different kinds of shared objectives. If you have ever observed a criminal trial, for example, you would have seen a scene that involves a place (a courtroom) in which communication happens among groups of people (judge, jury, lawyers, defendant(s), plaintiff(s), witnesses, court reporter, bailiffs, and observers) with some shared objectives (most generally, to reach some kind of verdict and, more ideally, to seek justice through a fair trial). The combination of the courtroom, the participants, and the shared objectives is what *constitutes*, in general, the criminal trial as a scene. In other public scenes, political groups, such as the local branch of the Democratic Party, work to elect their candidates and to achieve their agendas by using pamphlets, news releases, fund-raising letters, and other kinds of texts, to spread, in their own language, information about pertinent political issues. Other community action groups, whether created to stop the closing of a local elementary school or to promote the use of the public library, exist in particular scenes and use language in particular ways to achieve their particular objectives. At times, such public scenes can be quite large. City inhabitants may share a common newspaper, with its editorials and letters to the editor addressing local issues, and people may share some regional objectives. Even larger groups like Amnesty International have branches across the nation but still share common objectives and use their newsletters, Web sites, and other ways of communicating to reach their goals.

usually printed at the beginning of the classified section. Looking at the newspaper's policies regarding ads (cost per line, deadlines, and so forth) will tell you how to get your ad placed. By combining your observations about what ads look like and your reading of the newspaper's rules, you can write an ad that effectively participates in this scene—and achieves your goal of selling your bike. So writing a classified ad involves more than just knowing something about the item you are selling; it involves knowing how to develop strategies for presenting that item within the classifieds scene. Such strategies are learned through understanding the scene itself, whatever that particular scene might be.

Of course, even though your knowledge of the scene helps you frame your classified ad, there is still room for individual interpretation and choice—decisions on exactly how much and what information to include, how to balance the item's defects (if any) and its strengths, and how vividly to describe the item. The scene acts on you as an individual writer, but as a participant in that scene you also act on (and within) it.

Collaborative Activity 1.2

Write a classified ad for an item you wish to sell or can imagine selling. In small groups, share your ads and note similarities and differences in responses. What accounts for the similarities? Speculate also on the reasons for any differences in the ads. To what extent were the content, format, language, and tone influenced by the scene of writing? What part did individual choices and decisions play in the differences among your ads? Explain.

INTERACTING WITHIN SITUATIONS

When you need to write a classified ad, you encounter not just the large scene of classified ads but also the particular *situation* of writing *your* ad. *Situations, as we define them, are the various rhetorical interactions happening within a scene, involving participants, subjects, settings, and purposes.* In other words, each situation represents a specific rhetorical interaction that involves certain participants who are using language to engage with a certain subject in certain ways for certain purposes. A closer look at the scene of a criminal trial (as described on p. 9) for example, reveals that this scene has many situations in it. A few of the situations—the rhetorical interactions—that together make up the scene of the criminal trial include making opening statements, swearing in witnesses, testifying, cross-examining witnesses, making closing statements, instructing the jury, delib-

erating, reading the verdict, and sentencing. In each of these situations, a specific group of people is engaged in a specific rhetorical task, which requires them to relate to and communicate with one another in certain ways—to use language to accomplish something specific within the overall scene.

Not every participant within the scene of a criminal trial is or needs to be involved in all its situations, of course. For example, the lawyers, defendants, court reporter, and observers do not participate in the jury deliberations. Only jury members are engaged in the rhetorical interactions of that situation as participants dealing with a specific subject (the facts presented at trial) in a specific setting (behind closed doors at the end of a trial) for specific purposes (to come to a consensus about whether the prosecution has proven guilt beyond a reasonable doubt). In another situation within the scene of a criminal trial—the situation of cross-examining witnesses—a different rhetorical interaction takes place, involving a different group of participants (most immediately, a lawyer and a witness, while judge, jury, and other lawyers observe). In this situation, a lawyer and a witness are usually engaged in a more “aggressive” interaction, with the lawyer perhaps trying to expose or discredit a witness. The situation of cross-examination, then, engages the participants in a specific rhetorical interaction, involving a specific setting (the witness in a chair, the lawyer standing before the court), a specific subject (testimony), and a specific purpose (to test whether the witness's testimony might prove incorrect or unreliable).

Because situation involves rhetorical interaction, it is often referred to by teachers of writing as the **rhetorical situation**. Within a rhetorical situation, how participants communicate about a certain subject will depend on **who** these participants are, what **setting** they are in, and what their **purposes** are in communicating. For example, a writer's purpose (what he or she wishes to accomplish) will influence his or her approach to the subject, suggesting what information needs to be included and how the subject might be presented. The writer's understanding of audience and the setting will, likewise, shape how the writer approaches the purpose and subject and will also influence the writer's **tone** (the attitude that comes through the writing) and the writer's **persona** (the image presented, the character of the writer that comes through). *These elements—the participants, subject, setting, and purpose—interact within rhetorical situations.*

Consider the scene you are in while taking this writing course and the rhetorical situations it includes. Within the broader academic scene, you are in the scene of a writing class, and within the classroom you participate in many interactions, from chatting with a fellow student to listening to a

lecture to contributing to a class discussion or working on a group task. Even though all these *situations* exist in the same scene of your writing class, they differ in exactly who is participating and in what ways, what subjects they address, and the purposes people have for participating in them. Even the setting varies a bit, with the group work occurring in a small circle of desks rather than the larger classroom of a lecture. Any differences of participants, subjects, settings, or purposes from one situation to another influence how you act within the larger class scene. When listening to a lecture, you probably take some notes for yourself, while in a group activity you might record the group's responses or complete a form for your teacher. You probably use more formal language when contributing to a class discussion than you do when you work with your peers in a group. The persona or image you project when speaking with classmates without the teacher present may differ from that you project when your audience includes your teacher.

Writing Activity 1.3

One situation in this writing class is responding to the Activities in this textbook. You have already seen in this chapter two other Writing Activities and may have responded to one or both. You have also encountered two Collaborative Activities. Select any one of those four Activities and consider its rhetorical situation. Identify the participants, subject, setting, and purpose in this activity. Explore how each of those elements might affect what you would do in responding to it.

Writing Activity 1.4

Looking back on the classified ad you wrote for Collaborative Activity 1.2 (p. 12), use the terms you have just learned to describe its rhetorical situation within the scene of the classifieds section: Who are the participants in this situation? What are they interacting about (subject), where (setting), and why (purpose)?

ANALYZING THE SITUATIONS OF THREE EDITORIALS

The following three editorials, which are on the topic of drilling for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), exemplify three different scenes and rhetorical situations, each with its own interaction of subject, participants, setting, and purposes. The first editorial is written by the vice president of species conservation at Defenders of Wildlife; the second editorial is written by a student and native Alaskan; the third editorial is written by the chairman of the International Association of Drilling Contractors (IADC).

As you read the editorials, consider the different scenes of writing (a national conservation organization, a university, and a corporation), and try to identify the various elements of the rhetorical situations within these scenes:

- *Who* the participants are, especially writer and readers
- *Where* the interaction is taking place (the setting of the interaction, which in this case has to do with where the editorial appears)
- *What* the subject of the interaction is
- *Why* the writer is presenting the subject in this way (what purposes seem to be driving the interaction)

Notice how, even though the editorials address the same topic, they address it differently based on their rhetorical situations. As you identify elements of each rhetorical situation, pay attention to how they affect how the writers of the editorials present themselves, describe ANWR, and characterize the oil companies.

New Technologies But Still the Same Messy Business

Bob Ferris

Bob Ferris is the vice president of species conservation at Defenders of Wildlife. This editorial appeared in TomPaine.com, an online journal of progressive opinion.

Each time an argument for oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is analyzed and rebutted, a new one emerges. President Bush suggested that drilling would help solve California's energy woes, but that makes as much sense as filling up a car's gas tank because its pistons don't work. Others have argued that ANWR could help us become independent of OPEC, but in the unlikely event that there's enough oil in Alaska to make a difference, trade regulations under the World Trade Organization would prevent keeping all the oil for domestic use.

Now the oil industry is touting advances in technology that would let them drill with minimal environmental impact. They are using this new technology to paint a very pretty, almost clinical picture of petroleum extraction. In recent weeks, a number of media outlets, including the *New York Times* and *60 Minutes* have run stories heralding the new technology.

Yet this pristine view is strongly at odds with experience. Oil extraction, much like open heart surgery, is a very messy business.

Of primary importance is not fancy technology, but whether we should trust oil company claims of cleaner, more ethical behavior. Incredibly, they are projecting this newly sanitary image at the same time they are reporting an oil or chemical spill every eighteen hours on Alaska's North Slope. Then there's the case of BP-Amoco—one of the most likely refuge lessees. The firm must be seriously hoping that their \$22 million settlement with EPA for dumping toxic chemicals in Alaska (not to mention the potential congressional investigation of its business practices) will somehow not make it to the public's radar screen before Congress votes on whether to open up the refuge to drilling.

That point aside, while improved technologies can certainly lessen the impact of major surgery or oil drilling, neither is easy on the patient. And the scars—whether on flesh or land—never do disappear. Period.

Conservationists favor technologies that lessen the impact of necessary resource extraction. But all of these technologies have both pros and cons. Using the "targeted drilling" featured in the news reports, drill heads can steer through the rock laterally deep below the earth's surface.

The benefit is indeed a reduced drilling footprint, but the trade-off is a need for dramatically more detailed seismic data, derived by blasting dynamite and by even more intrusive and extensive seismic testing than ever before. This seismic testing is not benign and visitors to the refuge can still see evidence of testing that is nearly two decades old.

The oil industry also boasts of ice roads "harmlessly" made out of water that protect the delicate tundra. They fail to simultaneously mention that the vast volume of unfrozen water they use to make those roads is rare in the arctic. And it is much needed by fish that often get pumped up with the water and become part of these harmless roads.

Drilling and seismic activities comprise just a small percentage of the total extractive insult to land, water and wildlife from oil development. Behind the drillers come the legions of roads, water use, pipelines, garbage dumps, worker housing and a host of associated infrastructure problems that even the most gee-whiz drilling practices cannot eliminate. As the *New York Times* noted in a January 30, 2001 editorial, imposing this industrial sprawl on the pristine coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is an unconscionable price to pay just to roll the dice on six months worth of oil.

The new technology is promising, but it will never mean that drilling can occur without serious environmental consequences. Defenders of Wildlife would rather see the country's technological elbow grease applied to energy conservation, which would have the same result as drilling, but with less cost to people and the environment.

If we truly need the oil we could extract it from the plugged and abandoned wells that dot our country's mid-section and which contain many billions of barrels. In fact, two areas in north and east Texas contain roughly 7 billion barrels of oil—more than twice the mid-range estimates for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. If the president and vice president are so gung-ho to drill why don't they look a little closer to home?

Americans love the promise of having their cake and eating it—the seductive voice that says we can have oil development and an Arctic Wildlife Refuge. We can't, and no amount of oil company advertising will alter the laws of physics and biology to make it so.

My Opinion: The Shortsightedness and Exploitation of Oil Drilling

Elizabeth Morrison

Elizabeth Morrison is a senior majoring in general arts and sciences and a Penn Collegian columnist. This editorial appeared in the Penn Collegian newspaper.

In a national news magazine recently, I saw an advertisement: "Alaskans support oil drilling." It was an ad picturing smiling (presumably) Alaskan people grinning in agreement with the oil industry, who (obviously) paid for the ad. I've seen this ad now in the *New York Times*, *Newsweek* and *Time*. The advertising campaign is an effort to convince the continental United States that because Alaskans support yet more oil exploration, they should also.

I've certainly never polled the 450,000 people who live in Alaska, but I know absolutely that I am not the only Alaskan who is against the opening of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for oil drilling.

For those who don't know, there is an ongoing battle between boom and bust oil developers and environmentalists about whether to open up ANWR for oil exploration and drilling, or to keep the land protected.

Situated on Alaska's North Slope, just west of the Canadian border, the million-acre refuge is home to several thousand indigenous peoples, grizzly bears, musk oxen, wolves, migratory birds and a herd of 180,000 caribou. It is sold to the oil industry—and those who benefit from it—the refuge is nothing but a potentially profitable lode of black gold.

This battle tipped for a brief period in favor of drilling opponents after the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill. But in the three years since the Persian Gulf War, the political mood has changed drastically. Once purely a state issue, it has now be-

brought to national attention, and opinions have swung in favor of drilling. Even the change of presidential administration last November did little to stop the tide of opinion. In fact, shortly before the election, the Democratic Party took its opposition to oil drilling in ANWR out of its platform. Since then, a tide of senators and members of Congress have flown in their private jets to the middle of ANWR, looked at the tundra and proclaimed it not worth saving.

Of course, drilling may have seemed logical after the emotionally frenzied aftermath of the Gulf War. Why should we be dependent on foreign oil, politicians asked, when there is oil waiting to be tapped in our own backyard?

I think there are an awful lot of reasons. First, contrary to what developers and oil companies publicly say, there are innumerable variables and guesswork involved in oil drilling—and absolutely no guarantee that oil will actually be found, much less be actually exploitable. Although developers and those opposed to drilling agree that there is indeed oil under the plain, the size of the oil deposit is a mystery.

The U.S. Interior Department's estimates range from 600 million barrels to as much as 9.2 billion barrels. Even the highest estimate, an almost unimaginable amount to most of us, is only the amount of oil the United States uses in just one year. In addition, the department puts the odds of actually finding a commercially exploitable oil field at just one in five. Assuming (and this is a major assumption) an oil field is found, as long as 10 years may be needed to gear up before major production could begin.

Compounding the logical inconsistencies and practical fallibility, opening up the refuge to oil drilling would be a gross intrusion on one of the last untouched wilderness areas in the United States. Politicians and oil men who advocate drilling argue that it would create thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in tax revenues.

In reality, drilling would only be lucrative to certain people, namely those mentioned above. However, those who would not profit and who would be most adversely affected are, ironically (but not surprisingly), those with the least voice in whether the refuge is opened. This includes the indigenous peoples who have lived in what is now ANWR for thousands of years. To advocate drilling is to blatantly disregard the Native Alaskans who bitterly oppose the rape of the land and intrusion on their way of life.

Last summer, at an open forum on this issue, Sarah James, a tribal leader of the Gwich'in Indians said, "This is a simple issue. We have the right to continue our way of life. We are caribou people."

To open the refuge for drilling is also to virtually ignore the environmental effect oil exploration and exploitation has on the animals who live there, and on the land itself. The most-often-cited example is the caribou. The herd that makes its home in the refuge represents the largest migratory pattern in the

United States, and it would be in danger of disruption and displacement, as would other birds and animals.

Oil is a non-renewable energy source; a fact that advocates of drilling conveniently neglect to address. Opening ANWR for oil drilling would only act as a short-term drug for a chronic ailment. It would succeed in putting off, yet again, the urgent need to find alternative energy sources. It would be folly to count on any oil in the refuge to fuel our gas-guzzling lifestyles for long. The contribution to U.S. petroleum needs would be small compared to other means of reducing demand and finding alternative energy sources.

The billions of dollars squandered in oil exploration, oil drilling and oil production is money not spent on potentially more-beneficial activities. Most importantly, it compromises the inherent value of the land, the animals and the people who live there. The proposal to open the ANWR for oil drilling is an attempt at a short-term solution to a problem that requires careful long-term management.

This is no longer a state issue; as I said above, it has long been a national one. We are all dependent on oil, and we all suffer, sooner or later, from the environmental consequences. In our increasingly global economy, the use of one of our greatest natural resources—land—is all of our responsibility.

Alaska Environmental Bugaboos

Bernie W. Stewart

From Bernie W. Stewart, chairman of the International Association of Drilling Contractors. This editorial appeared in the IADC corporate magazine, Drilling Contractor.

As IADC chairman this year, one of my most rewarding activities has been the opportunity to travel to our Chapters and visit with contractors in a variety of markets, both geographical and operational. Most recently, I was the guest of our IADC Alaska Chapter. In addition to participating in a well-attended Chapter meeting, **Doyon Drilling, Nordic-Calista Services** and **Pool Arc Alaska** graciously hosted me to the North Slope. I was very impressed by how the North Slope drilling contractors and operators conduct their business. Through close cooperation, the industry has developed ingenious adaptive environmental precautions for this very difficult environment.

Speaking of the environment, much is made over the allegedly deleterious effect of drilling on the Alaskan ecology. I'm here to tell you that drilling operations are in no way going to harm the environment in Alaska. Industry environmental precautions in Alaska deserve tremendous applause.

Technology has been used to great advantage in Alaska. Despite the field's vast area, the Alaskan industry has been miserly when it comes to generating footprints of drilling operations. They have done their utmost to minimize the number of well pads through the canny use of horizontal drilling and offset wells.

The caribou are among the most visible source of nervous anxiety. The fact is that these magnificent animals graze unconcernedly around the drilling rigs. The scene is little different than cows munching pasture around a rig in Texas. One experience was particularly striking. In Alaska, the buildings stand 7 ft off the ground to avoid damaging the permafrost. At one site, a mother caribou stood with her calf in the shade of such a building. So much for our industry's threat to the caribous!

This brings me to the great Alaskan environmental bugaboo—the Alaskan National Wildlife Refuge. The US Congress regularly denies drilling access to ANWR. From the hype, one might conclude that allowing drilling on this frozen wilderness is to invite an environmental disaster on a par with Chernobyl. In all this, one gets the notion that ANWR is a pristine Eden of scenic proportions equal to Yellowstone or Yosemite.

From "A" to "Y," ANWR couldn't be more different from Yellowstone. There are no sweeping forests and grand roiling rivers, all teeming with wildlife unknown in modern society. ANWR is a barren and empty place. It is a land of endless tundra where no vegetation stands taller than 6 in. The principal wildlife is the migratory Porcupine Caribou Herd. Having observed the aplomb with which caribou react to drilling activities elsewhere on the North Slope, I have no doubt that this 150,000-animal herd would be similarly unaffected.

Part of the reason is there's plenty of room in ANWR. Out of the refuge's 19 million acres, 17.5 million acres are permanently off limits to exploration. Development would be confined to only a small fraction of ANWR's coastal plain. Estimates are that this field could reach a peak output equal to 10% of total current US production. Developing ANWR would create jobs, enhance national security and lower consumer costs, all at an extremely remote environmental risk in a forbidding area of the US. In a cost-benefit analysis, it's easy to see the logical solution.

Collaborative Activity 1.3

Working with classmates, select one of the three editorials and describe in as much detail as you can the rhetorical situation to which it is responding. Who are the likely participants in this situation? What purposes seem to be driving these participants? What's the setting in which the editorial appears, including the date of its publication? And how does the interaction between the participants, the purposes,

and the setting affect how the subject of the editorial is treated and presented? Describe some of the choices that the writer makes regarding kinds of organization, examples, style, tone, and persona as a result of his or her situation. Then explain how these rhetorical choices were shaped by the situation of writing.

Writing Activity 1.5

Keeping in mind their different rhetorical situations, compare how the three editorials treat the topic of oil drilling in ANWR. (For example, even though the first two editorials take a similar position on the topic, they differ because of where and when they were published, who wrote them, and who would be reading them.) How do the shared objectives, beliefs, and values of the differing scenes (the national conservation organization, the academic scene, and the corporate scene) affect the rhetorical choices? Look back over the editorials and compare how the writers present themselves in each, the ways they treat ANWR as a place, and how they describe the oil companies. Once you have described the differences, speculate on the effects these differences might have on readers of the editorials.

As the three editorials exemplify, each time we communicate, we act within a rhetorical situation. When we write, we perform a rhetorical action—an action shaped by the situation we are responding to. As you discovered in the previous activities, this action involves all sorts of strategic decisions and choices, choices regarding vocabulary, sentence structure, tone, persona, organization, and supporting evidence. These choices are guided not only by the situation—the participants, subject, setting, and purposes—but by the chosen type of writing (in the case above, an editorial). The type of writing chosen guides decisions about such elements as the use of examples, length (fairly brief for an editorial), tone, and persona (the editorials chosen as examples are informal). The next section will focus further on this key component of scene, the type of writing or genre.

ACTING WITH GENRES

We know that each of the various situations that make up a scene represent a specific rhetorical interaction taking place within that scene. As participants find themselves in these situations over and over, they develop habits or rituals of interacting within them. In the case of the criminal trial, for example, participants have developed typical rhetorical ways for dealing with such situations as swearing in witnesses, delivering the opening statements, or presenting evidence to the jury. In each of these repeated situations, participants draw on a pattern of action that is already in place, widely

accepted by participants in the scene to guide them as they act in that situation. They do not need to invent everything anew. Some of these patterns are more flexible than others (the conventions for the swearing-in of witnesses are more strict than the conventions for opening statements, for example), but all involve certain conventions for using language to accomplish efficiently and effectively certain tasks within the situation. This is where genre comes into play. *Genres are the typical rhetorical ways of responding to a situation that repeatedly occurs within a scene.*

You may already be familiar with the term *genre*, which literally means “type,” as in genres of books (mystery, science fiction, autobiography, textbook), genres of music (classical, country, alternative), or genres of movies (action adventures, romantic comedies, “slasher” movies, or thrillers). But genres are more than just categorizations. Genres carry with them certain expectations—expectations that a romantic comedy will end happily or that an action adventure will incorporate high-tech special effects. Where, you might ask, do these expectations come from?

Your expectations of genre are based on your participation in scenes that repeat themselves and your prior experiences with reading, writing, and using genres. For example, how do you know how to respond to the Writing Activities in this textbook? Much of your knowledge comes from having written such classroom activities before, in other classes with other textbooks and teachers. While the details of this particular set of activities and your teacher’s use of them probably vary somewhat from your past experience, you know from your past experience what to expect in them and how to respond appropriately, to meet your teacher’s expectations.

You might be surprised to realize that most of our spoken and written communication operates within generic conventions. Some of our generic responses, our responses to situations that repeat themselves, are automatic. When the phone rings, you know, without even thinking about it, to answer “Hello” or “Smith residence” or maybe even “Bob [your name] speaking.” Any response that varies too much from these typical responses might confuse the caller at the other end. Similarly, when you write a personal letter to a friend, you know to begin by addressing the recipient (“Dear Sue”) and greeting him or her (usually with “How are you?” or “How’s it going?” or even “What’s up?”). How do we automatically know how to act within these situations? We know because these are situations that have been played out many times, and we are familiar with our roles as communicators within these scenes. You are not the first to have answered a phone call or written a personal letter. These generic conventions have arisen in response to a situation that has been repeated. Without these generic responses to situations that repeat themselves, we would have the

almost impossible task of inventing new ways of communicating each time we confronted a rhetorical situation.

In the next two chapters, we will teach you how to analyze genres in greater detail so that you can turn your understanding of genre into your writing in the genre. And then in Parts II and III of the book, you will have the opportunity to apply your genre knowledge to write more effectively in academic, workplace, and public scenes.

Writing Activity 1.6

To illustrate how genres arise based on rhetorical situations that repeat themselves, consider the genre of the postcard. (If you’ve never written or received a postcard, answer the following questions for the genre of the greeting card.) What repeated situation does it arise from? What is its purpose? What are the expectations of the readers of postcards? What relationship with readers is established? What are the particular features or textual regularities that make up the postcard? For the next class meeting, bring in a postcard that you or someone you know has received and compare your findings.

Writing Activity 1.7

Read back over the editorials presented earlier in this chapter. Despite their differences, what do they share in common that defines them as editorials? What makes editorials different, say, from a newspaper article, an advertisement, or even an argument paper you would write in your writing course? What do editorials allow their writers to accomplish that these other genres may not?

Putting Scene, Situation, and Genre Back Together

Let us summarize the key terms we have been describing and then return to the scene you are now becoming more familiar with, that of the writing course, to show how they work together:

- **Scene:** a place where communication happens among groups of people with some shared objectives. Think of the scene as the overarching site that frames the action.
- **Situation:** the rhetorical interaction happening within a scene involving participants, subjects, settings, and purposes. Scenes often have multiple situations within them, each with its own specific

participants (who), subjects to deal with (what), settings in which they interact (where and when), and purposes for doing what they do (why). Together, the participants, their subject, setting, and purposes combine to create a specific rhetorical situation.

- Genre:** the typical rhetorical way of responding to a repeated situation within a scene. As situations within a scene repeat themselves, participants develop rhetorical conventions for interacting and getting things done within them—typical ways of using language to accomplish certain actions in a situation. Genres are these typified rhetorical actions.

The typical writing class, likely similar to the one in which you are currently enrolled, is a scene. It is a place where communication happens among teacher and students who have some shared objectives. These objectives, which are frequently outlined in the course syllabus, vary from institution to institution and teacher to teacher, but, generally, they could include something like “teaching students to write effective academic papers” and “encouraging students to read and write critically.” (We will discuss the objectives of the writing class with more complexity in Part II of the book.)

In this scene, and working to accomplish its shared objectives, are a number of situations, each of which involves teacher and students (who) in specific rhetorical interactions: certain ways of interacting with one another in order to engage in a specific subject (what), in a specific setting (where), for specific purposes (why). Situations in a writing class scene might include peer review workshops involving students, in groups, as they exchange, read, and respond to each other’s writing in order to help their writing improve; student-teacher conferences, a different rhetorical situation, as student and teacher meet in the teacher’s office to discuss a student’s progress on an assignment or in the class in order to help the student make better progress; and class discussion, yet another rhetorical interaction. In each of these situations within the scene of the writing class, students and teachers make different rhetorical choices as they interact with each other on different subjects, in different settings, and for different purposes.

To help them function effectively in these and other distinct situations, teacher and students use various genres, each of which enables them to respond in typical rhetorical ways to these repeated situations. To respond to the situation of evaluating student writing, for instance, teachers use the genres of margin comments and end comments. To respond to the situation of peer-review workshops, students often use the genre of peer-review

sheets as guidelines. To respond to the situation of generating ideas, students use the genres of freewriting, clustering, and brainstorming. To respond to the situation of explaining common concepts, teacher and students use the genre of textbooks. These, as well as other genres such as the syllabus, assignment sheets, class journals, paper outlines, final drafts, and others all help teachers and students function effectively in the various situations of the writing class scene.

Collaborative Activity 1.4

Working in groups, use our key terms—scene, situation, and genre—to describe your own writing course scene. What makes your writing course a scene (a place where communication happens among groups of people with some shared objectives)? Describe a particular situation or rhetorical interaction within your writing course, and define the subject, the setting, the purpose, and the roles of the participants. What genres are used to interact within this repeated situation? Generate a list of your answers, and compare it with the findings of other groups of your classmates.

Learning Strategies for Observing and Describing Scenes

Scenes fill our lives. Any given culture is defined by the combination of its many scenes, some of which are more powerful than others. Not all members of a culture, of course, interact within or even are aware of all its scenes. Some scenes require certain credentials from their participants and are therefore more exclusive (such as certain workplace scenes like law firms or social scenes like sororities and fraternities), while others are more public (such as the scene of a peace rally or protest). As we mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, you already interact within numerous scenes and most likely are able to navigate between some of them with more ease than others. You also are just in the process of getting to know some new scenes, scenes such as your academic major and other college or university scenes. And, of course, there are various scenes you probably hope one day to join, including workplace scenes. Observing these less familiar scenes can help you eventually participate in them more fully and more effectively.

If a culture is defined by its numerous scenes, then your role and place in the culture will in part be defined by your participation in these scenes. This is, in fact, one reason sociologists and anthropologists give for why it is important to observe scenes: Observing scenes can tell us things about how a culture

works, how people interact, and why people do what they do. By studying the scenes in which we participate, we can learn something about ourselves.

Ethnography is the sociological term for studying a scene from an insider's perspective. One gains access to the scene and then conducts fieldwork by immersion into that scene over a period of time, sometimes lasting years. An ethnographer carefully collects data by observing what happens within a scene: the actions and interactions taking place, the daily routines of people within that scene, who does what, when, and why. He or she collects these observations in field notes. The ethnographer also supplements observations by interviewing participants within a scene and collecting artifacts from the scene, such as written documents used by participants within it. In short, ethnography allows a researcher to observe how individuals interact, behave, and think in specific settings.

Observing scenes is a particularly relevant activity for writers since effective writers are mini-ethnographers of sorts. They observe scenes in order to understand how and why individuals communicate within them. Such observation enables writers to access and begin to identify the various situations and genres contained within these scenes so that they can more effectively participate within them.

You probably already use various strategies for observing scenes. We all constantly observe our worlds in the process of making decisions about how we should act within them, whether we are entering a party or deciding whether to speak up in class. In this section, we will build on this ability so that you can apply it to your acts of writing. We will also help you expand on this ability by guiding you from observation to *analysis* of how and why people do what they do within a scene and the underlying reasons and beliefs that shape people's behaviors and interactions. You will be able to use this knowledge to participate more meaningfully and critically as writers within different scenes.

For example, notice how the following sample ethnography by Stephanie Smith of a greyhound racing track helps to bring the scene to life through close observation and description. Smith's ethnography was written for an anthropology course and appears in a book called *Field Ethnography: A Manual for Doing Cultural Anthropology*.

The study by itself is interesting for the access and insight it gives into people who participate in this scene. But as you read it, pay specific attention to the scene itself and try to identify some of the situations and genres found within it. From what Smith writes, what do you think makes the greyhound track a scene? In what ways are the three areas Smith describes smaller scenes that make up a larger scene? What are some of its situations and what are the components of these situations? And what genres do you

notice participants using in this scene? Also, as you read, think about how this knowledge of the scene could help you participate within it. What do you learn from the observation, for example, that might help you figure out how to act in this scene?

Ethnography of a Greyhound Track: A Study on Social Stratification and Diehards

Stephanie Smith

When I thought about taking on the Rocky Mountain Greyhound Park as the subject for my ethnographic study, I had some preconceived notions about what it would be like. I wanted to study the "type" of person who participated in the dog races. I was assuming there was one type of person I could classify and study, no problem. I imagined this seedy place with lots of middle-aged down-and-out loners, placing bets with money they hocked their TV to get. I was convinced I could construct a model of this type and fit all of my informants into the mold.

Then I went out to the track. My first thought was, "Oh S——!" as I looked around at the crowds of senior citizens, young couples, business types, and even families with four children. A two-second look around at the track will clue in any moron to the fact that the crowd is a diverse mishmash of every type of person. I had a lot of work to do.

Along with the physical and age diversity was the difference in intentions. Not everyone goes out there just to bet. Some go for the entertainment with the kids or the food. Some go for the novelty of betting, picking dogs for their names, or look at the minimum \$2 bet. Others are more serious, studying the dogs and placing big bets. The more I studied, the more I began to see an underlying social structure. This structure is determined by the three areas from which the public can watch the races. Although the focus of my study is not the actual greyhound race, that is the reason everyone is there. I think it is important to understand what the races, the park, and wagering, are all about.

The Common Denominator: The Setting

The Rocky Mountain Greyhound Park opened in 1949, a few months after the first track in Pueblo started. Located in the north-central part of Colorado

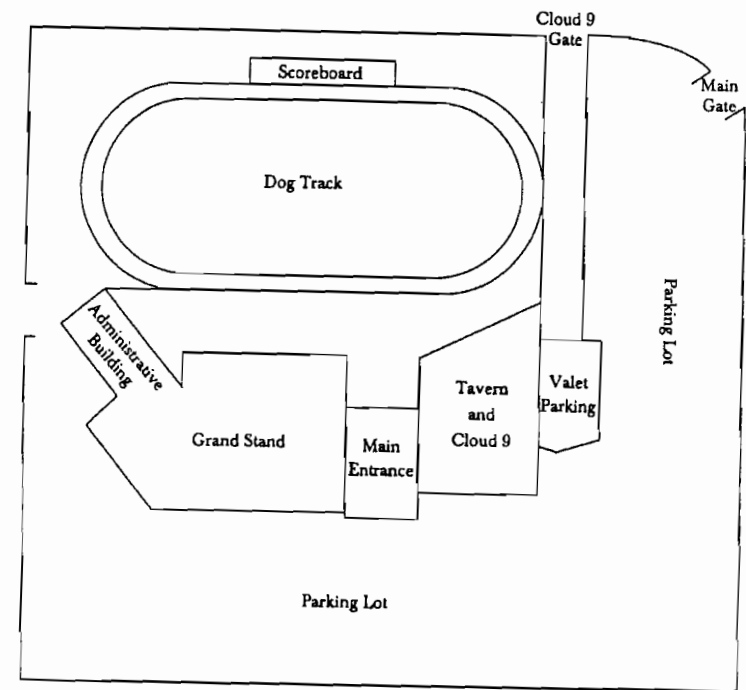
Springs, it sits on approximately 25 acres off Nevada Avenue. The elevation is over 6,000 feet, and to this day RMGP remains the highest greyhound park in the world. It is a part of a nationwide system of 57 tracks. Until this year the racing season at RMGP had been three months in the fall. Due to a recent court decision in which the state of Colorado approved tracks to operate live racing six months a year, the season has been changed to April through September. (Although not publicized, gambling or wagering occurs all throughout the year via closed circuit television. People gather at the park and wager on live races broadcast from other parks.)

The RMGP consists of a racing track, spectator stands (indoor and outdoor), an administrative building, and an immense parking lot (see map). Spectators have three areas to choose from: the Grand Stands, the First Turn Tavern, and the Cloud 9 Restaurant. Admission to each area is \$1, \$2, and \$3, respectively. Race programs sell at \$1.25. The park and all areas are opened to the public one hour before the program begins. The program is a set of races, usually 13, that take place one or two times a day. Matinees take place at 1 P.M. Wednesday and Saturday; evening performances take place at 7:30 P.M. A typical 13-race program will last three and a half hours. Most of my work was done during the evening programs.

Procedure of a Race

Many people arrive as the park opens an hour before the first race. I had even seen a small group waiting for the gates to open one Friday evening. I noticed that the majority of people who arrive at the park early come to figure out their bets, study the night's dog selection, and to view the previous night's replays on the many TVs that cover every nook and cranny of the place.

About fifteen minutes before post time the dogs are paraded before the spectators. There are eight dogs per race, each one wearing a numbered blanket and a muzzle. (The muzzles are worn only to determine the outcome in photo finishes.) They come out single file in numerical order led on a leash by official handlers. Each dog is subject to an inspection; the muzzle and blanket are pulled and tugged. The purpose is to show each dog and its statistics up close on the TV screens. The dogs are paraded up and down the length of the track for all the spectators to see. During this time the people can change or confirm their choices and place a bet. When the scoreboard says "0 min to post," the dogs are placed in the gate according to their numbers. At the announcer's last call the handlers leave the gates and the lights are turned out in the spectator areas. An Aldritt mechanical lure they call "Rocky" then pops out of its gate making its way to the dogs' gate. The announcer does a Johnny Carson type "HERERRRRRRRRR's ROCKYYYYYYYYYYYYYYY!" at the end of which the gate to the dogs is opened, and the dogs are off.



The greyhounds take off from the gate chasing the lure, reaching speed from 25 to 40 mph. The general speed of the race is determined by the class "A" being best, "E" and "M" being the lowest ranked. The first turn is usually the deciding factor in the race. The best dog can easily trip or be knocked out on the first turn. After the dogs come out of this turn, the leading two or three dogs are apparent. Of course this can always change, which is what people are literally betting on. When the dogs have gone three-quarters of the track, light shines on the finish line. The dogs pass the line and a picture is taken. The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd places are obvious then the paybacks are listed on the scoreboard and TVs right away. If there is any doubt, the picture is analyzed and scores held back until the judges reach a conclusion.

Meanwhile the dogs are stopped by a net farther down the track. The dogs are herded into one area and the handlers scramble to get their dogs back on the leash. The dogs once again are led single file in numerical order back to their respective trainers. The next batch of eight dogs take their place in the lineup to be paraded. This exact procedure is followed for every race I saw. I was pulled off smoothly even in inclement weather and as it says at the bottom of the race programs, "strict post time observed."

Grand Stand Area

The Grand Stand area holds the largest number of people, 3800, and at \$1 is the least expensive to gain entrance to. It is a huge indoor structure with three levels that look out a wall of windows onto the track. The first level is primarily food and betting windows. The entire north wall is dedicated to betting windows (and one information booth), 34 total. There are two bars and concession stands on the south side. The food consists of hot dogs, hamburgers, chips, popcorn, nachos, candy bars, and such. The bars offer beer, wine, and mixed drinks. There are many doors leading to the patio on this side. Scattered all over are TVs. Between the two main stairways are rows of chairs facing large TVs.

The second level is tucked under the main Grand Stand area, above the first level. This is similar to the offerings of the first level. It has 20 windows, one food stand, and one bar. A large-screen floor TV dominates the attention around the tables and rows of chairs. The third level is where most of the seating is. It is just like Grand Stand seating, with reams of seats, one flight next to the other, sloped toward the event. Seating right in front of the window is divided into boxes. It costs \$2 to sit in a box seat. Box seats offer a better view of the track, cushioned seats with arm rest/drink holder/ash tray, and separation from the general crowd. The range of people that attend the races, especially in the Grand Stand area, is extremely diverse. The dress is casual—jeans and more jeans, I estimate the percent of whites who attend runs about 60 percent. The other 40 percent consist of mostly black, then Hispanics and Asians. There are couples, families, groups, and “solos.” The couples range widely in age and race. The elderly couples usually settle in the box seats close to the window. Usually the man gets up and down, presumably to bet, while the woman sits in her seat. Young couples sit in the Grand Stand area toward the window and bet together. Then there are the buddy couples. Quite a few male duos hang out there, of either the same age or father/son type, I saw very few female duos.

I was surprised to find so many families. The families tend to favor the box seating. Many couples bring their children out to the track, and extended family groups, with grandparents, cousins, and so on, are not uncommon. Children under 18 are not allowed to place bets but they can be in certain areas. The next classification, the solos, were the most interesting to me. This is the type I expected to dominate the scene at the track. The solos are people who hang out at the track alone. My own stereotype for a solo is a 40+ male who hangs out in the upper section of the Grand Stand away from other people. He bets on every race using a system he invented. Since this characterization is a stereotype, I found exceptions to it but not many.

One of my informants who frequents the Grand Stand area is “Flamingo,” a 35-year-old black man with a granddaughter. He likes to come to the track by himself, claiming “I’m a loner, I cook for a living. I see [enough] people.” He plays the dogs every day the track is open but does not consider himself a “diehard.” Diehards are “the ones you can’t see. They hang out in the Cloud 9 Room. Instead of work, they are here all the time.” Flamingo uses a system of betting that allows him to stay away from the track. He comes up with three numbers and then plays the trifecta (see “wagering”) with the same numbers the whole night. He does not know statistics or other information about the dogs like some diehards do; he just plays the numbers. Usually he bets in the future for a whole program. This means he will pick his numbers and place his bets for say a Friday night program on Thursday. This way he does not have to be at the track during the races. “This is not exciting to me! I don’t have time for this s——! I look in the paper [the next morning] like a kid at Christmas to see if I won.” If he wins he can collect the money the next day.

Flamingo claims to do quite well at the track. He uses the winnings as a supplement to his job income. “I could take a second job, but I take a chance on this.” I saw him win with this method. Apparently on one Friday he won \$130, Saturday night, \$106, and Monday, \$480. All of these paybacks were off \$2 bets. “I’ve made about \$800 in the last three days out of 48 bucks. I expect more but I settle for this.” When Flamingo told me these figures I just kind of nodded my head thinking “yea, RIGHT!” However I saw him win \$130 from only \$2. Something in his method works.

First Turn Tavern

The First Turn Tavern is located on the first level in the building west of the Grand Stand area. The tavern has two entrances, one from the main gate and another on the west side of the building. This entrance is exclusively for the tavern and the Cloud 9 Room. Access to the Tavern cost \$2 and no one under 18 is allowed. The price includes the use of a table for the duration of the program. The decor of the room is in oak, brass, etched glass, and maroon plastic tabletops.

The Tavern has a capacity of 300. There are four tiered levels of tables and chairs all facing the track. Each table has a small TV that operates for an extra \$1.50 and broadcasts network TV as well as the greyhound information. The Tavern offers food and beverages in a bar-type atmosphere. The foods offered are various appetizers, burritos, deli sandwiches, salads, cakes, and ice cream. The bar serves beer, wine, and mixed and blended drinks. The food and drink are pricier in the Tavern than the Grand Stand, and everything is served to the tables by a waitperson. The only reason to get up from your table is to bet (to go to the bathroom). The Tavern has 17 betting windows.

The first thing I noticed when I walked into the Tavern was a sign that said,

AVOID INCONVENIENCES
BY REFRAINING FROM EXTREMES
IN CASUAL DRESS

I suppose "extremes" is the operative word in that request because the dress of Tavern patrons is quite casual. As in the Grand Stand area, the main trend is jeans. For men, shirts tend to be short-sleeve Izod types, and button-up cotton shirts, a step above the T-shirt. The women are just as casual in printed shirts and blouses.

Another major difference about the Tavern people is their age. The 18-and-over policy no doubt raises the average age. Interestingly there are more young-to-middle-aged people than anything else. The proportion of whites in the Tavern rises to about 80 percent, the other 15 percent black and 5 percent Hispanics and Asians. The ratio of elderly persons seems low in comparison to the Grand Stand area, and there are no families. The majority of types in the Tavern are groups of three to five. There are mostly men, but women are definitely an active part of the Tavern scene. The solos who do hang out in the Tavern either do so in the very front, where no one else can see them, or in the back standing at the counter.

The social atmosphere is similar to that of a bar. The low ceiling imposes an air of intimacy not found in the Grand Stand area or the Cloud 9 Room. Everyone has a drink at their table. The waiters and waitresses socialize with the customers and know a good many of them on a first-name basis. The table seating arrangement causes people to look at each other and interact more than if they were sitting shoulder to shoulder in rows of seats. By the same token people do not walk around to other tables and mingle as often as in the Grand Stand area. The wagering seems to be taken quite seriously. Many tables are crowded with various racing papers. Reams of notes are being taken and lots of bets are made.

Mark jokingly refers to himself as a "degenerate gambler." He says, "True pros will sit in the Grand Stand." But Mark is a pro; I consider him a diehard. He hangs out in the Tavern just about every night the track is open. He is a white male in his late thirties (his age is a guess because he would not tell me), has a mustache, wears glasses and dresses in short-sleeve polo shirts and jeans. "Professionally I'm a U.S. Merchant Marine. On my time off I play the dogs [to support myself] until I run out of money."

Whenever I see him he is always very friendly and willing to talk to me, but 95 percent of the time his eyes are on the TV screen. He carries around a spiral book of notecards, which he constantly writes on. I have seen the cards a few times, but I cannot make any sense out of his diagrams and figures. Like most

diehards he has a method for betting but he is not eager to reveal it to me. I am not sure I could even understand it. I can say it is extremely analytical. Unlike Flamingo, Mark is definitely interested in what the dogs look like, their weight, present and past performance, and other statistics. Unfortunately, he would not give me exact figures on his paybacks, and he placed future bets so that I never saw the amount of money he bet with. But I can only assume, given Mark's serious dedication and attention, that his bets average much more than the \$2 minimum.

Cloud 9 Room

The Cloud 9 Room is a restaurant located above the First Turn Tavern. It is structured similarly to the Tavern. The Room has four tiered levels of tables, a full bar and food selection, a capacity of 300, and its own betting windows, 11 total. The decor is dark wood, brass, glass, carpeting, and linen tablecloth and napkins. The ceiling is quite high and every table seems to offer a good view of the track.

The restaurant has its own gate to the park (although it can be easily reached by the main gate) and one entrance to the building. Valet parking is offered at \$1 to patrons. Upon entrance to the building you must stop at a hostess boot to pay the \$3 cover charge and to confirm your reservation; there is no admittance to the Cloud 9 without one. At the bottom of the escalator that whisk you up to the restaurant is a sign that says,

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO CLOUD NINE PATRONS
Proper attire must be worn for admittance
to the Cloud 9
Body Shirts, frayed jeans, tank tops, shorts
and similar styles are not accepted

At the top of the escalator is another hostess booth. A host in a tuxedo takes your reservation slip, checks it against his records, then leads you to your table. Each table has a number, which is given to you in case you want to request the table again. It is just like the procedure at a fine restaurant. The menu has appetizers, steak, seafood, pasta entrees, ice cream, cheesecake, coffee/tea, and vintage wines. There are many servers around to cater to your needs. The waiters are very friendly and attentive. Like the Tavern servers, many of the Cloud 9 servers know their customers by name.

The crowd was about 95 percent Caucasian, 5 percent Asian on the night I went to the Cloud 9 Room. The dress varies from nice casual to dressed up. The standard dress for men is a clean short sleeved polo shirt and slacks. Some wear sport coats, suits, or designer sweat suits. It is similar for the women, who wear

mostly slacks and blouses, some dresses and some designer sweat suits. Couples dominate this scene. I took a census at one point and out of 30 occupied tables, all were mixed couples or groups except one. That table had two men.

Socializing is the key theme in the room. It is not the milling and mingling around type of interaction characteristic of the Grand Stand area. Socialization occurs at the tables. It does not take long to figure out it is a highly social atmosphere within the table unit. There is much laughter and conversation in the air. Most people have smiles on their face directed at the person across from them instead of the track below them. There is not a dominant preoccupation with betting that is characteristic of the Tavern and among the Grand Stand diehards.

"This is the only place to be," said Mary, an elderly woman who is a regular with her husband Jim at the Cloud 9 Room. They frequent the dog track circuit, which runs from Pueblo to Denver (Cloverleaf). Although the drive from Canyon City is a pain, Mary and Jim do it every weekend to have dinner and bet on the races. To Mary the Colorado Springs track is her favorite because apparently the other tracks do not offer good dining rooms to hang out in.

Mary does not do any betting; she leaves it up to her husband. "I don't come here for the gambling. . . . I like to watch the dogs run. I'm a ranch girl." Jim has the concentration of a diehard. With pen in hand and eyes on the TV screen, he is constantly scribbling on his program and putting his hand on his forehead to think. He keeps himself much too involved to ever talk to me. I can sense he does not want to tell me anything. Mary is quite happy to converse, since she is just there for the entertainment. When I finally asked Jim about the amount he spent on each bet he muttered, "Oh not much, certainly not much for this room." Then Mary piped in, "Oh pooh. You spend about \$20 on each bet; I'd say that was a lot of money." After that Jim told me he usually manages to pay for dinner, traveling expenses—he breaks even.

Analysis/Interpretation

There are so many intricacies at the dog track it is difficult to define the whole "culture" of the place. What makes the culture of the track is the people. The diversity of people is immense and what keeps them coming back is the entertainment, the social opportunity, and of course the wagering, that "\$2 dream." At the risk of sounding like a commercial, it truly has something to offer everyone. Because of this the track draws from every social stratum of the city. I found on any given night that the track has a cross section of society in attendance. But the different social classes are not interacting together. The diverse appeal would not be there if everyone were meant to mingle.

A social hierarchy exists, which is staked out quite clearly by the three rooms. The Grand Stand represents the working class, the Tavern is the middle class, and Cloud 9 is the upper class. This structure is supported and perpetuated mainly by the diehards, who maintain myths and preconceived notions about the different sections.

The administration for the dog track has handled this situation quite shrewdly. The Tavern and Cloud 9 Room did not exist until 25 years ago. Before then both the buildings were Grand Stand areas. Stacie Taylor, head of promotions and publicity, acknowledges that there was a need for the type of services that the Tavern and Cloud 9 offer. She says they have served most successfully as facilities for group parties and fund-raiser benefits.

Whatever the intentions of the administration, the different rooms make it possible to separate oneself from others. This is an idea more appealing to the upper class, so it makes sense that the areas reserved to them have restrictions in dress, high prices, and an emphasis on service. It is also no surprise that whites dominate the scene. It is all a reflection of the social hierarchy that exists in the community.

But the nicer areas are not inaccessible to the everyday Joe. It is not like a club where you have to "belong" and be voted on to gain entry. Admittedly, the signs concerning dress code in front on the Tavern and Cloud 9 do have a deterring effect. Any sign indicating some restriction immediately sets off a signal in a person's head that there is some type of assumption about the customers and the atmosphere. I felt some trepidation when I first walked up the ramp toward the hostess booth at the Tavern. Was I dressed OK? Will I stand out too much? But other than fitting in in a superficial sense, I had no worries. If you have the money, entry to the Tavern or Cloud 9 only takes a little planning ahead.

Interestingly, the diehards all have their theories about one another, according to the room. Flamingo told me that the real hard-core diehards were the "ones you can't see" in the Cloud 9 Room. If I were to believe his theory, Cloud 9 would be a place full of solos in suits calmly smoking cigarettes and placing thousand dollar bets. In reality I found the Cloud 9 Room to be a highly social place, with no solos. In fact the crowd would get extremely rowdy during a race, more so than in the Tavern, yelling for their dog to win. My informant Mary, a little old lady going blind in one eye, even started yelling, "Go baby go!" at one point.

The high-rolling diehards that Flamingo imagines *do* exist in the Cloud 9 Room according to Lissa, my waitress one night. I never had the opportunity to speak to them. They either pretended they didn't know what I was talking about, did not want to talk, or really were not diehards. Lissa told me, "I've worked here two years . . . you see a lotta lotta money. I've talked to a couple

people here, asked if they had day jobs and they said no. They just follow a winner around [the circuit] and make their money." When I asked her how much a "lotta" money is she told me about \$2,000 to \$5,000 a bet. Mark thinks that the pros are really in the Grand Stand. I could never quite get to the bottom of his reasoning for this, but he seemed pretty sure about his opinion.

Jane, a cocktail waitress in the Tavern, told me, "There is a different crowd here than at the Grand Stand. They spend money to come in and sit. [People in the Tavern] are willing to spend money in here, there is nicer dress in here. Plus there are no tabs, so I make more in tips. People come in here holding a lot of money."

Crossovers into different areas happen often; the culture does not demand that you stick to one room. But the social stratification between the rooms is so obvious it is hard not to notice it. The mobility among the rooms exist in a downward direction, much more than upward. Nonetheless, the spectrum of intentions from the little old lady who bet \$2 on a dog because of the name, to the diehard 30-year-old with reams of notes placing \$2,000 bets to pay the rent, all exist at each level. The ratio of the types in each room varies, but they are all in there. The main difference is appearance and bank account. This is obvious from the similarity of offerings in each area. The basics are the same for every room: food, drinks, bathrooms, a view of the track, a place to sit, betting windows, TVs, and people.

I also believe the track is a great service to the people of the community. There are many benefits for the large number of senior citizen patrons: free admission for 60+ and nighttime escorts to cars. Families may bring their children so they do not have to find a babysitter or stay home. On a more subtle social level, as one informant said, "It's a good place to learn about people—lots of weirdos." Perhaps "weirdos" is pushing it, but I think she was right in her assessment of the situation at the Rocky Mountain Dog Track. It is a good place to learn about people and provides a perfect model of how social stratification works. And hopefully make a buck or two in the process.

Collaborative Activity 1.5

Working in groups, use our key terms—scene, situation, and genre—to describe the scene of a greyhound track. In what ways is a greyhound track a scene (a place where communication happens among groups of people with some shared objectives)? Are there smaller scenes within this larger scene? If so, what are they? What are some of the situations we find within this scene (rhetorical interactions involving particular participants, subjects, settings, and purposes)? And what genres (the typical ways of interacting within the repeated situations of the scene) are used in this scene? Generate a list of your answers, and compare it with your classmates' findings.

Writing Activity 1.8

Smith describes the overall scene of the greyhound track as well as three smaller scenes within it (the Grand Station, the Tavern, and the Cloud 9 areas). Based on her observations of this general scene and its constituent scenes, situations, and genres, explain to a newcomer in this scene how he or she might act within its different smaller scenes. What from the observations help you determine how someone might act in these scenes?

You can use ethnographic techniques like the ones Smith employs to observe and describe scenes of writing, including their situations and genres. Such techniques can allow you to find out what sort of "place" the scene is, what sort of communication happens within it, who participates in this communication, and what objectives participants share. In addition, such techniques will help you to discover and describe some of the situations that happen within the scene, including who participates in these situations, what subjects they engage in, the specific settings where they interact, and the purposes for their interacting. Finally, by using such techniques, you can also identify what genres participants use to interact typically within the situations of a scene. Through observations and interviews, you can find out what patterns and rituals participants have developed to interact with one another in the situations that make up a scene.

Before you begin your first observation, you should know a few things about how to observe scenes ethically and responsibly. Scholars conducting ethnographic research submit their research plans to review boards, who check that they are following accepted practices for protecting the people and places they observe. Although your observations will not require such review, you should make sure you follow some of the same practices as you observe a scene:

- ❑ If someone is in charge of the site you want to observe, ask his or her permission.
- ❑ If observing a private group or a stable group of people, one whose participants you can identify, let them know what you are doing with your observation, what your purposes are, and how you will use what you observe—that you will share findings with your teacher and classmates.
- ❑ Ask for their consent to your recording their participation.
- ❑ Especially when you are observing a private group, whose interactions would usually not be open to public observation, assure them that you will hold what you observe in strictest confidence except for

those purposes you've told them about. Never reveal what you observe to anyone outside of your original purposes—in this case, those connected to your writing class assignment.

Following such practices will help ensure that you observe a scene without damaging it or its participants.

We will now guide you through some strategies for observing scenes, moving from the scene itself to its situations and genres. Once we have described these strategies, we will list them as guidelines for observing scenes in Box 1.2 (pp. 44–45). By the end of the chapter, you will be able to practice using these strategies to observe, describe, and then reflect on a scene you participate or have participated in. In later chapters, you will be able to use these strategies to gain access to less familiar academic, workplace, and public scenes.

STRATEGIES FOR DESCRIBING THE SCENE

Place

One of the first things you can identify, when observing a scene, is what the scene “looks” like. Since a scene is a place where communication happens, ask yourself these questions:

- What sort of place is this?
- How is it organized?
- What are its parameters?

At this point, rather than observing specific interactions within the scene, you are focused on identifying the larger environment in which these interactions are happening. Once you have described the environment of the scene, you can then start to identify what is generally happening within it.

The Group's Activities

Here you will be observing what is going on within the scene:

- Who is taking part?
- What are they doing?

Keep track of the activities you observe and how groups of people are interacting/communicating while performing these activities. Try to separate what you have observed from what you think about what you have observed. One effective way to record your observations involves using a **double-entry notebook**. This type of notebook divides your observation notes into two parts. After drawing a line down the middle of each page of the notebook (or

using a notebook with two facing pages), you write on one side your direct observations of the scene as they happen. On the other side you note your questions about and your reactions to what you have observed, either while you are observing the scene or during later reflection.

Writing Activity 1.9

To begin practicing observing scenes, record and gather observations during a half-hour of an ordinary scene in your day, such as having dinner with your family or friends; chatting in your dorm lounge, coffee house, or restaurant; studying in the library or the student union; or discussing topics at a meeting. Describe both the setting and the participants and their activities in the setting, recording details of place and perhaps even sketching out the space or mapping it. In addition to describing the participants and their activities and interactions, be sure to add your own reflections on anything interesting or unusual about the interactions.

Shared Objectives

Once you have observed the environment of the scene, its participants, and their activities, you need to try to identify the participants' shared objectives so that you can see how communication, including writing, helps them achieve their objectives. Here, you are trying to get a general sense of what people are doing what they are doing in this scene. Try to figure out what people are participating in the scene. Ask yourself these questions:

- What is it that brings people together in this scene?
- What overarching objectives do they share?
- What are they trying to do or accomplish?

The Need to Interview

Sometimes the shared objectives might be fairly obvious, but often the objectives go deeper than an observer might be able to see. For example, the objectives of a criminal trial might seem obvious—to come to a judgment about a defendant's guilt—but participants might also have deeper or multiple objectives like securing justice, protecting the public, or even pushing the prosecutor to offer or a defendant to accept a plea bargain. All these objectives will affect how people interact within the scene.

Since you might not be able to observe deeper objectives, you might need to supplement your observations with interviews of people participating in the scene. It might not be evident just through observation what people are doing, but by asking them, you would get an insider's knowledge

about what is going on. Since you are looking especially for *shared* objectives, try to ask as many participants as possible so that you can find commonalities among their answers.

To help you conduct interviews, consult the interview guidelines in Box 1.1 below. You might need to refer back to these guidelines in later chapters when you observe academic, workplace, and public scenes.

Box 1.1 *Interview Guidelines*

1. Contact the interviewee, preferably in advance, by phone or e-mail and set up a day, time, and place for the interview. Be sure to explain the purpose for the interview and how much time it will take. Ask permission to tape record the interview if that becomes necessary. (Test your equipment before going to the interview.)
2. Prepare interview questions in advance, but be willing to remain flexible if the interviewee would like to bring up additional issues that might be of interest.
3. When formulating questions, avoid “closed” questions that can be answered with a short response (like “yes” or “no” questions), and instead frame questions that elicit more detailed responses. For example, instead of asking “Is your purpose to convict the defendant?” (a yes/no question), ask “What do you see as your main purposes in conducting a trial?”
4. During the interview, take notes by hand or recorder. For shorter interviews, note-taking should be sufficient, but you might want to develop a shorthand of sorts—notations that can be made quickly as the person is talking but that you can go back to and decipher later.
5. Thank the interviewee for his or her time, and ask if he or she would like to see the final version of the writing project you are working on.

Writing Activity 1.10

To practice interviewing, interview a classmate on the topic of what the person hopes to achieve by attending college. Formulate at least five open-ended questions. Then interview the classmate, and write a paragraph that collects and synthesizes your findings. In another paragraph, answer the following questions: What was the most difficult part of the interview and the write-up? Were some questions

more effective than others? Why? Did any information come up that you didn’t ask about, and how did you handle that? Did you revise any of your questions during the interview or add any questions? Did you encounter any problems with recording and then transcribing the information? In your write-up on the classmate, how did you decide what to include and what to leave out?

Collaborative Activity 1.6

Compare the results of your interview with those of some of your classmates, and try to discover some shared objectives that people have for attending college. Look for both the most general objectives and the ones some sets of people might share. Prepare to share your discoveries with the class.

STRATEGIES FOR OBSERVING AND IDENTIFYING SITUATIONS

Observing and identifying the environment of the scene, its participants, and their interactions and shared objectives allow you to sketch the general outline of the scene. But because a scene is also made up of various situations—each with its own specific participants, interactions, subjects, settings, and purposes—observing some of these particular situations will give you a more in-depth understanding of the scene. This section outlines some strategies for observing the situations within a scene.

Situations, remember, are the specific rhetorical interactions happening within a scene. A typical scene will include multiple situations, some more visible than others. For example, the scene of a baseball game includes such visible situations as fans buying food, fans cheering the team in the stands, and the home plate umpire calling balls and strikes. But there are also less visible situations that involve coaches relaying signs to catchers, reporters interviewing players after the game, and players meeting in the locker room. As an observer, you may not have access to all these situations, but you can at least try to identify as many of them as you can by looking for different interactions that are happening within a scene. To identify situations, ask yourself questions such as the following:

What types of interactions can you see happening?

What different groups of people might be interacting?

Are there less visible settings where interactions might be occurring?

Once you have identified the different situations within a scene, you can begin observing some of them more closely. In your notebook, try to describe the following:

- Who is participating in the situation?
- What are people doing, and how do they seem to be relating to each other?
- Where are their interactions taking place, in what specific setting?
- What is the nature of their interaction? For example, are they engaged in conversation, or are they placing orders, or are they asking questions? What sort of language are they using? What words do you hear? Is the language formal or informal or somewhere in between? What sort of tone do they use?
- What subjects are they interacting about?
- What is it that brings them together? What are their purposes for interacting?

Here again, you can supplement your observations with interviews (see guidelines for interviewing in Box 1.1, p. 40). By asking yourself and the participants some of these questions, you can begin to identify some of the situations within a scene and better understand how to act within it.

STRATEGIES FOR IDENTIFYING GENRES

Earlier in the chapter we discussed how, as situations reoccur, participants develop typical ways of interacting within them. That is, they develop habits of communication that help them interact in these situations in fairly recognized and predictable ways. For example, coaches give umpires lineup cards to announce the starting players. Pitchers and catchers have developed signals for communicating to each other different pitches, pitch outs, and so on. Fans and vendors have developed typical ways of interacting, with vendors calling out “programs, get your programs” and fans signaling their interest and passing money down the aisle. These typical rhetorical ways of interacting in repeated situations are all genres. In a more academic scene, the genres might include essay examinations instead of lineup cards, the syllabus instead of the program, and literature reviews instead of pitching signals. Within the multiple situations of a scene, participants will use a variety of genres, both written and spoken, to help them interact efficiently.

One way to identify genres when observing a scene and its situations is to look for patterns or habits in people’s interactions. Look for similarities in how people talk within a situation. Look for any written documents that typically appear in that situation. For example, in an office scene you might notice spoken genres such as the hallway greeting, the work request, the delivery of completed work, or the phone call with a client; and you might notice written

genres such as message slips, e-mail announcements, employee time sheet business letters, memos, budget reports, order forms, newsletters, and so on. Each genre is used in a different recurring situation. To connect a genre to a situation, try to pay attention to who uses the genres in each situation and for what purposes.

Because it may not be clearly visible what genres are used in a situation especially written genres, another way to identify genres is again by asking participants in that situation—the users of the genres. Since they may not know what the word *genre* means, especially as we use it, ask them what kinds of things they typically write in that situation. Ask them also to describe the kinds of writing and to tell you what they call them. If possible ask if you could have or borrow some examples of the genres. Finally, try to find out why they use these kinds of writing: who uses them, when, where, and why. Be sure to record your findings in your notebook for later reference, when you want to understand better how to act in that situation yourself.

We will discuss genre in much greater detail starting in Chapter 2 and then throughout the book.

Describing a Scene You Participate In

Now we invite you to practice using the strategies we have discussed above to observe and describe a scene in which you participate. Being able to make a familiar scene and its situations and genres will serve you well when you begin to observe and write in less familiar scenes later. As you perform your observations, consult Box 1.2 (pp. 44–45), in which we compile the strategies that we have discussed so far for observing and describing scenes.

Writing Activity 1.11

Using the strategies outlined in Box 1.2, observe and describe a scene in which you already participate. Address the following questions: What makes it a scene? Who are its participants? What are their shared objectives? Then identify some of the situations within that scene. What kinds of rhetorical interactions happen within each of these situations? Who participates in these interactions and in what settings? What subjects do they engage in, and for what reasons do they engage them? Finally, try to identify the genres participants use to respond to these situations. How do these genres help participants act within the situations? Be prepared to share your observations with your teacher and classmates, and be sure to keep record of your findings because you might need to refer back to them in Writing Project 1.1.

Box 1.2 *Guidelines for Observing and Describing Scenes*

1. Select and Gain Access to a Scene.

Once you have selected a scene, determine how you will gain entry into it. Whenever possible, ask for permission from somebody in that scene with the authority to grant it (the manager of a supermarket or office, for example, or an owner of a small business or a teacher of a classroom). Tell him or her what you are doing and why you are doing it. Ask also if you could get permission to interview participants in the scene (refer to Box 1.1 (p. 40) for interview guidelines).

2. Observe the Scene in General.

With a notebook or voice recorder in hand, you are now ready to begin your observations. Begin by describing the scene in general terms. Ask yourself and, whenever possible, ask the participants in the scene the following questions:

- ❑ What sort of *place* is this scene?
- ❑ What *activities* take place within the scene? *Who* participates in these activities?
- ❑ What is it that brings people together in this scene? What are the participants' shared *objectives*?

3. Identify the Situations of the Scene.

To identify the situations within a scene, use the following questions:

- ❑ What *sorts of interactions* do you see happening in this scene?
- ❑ Are different interactions occurring in different *settings*?
- ❑ Do different *people* participate within these different interactions?
- ❑ Are different *subjects* discussed within these different interactions?

4. Observe and Describe the Situations of a Scene.

Once you have identified some of the situations within a scene, you can begin observing some of these situations more closely in order to describe them more fully. In your observation notes, try to describe the participants, setting, subject, and purposes of the interaction for each situation. Keep these questions in mind:

(continued on next page)

- ❑ *Who* is participating in this situation? How do the participants seem to be *relating* to each other?
- ❑ *Where* exactly is their interaction taking place within the scene? *When* does this interaction typically take place?
- ❑ *What* are they interacting about? And what is the *nature* of their interaction? What sort of *language* are they using? What sort of *tone* do they use?
- ❑ *Why* do they need or want to interact? What is the *purpose* of their interaction?

5. Identify the Genres in the Scene.

To identify the genres of a scene, look for patterns or habits in the interaction within a situation. Ask yourself:

- ❑ What *patterns* of speaking do you notice in those situations?
- ❑ What *written documents* typically appear in and are used repeatedly in those situations?

Because you might not be able to observe all of the genres in action, interview participants in the situation about their genres, and, if possible, collect samples. Try to get responses to the following questions:

- ❑ What *kinds* of writing do the participants typically write in that situation?
- ❑ What are these texts *called*?
- ❑ What do these texts *look* like?
- ❑ *Who* uses these texts, *when*, *where*, and *why*?

Writing Projects

Writing Project 1.1

Based on your responses to Writing Activity 1.11, write a self-reflective essay (4–6 pages) in which you examine your experiences with writing in a scene you have participated in. You might describe your transition from outsider to insider in this scene, the struggles and rewards of participating in this scene, and your adaptation to language and writing in this scene. You might also reflect on how this scene has shaped and perhaps continues to shape who you are as a writer, including what you have learned about writing as a result of participating in this scene. Use the following questions to guide your reflections: