

The Reporters of World War II: A Multi-Genre Research Paper

A multi-genre research paper is a collection of pieces written in a variety of genres that is based on research and presents one or more perspectives on a research question. A primary goal of such a paper is to “experiment” with genres to represent key learnings and understandings.

Multi-genre writing promotes active learning on the part of the student for several reasons:

- Students make conscious decisions about the genres they choose;
- Students explain why they chose a particular genre; and
- Students incorporate research findings and information in a creative way.

In the multi-genre research project, you will complete the research as if completing a traditional research paper: collecting information and recording it, synthesizing the information and then presenting it through writing. Instead of the single, extended prose piece of the traditional research paper, however, the multi-genre paper consists of a number of creative pieces—poetry, journal entries, news articles, lists, artwork, graphics, one-act plays, comic books, etc. It is imaginative writing based on fact.

Unlike the research conducted for a traditional paper, research for a multi-genre paper often does not begin with a working thesis. Rather, the multi-genre researcher begins with an interest and discovers a unifying element along the way. This emergent theme often suggests a thread with which the writer may create cohesion among the separate pieces of writing.

Project Specifics

You will complete a multi-genre project with information regarding one of the journalists in the “Murrow’s Boys” group or a journalist who covered the events of the Normandy Invasion. This project will contain the following:

- a title page with the war correspondent’s name, date of birth/death, dates of his/her life, and photograph of the correspondent.
- a table of contents
- a map delineating war zone and general location where the correspondent was assigned
- a collage page of five headlines (with dates and sources identified) from this specific time period

- a two-page factual summary of war correspondent's contributions to the field of journalism, describing the particular risks undertaken in this specific assignment, the dedication and accuracy the correspondent showed, and the outcome of his/her efforts (if the information was accurately relayed; where or in what publication the dispatches were published, edited, withheld or censored).
- three examples of multi-genre writing of the student's choice. This could include creative journaling, poetry, reports from the field, interviews with soldiers, editorial cartoons, etc.
- a brief one-page biography or timeline indicating major events in the war correspondent's journalistic career.
- a one-page self-assessment that addresses the following:
 - What surprised you during the process of writing your Multi-Genre paper?
 - What aspect of this paper would you like advice on?
 - What did you learn about writing in different genres as a way of inquiring into your topic and communicating what you know?
 - Describe the strongest and weakest parts of your paper and explain why you categorize those parts as strongest/weakest.
 - What grade do you feel you deserve on this paper and why?

Wrap-Up

Following completion of the multi-genre project, you will each write an editorial piece, for publication in the school newspaper. This written piece will encourage you to take a stand on a current or historical conflict, commenting on a correspondent's responsibility to report from the field, actions of valor and risks undertaken.