

Multimodal Writing

At some point in your college studies, you will likely be tasked with creating a media-based artifact. This type of project requires creative and versatile writing that utilizes different software tools to present information in different formats. Whether you are making an infographic, slideshow, audio/video presentation, or some other kind of media-based artifact, multimedia projects often require structuring written information in visual and auditory modalities. For that reason, they are often referred to as multimodal projects.

Getting Started

In choosing the type of media-based artifact to create, think first about the information you intend to convey. What kind of information product best communicates your message? Let the nature of your message determine what the most apt media format should be.

Sometimes the assignment will specify the media item and its context. For example, your assignment might task you with creating an infographic as part of an organizational overview of a company, library, or hospital. In this case, the infographic is a useful format for providing a lot of information about an organization's structure, funding, policies, and population in a small amount of space. It requires a special kind of writing that is concise and visual, utilizing tables, charts, bullets, graphics, and images. For this reason, the infographic format is also an impactful way to synthesize research findings. As you explore the scholarly literature on a given topic, pay attention to the themes that emerge and consider how you might represent them graphically.

However, if your assignment encourages you to present your work in whatever creative manner you'd like, you can start by exploring the different tools and resources available to see which one best fits your purpose. Remember to cite your sources appropriately regardless of the format.

Selecting Your Format

When deciding what format to use, consider the advantages and limitations of each one. What can a video accomplish that an infographic can't, and vice versa? Brief, highly focused talk-aloud screencast videos, for example, are an effective way to demonstrate a series of steps or actions. A professional-style slide deck, on the other hand, allows you to present a visual narrative in a sequence of slides. Perhaps you want to record yourself delivering the presentation, put the video on YouTube, and then embed it in a blog post. Be creative. Think about what information you are trying to convey and how the audience will interact with it. Remember: brevity is the soul of wit. With media like podcasts, videos, and presentations, aim for 10 minutes or less because you want to hold your audience's attention. Look at examples of the format you are considering to see what others have done and become inspired. If, however, you are marshalling scholarship to argue a claim, you may decide that a traditional essay is still the best vehicle. Form follows function is a good rule of thumb.

Using Tools and Resources

Many content creation or instructional design tools have a wide variety of functionalities and can be used to create various end products. Below is a list of tools and resources.

Infographics

Present a lot of information in a succinct and visually compelling way

Tools

[Canva](#)

[Piktochart](#)

[Venngage](#)

Resources

[Infographics LibGuide from Drexel University](#)

[Infographics LibGuide from University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign](#)

[Infographics LibGuide from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill](#)

[16 Types of Infographic Layouts](#)

Slideshow Presentations

Illustrate a narrative presentation with a slideshow

Tools

[Canva](#)

[Genially](#)

[Google Slides](#)

[PowerPoint](#)

[Prezi](#)

Resources

[Presentations LibGuide from University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign](#)

[Presentations LibGuide from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill](#)

[Presentations LibGuide from Excelsior Online Writing Lab](#)

Audio Recordings

Tell a story through sound instead of text or visuals

Tools

[Adobe Audition](#)

[Audacity](#)

[GarageBand](#)

[Riverside](#)

[Zoom](#)

Resources

[Podcasting LibGuide from Cornell University](#)

[Podcasting LibGuide from Tufts University](#)

[Podcasting LibGuide from University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign](#)

Videos

Create a video essay, deliver a presentation, record a screencast, and more

Tools

[Animoto](#)

[Camtasia](#)

[Canva](#)

[ClipChamp](#)

[Google Vids](#)

[Inshot](#)

[Masher](#)

[Vyond](#)

[Wondershare Filmora](#)

Resources

[Video Creation LibGuide from University of Michigan](#)

[Video Creation LibGuide from University of Utah](#)

Using Google Workspace and Zoom

Both Google Workspace and Zoom are versatile tools that you can use for a variety of multimodal writing tasks. For example, you can create slideshows in Google Slides, draft scripts in Google Docs, and create videos in Google Vids. You can also store files like documents, images, and videos in Google Drive. Zoom is another tool that is useful for making recordings. The process is straightforward: start a meeting, share your screen, and click record.

Sharing Your Multimodal Media Product

You will need to think about how and where you share your media and where it will ultimately reside. Will you post an infographic on your blog, or will you share your video on YouTube? You can also share a link to your multimodal project file directly from cloud storage platforms like Google Drive, Dropbox, or OneDrive.

Activity: Creating a Plan for Multimodal Writing

Answer the following questions:

1. Prompt / Purpose:

(What is the class assignment or other goal you are responding to?)

2. Format / Media Product:

(What format / media product seems most appropriate for conveying your message?)

3. Rationale:

(How are the peculiarities of your format / media product appropriate for your purpose?)

4. Tools & Resources:

(What tools and resources will you use to create your content?)

5. Preservation:

(What files will this project produce? Where will they ultimately reside?)

Answer Key for Activity (example)

1. Create an instructional tutorial about how to search library databases
2. 5-minute screencast
3. By showing how to search the library databases and narrating the process, the screencast effectively demonstrates the technique.
4. Canvas Studio
5. Slide deck, script, and mp4 video. The files will all be stored in Google Drive and the video will also be posted to YouTube. See [Music Research: Stockhausen](#).

Please feel free to check out an earlier version of this handout, entitled [How to Create A Media-Based Artifact](#), which appeared on the Writing Center's blog on February 25, 2026.