In the beginning, I was slightly nervous about the "Unfamiliar Genre Project." It seemed like a lot of work, and I had chosen what seemed like one of the harder genres to do. But by the end, the project taught me a lot about journalism, and, surprisingly, myself.

In the past, whenever I did a project, I would always just jump in, head first. This strategy worked with varying levels of success. Sometimes I ended up very proud of the work I'd done, but usually I would be upset. For this project however, we used a different way. I learned that you could research things from your topic, and figure out a blueprint of your work before even starting.

I started out slowly, not quite understanding what I was supposed to be doing. I ended up surfing the New York Times website almost everyday, just reading through all of their science articles. At first I didn't see the benefit, but as I read more and more, I found myself planning my own article in my head. I knew what I wanted and what I didn't want. This is a good strategy, and I will definitely use it in the future.

My actual writing process hasn't changed much from my other writing endeavors. What I always do it just sit and write. This has always worked for me in the past, and continued its winning streak for this project.

Usually, after I sit and write my first draft, a huge editing process goes on. I don't do much editing on paper; I mostly read through it on the computer several times, and do my editing there. This time I tried it a bit differently. I just kept printing out copies, and editing the hard copies. This seems to work better for me.

Another thing I did was have people read my work. Most of the time I just have my mom read and edit it, but this time I branched out. I had peer editors and teacher editors as well as parent editors.

I had my Computer Applications student teacher look over it, and she really helped out with correct formatting, and balancing the article properly. I'm very glad that I shared it with her.

The whole time I was doing this process, I had thoughts sprinting through my head. At first I was thinking, "This is so stupid, it's never going to work." But after a few drafts, I began to believe in myself.

In the end, this project was very insightful. I learned a whole new way to read and write. I learned a new editing process that I will use forevermore. And I learned to believe in myself and get things done!
Green and Red: Not Just For Christmas

By Elspeth Hayden
Journalism I

The light filtered slowly through the thick bubble, gradually bringing the city into a state of awareness. As the city woke, the citizens buzzed around busily, like a hive of bees securing their winter's food.

The metaphor was only compounded by the bubble surrounding them, creating the hive-like atmosphere. The translucent half sphere was all that kept the city from destruction.

The humans can't survive without atmosphere. They built their Mars colony inside this fragile dome: leaving all of their lives in the metaphorical hands of a nonliving creature, incapable of harming them. Intentionally.

Terraform: verb. To transform a planet so as to resemble the earth, especially so that it can support human life.

Mars has long been in the eyes and minds of humans, especially scientists. From evidence that has been found, we know that Mars might once have had an environment like Earth's. And a select group is in favor of returning it to that state.

This is the future of humanity. Many believe that it is our birthright, and since we discovered the red planet we get to colonize it.

Others say that we should leave Mars as it is because there is the possibility of life, and the existing life must be protected at all costs.

These two opposing groups are becoming as vehement as Democrats versus Republicans, their equivalents in the scientific world.

The people who support terraforming Mars are called "Greens", perhaps because of the color they wish Mars to be. Their opponents are called "Reds"; probably because of the color they want Mars to stay.

Greens believe that at some point the Earth will be destroyed or become incapable of sustaining life. Either an asteroid will hit, or a huge volcano will explode, or perhaps even humanity itself will completely ruin the atmosphere with pollution.

Greens believe that our only way out is to have the option to live somewhere that's not the Earth. Mars seems a likely place, because of its once similar atmosphere, and the fact that there are no life signs. It's also far enough away to not be affected by anything that harms the Earth.

Greens believe that the most important thing is to save humanity, whether or not there was life on Mars first.

Reds like to believe in life. They think that there is life on Mars, and that they WILL discover it. They believe that no matter how small, the life deserves study and research.

Reds think of Mars as a time capsule. Mars' surface shows the history of the universe, and might be able to help us predict what is to happen in the future.

Reds also believe that by studying how life was created on Mars, they can discover how life was created in this solar system. Perhaps they'll even find life in places other than Mars.

So while most people associate red and green with the holiday season, the colors are gaining publicity in a different place: space.

A cute little article about our pets and their effect on us. It wasn’t that interesting to read, but in heart it was a good article. I enjoyed the idea of the article, but it was a little dry for my taste. If I were to write something like that, I would flesh it out more.


The article explains how and why art came to be. This article is found online, in the science section. This pushes the boundaries of a science article though, with a lighter view. The whole article seems to contain more “fun” than is usual for its genre. This article helped me decide what I wanted my article to be like.


A sort of review on today’s society. This article tells about an accelerated ninth grade science class and its very different view of the subject. An interesting twist on the science genre. Instead of reporting on discoveries made by already proclaimed scientist as per usual, it focused on the next generation.


Another lighthearted article, this time about dreams vs. nightmares. It defines nightmares, and tells about their levels: enough to make you uncomfortable, enough to make you wake up, enough to make you wake up screaming. This article was light on the facts, heavy on the interest. Even though I wasn’t into the topic, I enjoyed reading it just because of its craft.

A short little article about the new endangered species rulings and how they were affected. While this small blurb was jammed with good info, I prefer something longer, with more details.


This article seemed to have been written for information. It told of the Arecibo radio telescope, and the funding that has been cut. The article wasn’t that enjoyable unless you knew the background, which most people don’t. Because I want my article accessible to everyone, I won’t write it like that.


This article is more of a cautionary tale about medicating people. I didn’t like this article very much, because I’m not into medicine or the like. While it was well written, I didn’t find the content to be appropriate for all readers. I decided that I want my article to be accessible for all.


An article reviewing the intelligence of elephants. I loved this article, from its content to its craft. The article was very good at getting the facts across without seeming to boring. I want to write an article with this type of intensity.


Simply an elaboration on a blurb, this article was very boring. It was filled with facts that not everyone could understand. I think that all articles should be more fun to read, instead of a chore.


A dry article about the science of predicting what will sell. I didn’t enjoy reading it very much. I want all people to be able to enjoy my writing, not just those with Ph. D.s. The article could have been more interesting if there was more detail and less facts.
November 27, 2007
Diary,
As I looked through an assortment of articles today, I realized something important. I looked at two websites mostly; Science.com and nymtimes.com. From scanning through articles on both sites, I came to realize that I would rather write like the authors of New York Times. The Science authors tend to write “hard-core” science, for scientists to read and understand. It was too complex for me to understand. The articles in New York Times were science for anyone. I loved the way they made science accessible to all. I especially like Natalie Angier’s writing. I have read her book, Woman, and I now am really enjoying her science articles.
Elspeth Hayden

November 28, 2007
Diary,
I’m still reading other articles. This is taking a lot longer than I thought it would. I thought that I would already have a draft by now, but this is proving more difficult that believed.
Elspeth Hayden

November 29, 2007
Diary,
Today we looked at audience and purpose. I decided to pull a Natalie Angier and write for everyone. She manages to write science writing and yet everyone can understand it, not just people with Ph. Ds. And while she writes articles full of science, they are also entertaining. I want to be able to do that. The purpose of science writing is to inform or educate people. So therefore my purpose is to inform and educate, as well as entertain.
Elspeth Hayden

November 30, 2007
Diary,
Today I thought of a great title for my article. If I do it on terraforming Mars, I would put in a funny story at the beginning, like about aliens.
Elspeth Hayden

December 2, 2007
Diary,
So far I know what I want to write (science), what I want to write about (Mars) and how I want to write it (Natalie Angier style). All that’s left is actually writing it. I think that my biggest problem is getting the research done. I’m going to have to look up a lot of information. Luckily, my mom and dad are both scientists, so they can give me a lot of help.
I guess what I need to do is give myself a kick in the pants and get started. Once I begin, I’ll have no problems.
Elspeth Hayden
P.S. I have illustrations. That’s a plus!
December 4, 2007
Diary,
Today I looked at even more samples online, and I found what is going to make or break me. In publications like Science and Science News, the articles are written completely for scientists. There is no way a normal person would understand them. But the New York Times is written at an eighth grade reading level, accessible to all. So I’m going to write in the style of the Times: easy for all to read.
Elsbeth Hayden

December 7, 2007
Diary,
While still reading, I’m also (finally) starting my REAL drafts. It’s good that I finally started. The due date is approaching and I’m getting a little nervous. This project is more complicated than I thought at the beginning. And I trashed the illustrations.

December 12, 2007
Dear Diary,
I spent today with my bibliography. I was able to type up my first draft. I then annotated it, and ended the day with a complete annotated bibliography.

December 13, 2007
Diary,
Today was a slower day. I decided to do some more background research, and spent the day looking for more examples and getting help.

December 18, 2007
Diary,
I spent today doing a lot of work. I finished my annotated bibliography for good, and got my reading off the Internet. I also did another draft, and tried formatting it. Then I got a little iffy; I couldn’t decide if I wanted it in Internet format or newspaper format. I will decide that tomorrow.

December 19, 2007
Diary,
Today I read over my research journal. I wanted to make sure that it was complete. I then put my final reflection together. I had three or four separate parts that needed connection.

December 20, 2007
Diary,
All of my parts are mostly finished, with a few tweaks needed here and there. Now all I have to do is spend the rest of the night figuring out the order the pieces will go in. I need to have it organized so that it makes sense, and portrays the good side of my writing to the reader. I also want to give the genre a good front.
How to write a Science Article

by: Elspeth Hayden
Content Example

- what it's about
  - Huron
  - Community Service
  - all students
  - Proposal
  - Opinions from:
    * students
    * teachers
    * principal

Craft Example

- How it was written
  - font, format
  - structure (columns, etc.)
  - style - writer's voice
  - fact/quote pattern
  - balance
  - attribution
  - 1 quote/para
  - transitions, lead

ETC.
Content in Science

discoveries/new theories
interviews w/scientists
historical science
children's science

All types of research:
* biology
* chemistry
* Air? Space
* etc.

Craft in Science

format
columns
doesn't have to have as many quotes

\[ + \text{ balance} \]

transition \& balance
Purpose

Message, point
reason
- Entertain
- Inform
- Educate

Purpose in Science

to Educate/inform

Can be entertaining

Show new discoveries

In my draft, my purpose is to inform the public of something they didn't know (scientifically) and hope to also be able to entertain them.
Organization

Put together
Focus
Logical sequencing
INTERNAL

subject, topic, subtopic

content

Organization in Science

Focus -> art
Intro/ hook
interesting facts
book titles for more info

subject -> art
topic -> dance
subtopic -> mothers/ children

In mine, I will have a story at the start introducing the whole story in my fun way. Then I will write about the parts most important.
Presentation

SKIN

- Shows
- Looks like
- Columns
- Font
- Spacing
- Headline
- Pictures

Presentation in Science

Online → single column (more like essay)
- Bigger, easy to read font
- Block → OS between p
- Long headline → funny
- One picture @ end

In misc:
- I will write
- In an online
- Article: single column
- Single space between paragraphs
- Block format
Voice

Style
Sounds
- How they express themselves
- Subject matter (content)

Do you know the writer w/o byline?

Voice in Science

Can be written for scientists only
Can be written for everyone
Contains lots of science (facts)

In my article:
I'm going to attempt
To write in an accessible way. I want my article to be written like everyone can read them.
Word choice

words they choose put together
vocabulary
put together
audience affects words

Word choice in Science

Angier: writes using descriptive words
amusing words, alliteration
an anagram pie
writes for everyone so it's
easy to understand

In my article:

my going to try for a higher form
try for a higher form
vocabulary: while I do want everyone to be able to read it, I also
want to keep some dignity
Sentence Fluency

Flow (not choppy)
sounds "put together"

Structure of sentences
simple: subject + action
compound/complex

Aids personality/voice
combining sentence types

In my article, I want it to sound
put together and flowing.
I will do this by using
both simple and complex
sentences. I also hope to
be able to create a
voice for myself.

Sentence Fluency in Science

Sentences are fluent
complete
article flows
complex & simple sentences used
different columnists have voices
Proofreading

Run-on/Comma Splice

My name is Sarah, and I am attracted.

I am a teacher named Sarah.

Brendan, a student in journalism, knows a lot about sentences.

I don't care whether you can name the problem so long as you can fix it. I do care if you are completely checked out or frustrated, or giving up on proofreading.

Because it is icy outside, school officials in Ypsilanti and Milan declared a snow day. Ann Arbor didn't, we're still in session.

Proofreading in Science

all non-essential info taken out
left with basics
basics explained in detail
w/o extras
correct proofreading/spelling/grammar

UNLESS
it's a pun

In my article, I will have correct proofreading. I will use the base line of the info.
Leads

Beginning
HOOK -> draws reader in
attention grabber

Ex:
* Quote - really controversial
* Storytelling
  - Jump into a scene
* Swsrt
* Play on words (cute)

in my article, I've already lead.
I've started with an imaginary
out the story, in a scene, in dialogue, in

Leads in Science

the lead is about dancing

the article is about "art" and
how it started.
The author writes about dance
as if the start of art
starts with dancing the "hura"
1. Content Example
2. Craft Example
3. Content in Science Writing
4. Craft in Science Writing
5. Audience
6. Audience in Science Writing
7. Purpose
8. Purpose in Science Writing
9. Organization
10. Organization in Science Writing
11. Presentation
12. Presentation in Science Writing
13. Voice
14. Voice in Science Writing
15. Word Choice
16. Word Choice in Science Writing
17. Sentence Fluency
18. Sentence Fluency in Science Writing
19. Proofreading
20. Proofreading in Science Writing
21. Leads
22. Leads in Science Writing