

“Genre is a social practice through which writers interact with readers. As a social practice, genre links the expectations of individual readers and writers to those of larger social groups. By expectations, I mean a group’s typical words (or, in Bakhtin’s terms, social languages) and their typical perceptions, beliefs, values, and core concepts. To master a genre, a novice has to interact with readers in some way, gaining a sense of how these expectations shape the situation and of how readers attribute motives to written forms. Therefore, writers in university situations must learn what constitutes a typical, as opposed to an imitative, expression. Typicality has not been a popular subject for writing teachers because it smacks of formalism and, perhaps, threatens our deeply held disciplinary sense that each text is original or belongs to the writer. But, genre asks us to consider how a reader’s expectations constrain the rhetorical situation and powerfully shape any writing task” (Soliday 2-3).