

Unit 2: Conference Paper

In this unit, you will write a paper on a topic of your choice within the social sciences; you will then apply to the *PIT (People, Ideas, Things)* Conference for undergraduate research. At an **academic conference**, scholars gather to share their original research and benefit from each other's feedback. Most conferences organize their presentations around a central theme. Presenters are grouped into **panels** of three or four, and each panel has a sub-theme. For example, if you attend a conference entitled "Exploring the Frontiers of the Human Brain," and you are presenting on a new psychological theory, then you may end up on a panel with two other scholars also presenting on this theory. During a panel, each presenter has about 10-12 minutes (an equivalent of 6-8 double-spaced pages) to present his or her paper. When all panelists have presented, the audience is allowed about twenty minutes for Q&A—questions may be directed to any of the panelists.

Goals: Conference papers are intended both to educate and delight in a short time: since these papers are delivered orally, their sentences should be simple and direct while still offering a logical argument supported by evidence. If you present at the PIT conference, you'll have the chance to hear what other interested scholars think about your research—their suggestions may help you take your project further. You'll also gain a valuable resume or CV line. Either way, you'll get to present in class and get your peers' feedback.

Model conference paper: <http://english.web.unc.edu/files/2013/07/Reality-Check-CP.docx>

Genre	Purpose	Audience	Role	Rhetorical Situation
Conference paper	"Test drive" your current research project by presenting it to other scholars and gathering their feedback.	Like-minded, interested scholars in a social science field, gathered at UNC's PIT Conference.	Scholar in your field.	You've been researching a topic in the social sciences and wish to present the findings you've found so far at the PIT Conference. By writing a conference paper and building a presentation to accompany it, you will use multimedia tools to persuade and inform audiences in your chosen profession. You will also learn how to network and participate as a member in your field, gaining valuable feedback from advanced scholars.

Where to start?: We'll spend time in and out of class brainstorming topics. Once you choose one, you'll have to find and read several sources, and so you'll need to figure out which databases in your field are most useful or reliable. Here are some ways to do this:

1. **Contact a professor** or graduate student in your discipline to speak with them about your project.
2. Make an appointment to **speak with a reference librarian** in your field. Fill out this form to make an appointment: <http://www.lib.unc.edu/faculty/consult.html>
3. Read **past PIT Journal articles** on the PIT website (<http://pitjournal.unc.edu>) to see what previous ENGL 105 students have done in your shoes.
4. Pay close attention to the methods and types of sources used in the material you find: **consulting the bibliographies of articles you find especially helpful** is a great way to follow the scholarly conversation back through time, and to pick up new sources along the way.

Feeder #1: Design Plan

This feeder asks you to identify and describe audience, context, purpose, method, and arrangement of the PIT Conference paper (Unit Project 2) you're working toward. A design plan goes further than an outline; it not only considers the order of your ideas, but also the way you'll treat those ideas. Your rhetorical strategy will change

throughout your paper depending on what your audience knows and wants, where in your argument a particular scholar's idea fits, etc.

Please answer each of the following six questions with a paragraph of **at least 75 words**. Fill in your responses on [this handout](#) (also available on our course website under "Course Materials," Unit 2, labeled "Feeder 2.1: Design Plan") and submit it as your document to be graded. The questions are copied below for quick reference:

Part 1: Thinking about Audience

Take a minute to think about the audience(s) you imagine seeing and hearing your research project at the *PIT Conference*:

- Who is the **literal audience** for the project you are composing, the people who may actually show up?
- Who is your **intended (imagined, ideal)** audience? Out of all the students and professors on our campus who could potentially read your article, who are you trying to speak to? What do you have to keep in mind when writing your conference paper when we assume that the two audiences might not fully overlap? Write an **audience declaration**, being careful to distinguish between your imagined and real audience, and draw conclusions for the composition of your paper (style, tone, vocabulary, complexity and depth or thought, etc.).

Part 2: Thinking about Context

Take a few minutes to think about the academic conversation you're attempting to join:

- The **immediate context** for your project is your intended place of publication. This might be our course website, the PIT Submission Stream, the *PIT Conference* in April, the *PIT Journal*, the annual OUR Undergraduate Research Symposium, YouTube, a senior thesis, etc. Explain **your current ambitions and research successes** and describe how they shape the way you're approaching this project. You can refer to your proposal from Unit 1 here.
- The **broader context** is the conversation you are joining. How does your project fit in with other recent and past scholars' research projects? In what field(s) do you situate your project? How are you *intervening* in ongoing scholarly conversations and how will you push that conversation forward? Write a description of the broader context for your writing.

Part 3: Thinking about Purpose

Use these questions to craft a **statement of purpose**:

- What are you trying to accomplish with this text (not in terms of getting a good grade, but in terms of educating and delighting your audience)?
- What do you want your literal audience to know/believe/feel/do/change/understand/ question etc. after hearing your talk? If your audience had to **do** something with the information you give them, what would that action(s) be?

Part 4: Thinking about Media

A big part of this unit's project is to explore the ways you can communicate **without relying on the traditional written essay format**. Consider these questions:

- What objects, files, and formats will you use to convey your message with your project?
- Write a brief description of the **media** you will use and how you will use them (not necessarily how they will be arranged, but more so the role they will play in communicating your message). You can already provide links to images, graphs, tables, movies, etc. and your group will discuss the appropriateness of these items with you. If the only media you'll use is your Prezi, that's fine: figure out how it can most effectively complement your text.

Part 5: Thinking about Arrangement

Think back to some of the most helpful, interesting scholarly sources you've read. Remember the specific arrangement strategies of the writers in your field(s) and how they made sure that each part of their articles fit together. Think back to the overall organization of the articles and the rhetorical moves the writers made in each section of the article to advance their theses (think subheadings). Use your evaluation of these moves to guide you in thinking about how to organize your own paper (potentially an article-to-be). Questions to guide you:

- How are these pieces structured?
- Will you arrange the structure of your piece in a similar way? If so, how exactly?

- What will the most important similarities be, and why?
- If there will be differences, what will they be?
- Do you think this structure can successfully guide your reader from your project's beginning to its conclusion? Or, do you think your argument would be clearer if you tried a different structure?

Once you have an idea in mind about how you will structure your project, map out the **key sections** of your text and add a blurb (one sentence minimum) to each section explaining how you will organize it in more detail.

DUE: Friday, February 12 (draft); Wednesday, February 17 (final version)

Feeder #2: Prezi

For your second feeder, you will develop an effective visual presentation to accompany your Unit Project, the conference paper. Create a Prezi presentation that reflects the current progress of your project and keep in mind that you will either present it to the class in the last few weeks of the semester or that you will show it during the *PIT Conference*, should you get chosen. The Prezi is NOT a separate presentation from your conference paper. Rather, it is a visual aid meant to emphasize your points and hold the audience's interest as you present your paper.

Prezi is a free online tool available here: <https://prezi.com/>. We will discuss its usage in class. [The Media Resources Center \(MRC\)](#) in the basement of the Undergraduate Library can also provide instruction.

This is how I will grade the Prezi:

- 50% In-class Presentation: Evaluation of body language (confidence, eye contact, supporting gestures) and articulation (volume, clarity, tone, pace, transitions, stays on time)
- 50% Prezi Design: Quality of Prezi proves that student has developed proficiency in presentation design and understands functionality of Prezi software. Creatively uses Prezi's main features: various media types, rotation, zoom, arrangement. Readability and intuitiveness for general audience are important.

DUE: Friday, February 19 (draft #1); Wednesday, February 24 (draft #2, last version for now—you'll update the presentation as you advance in your research and writing).

I will grade your feeder after you have presented in front of an actual audience: either in front of your peers in class or the audience of the *PIT Conference* on April 1. **That means that will present your conference paper sometime between April 1 and April 22, and that you must finalize your Prezi before your scheduled presentation.**

Unit Project: Conference Paper

This project will be a 6-8 double-spaced page paper (able to be read aloud in about 10-12 minutes; the time limit is more important than the actual length) and accompanying visual presentation appropriate for an audience drawn from across the UNC campus. This paper should lay the ground for a potentially larger argument. This is a relatively brief presentation, so you'll want to give the strongest evidence you've found so far to support your claims. You'll also want to clearly tell your audience what direction your research could be headed, and why this direction is important. Include at least **6 scholarly secondary sources** in your paper and Works Cited.

DUE: Friday, February 26 (draft #1); Wednesday, March 2 (draft #2); Monday, March 7 (draft #3); Friday, March 11 (final version)

*****Remember to attend the PIT Conference on April 1!*****