

Identifying Genres Through Rejection

Activity:

At the end of class on the day genre is introduced, students first complete a free-write on what they know about rejection letters. The free-write prompt may look something like:

What do you know about rejection letters? What is their function? Have you ever received one? What is typically said in rejection letters? What kind of language/phrasing is used? How do we know what a rejection letter looks like?

After a brief discussion on some tenants of a rejection letter, show the class several examples of rejection letters you have received (assuming you have any!). Read them aloud, and then ask the students what they notice. What parallels can be drawn between each letter? Are they personalized in any way? How is the information delivered? What would you not expect to see in a rejection letter?

Preparation:

Bring at least 3 rejection letters. Mine were from graduate schools, but they could be from anything you applied to (e.g. jobs, publication houses/magazines, internships, etc).

Outcomes:

- Students gain a better understanding of what genre is and how to identify the particular features of a genre.
- May help your students see you in a different light. If you can get rejected and still be successful, so can they!