Good writing doesn’t just happen. At this point in your life you have likely encountered the idea that writing is a process, and involves various stages to get to a final product. When it comes to writing an academic essay, the writing process is undoubtedly different for different writers in different situations. Oftentimes writing instructors encourage you to follow a set of specific guidelines such as prewriting, mapping, composing an annotated bibliography, or crafting an outline. All of these activities can be quite useful in different situations for different writers, and maybe you have honed a process that works best for your own personal writing style.

Similarly, good multimodal projects don’t just happen—they involve planning, drafting, and revising. The first challenge with a multimodal project is to figure out what you’re going to say and how you’re going to say it. In Chapter 5, we asked you to write a proposal for your topic and get feedback from your instructor and/or classmates. So by now you likely have an idea of what you’re going to say, and the how you might proceed in saying it. But what does that process actually look like when you start to compose multimodally? There are many useful drafting strategies for designers of multimodal projects ranging from mockups to storyboards to prototypes, some of which may be more suited to your project than others. Remember, you won’t just magically arrive at a good multimodal project, you’re going to need a road map to get there. We’re going to describe two different strategies that can be quite useful depending on your project: mockups and storyboards.

- **A mockup** is a rough layout of a screen or page. It is most commonly used for drafting websites, but can also be used for drafting any type of static composition that is primarily visual such as a poster, album cover, brochure, or instruction set.

- **A storyboard** is a sequence of drawings, much like a comic book or visual outline, that represents the movement, spatial arrangement, and soundtracks of objects/characters in shots, screens, or scenes. Storyboards work best for projects that include a timeline, such as videos, audio pieces, or animations.

**Mockups**

Mockups are commonly used in web design, but can also be used for any text that is primarily visual. Essentially, a mockup is a rough draft of a visual project. In the case of a website, for instance, a mockup is a visual representation of what that site will look like. While it includes the visual elements, it does not include the functioning links or other interactive elements. Web authors often compose mockups either by hand on paper, or in some type of screen-based software such as Photoshop. You can also create mockups using word processors, spreadsheets, or slideshow software. It’s not so much how you create the mockup that’s important as it is what the mockup illustrates.

An important thing to remember is that mockups can help you translate the ideas for a layout that you have in your head into a reality. Once you can actually look at your initial plans on paper or screen, you can begin to see how readers will be able to interact with your design. This will also let you know where you might need to make adjustments before
you put lots of time and effort into building your project. As designers, we often find that our first ideas about how to arrange elements need tweaking and sometimes don’t work at all. By first sketching out really rough layouts, revising, and making changes, we ultimately save ourselves time and create more successful designs.

A good mockup (that has likely been revised a couple of times) should include the proposed layout, colors, images, fonts, and recurring elements like headers. They often do not include the actual textual content, though they may. Again, the idea is to create a kind of roadmap that shows where everything will eventually go, not to actually create the finished product.

Case Study: Cover for Pank Magazine

A friend of ours—a graduate student in fine arts digital media—was recently asked to design a cover for Pank Magazine, a literary magazine that describes itself as “fostering access to emerging and experimental poetry and prose, publishing the brightest and most promising writers for the most adventurous reader.” The editor of the journal provided the designer with two possible photographs, both taken by artist Elena Duff, along with some information about the journal itself. The designer carefully considered this information and then designed these four mockups:
These mockups were designed in Adobe Illustrator—a program the designer is quite proficient in—though the typeface on Mockups 3 and 4 is actually a picture of Sriracha hot sauce drawn out on a background similar to the one in the photo. The designer wanted to provide a bright and messy font for the photo in 3 and 4, thus he decided to go incredibly multimodal and designed his own logo in hot sauce. This choice, along with his other design choices, were based on the rhetorical situation for Pank.

The purpose of this text is to serve as an eye-catching cover for an edgy literary magazine, so that when it sits on a bookfair table or a store bookshelf (context) it will stand out amongst other literary journals (genre). The cover image also gets used as a digital advertisement for the issue itself, which is another context the designer had to consider. Take, for example, that Pank changes their Facebook icon to the issue cover during the run of that issue, and they promote the issue through posting the cover image in their Facebook followers' feeds. As such, the cover needs to be simple so that it can stand out in a variety of sizes and mediums, yet it also needs to meet the needs of the intended audience: those who enjoy literary magazines and think of themselves on the cutting edge of literary arts.

The author/designer created this mockup to share with the journal’s stakeholders—in this case, the editorial board. Stakeholders are one segment of a text’s audience, and are usually the ones funding a project or deciding whether a project (such as the use of this particular cover) should be acted on. Before the author spent time making the actual cover, he needed to make sure the stakeholders were comfortable with the design choices. They needed to be shown mockups of how the cover would look, so they could provide actual audience feedback. By producing these mockups, the author was able to share the design and learn what he should keep and what he should change before proceeding.

After sharing the mockups with the editorial board (the stakeholders), the editor sent this email to the designer:

Word back from all the editors is overwhelmingly positive, but with a
strong presence for the second of the two girl/hair designs. Wondering if I can see 2 or 3 variations on the theme (#1 being the existing design), leaving the image(s) as is, but playing with the typography a bit? We'll choose a final design from this next round.

While the Sriracha design didn't make the cut, the designer now was able to focus on Mockup #2, and offered the editor a range of different typefaces for the design. The stakeholders eventually decided on this cover (Figure 6.5):

![Figure 6.5: Final Pank Cover](image)

emphasize, contrast, organization, alignment, and proximity

In order to achieve the rhetorical goals for this project, the designer applied many of the design choices discussed in Chapter 2. To help **emphasize** the name of the magazine, he **aligned** the image on the right and framed the logo [Pank] in the doll's hair. [Pank] is also emphasized through the **contrast** between the heavy black font and the beige background. He also aligned the issue number in the curl of the bracket itself (draw an imaginary line from the top of the «n» in number up to the logo and you'll see how it's positioned). This helped to create **proximity** between the journal and issue number, thus creating a unified look so as to help the audience know what they are looking at. The designer also worked to keep the cover edgy through the use of this photograph. This particular image creates an ethereal eye-catching effect, and the fact that it appears she's reaching for the title of the magazine makes it even more appealing (and truthfully, a little creepy!).

As this example illustrates, creating a mockup usually involves creating several options and playing around with design combinations to get a sense of what might work best for your text’s rhetorical situation. Your first design choice is usually not the best or only way to get your multimodal point across. For example, while the author really enjoyed playing with Sriracha, mockups 3 and 4 weren’t the most effective for the stakeholder’s purpose.
Figure 6.6: ZZU Tube mockup showing how the basic features (genre conventions) of a YouTube channel.

TO DO:
Figure 6.6 (above) is a sample web design for Washington State University’s proposed ZZU Tube channel, a YouTube channel that includes videos promoting WSU or WSU sports (WSU is sometimes referred to as Wazzu, or just “zzu”). Based on this website’s rhetorical situation as a video repository for people interested in WSU:

What design choices are effective in this mockup? (Use the design terms from Chapter 2 to help.)
What design choices should be changed? Why?

Figure 6.7 (below) is a bit more simplistic since the designer wasn’t familiar with more complicated graphics software.
Is her mockup in PowerPoint still useful? Why or why not?
What feedback would you give the designer, indicating what you like and what you might suggest changing?
Mockups are useful for any type of static or print text such as websites, posters, brochures or newsletters. Essentially, a mockup is a way of placing your visual, spatial, and basic linguistic design choices on a page or screen so that other people can provide you with feedback. Mockups help you see firsthand how the ideas you have in your head translate to print or screen.

**Storyboards**

Unlike a mockup, which represents a static text, a storyboard represents a text that moves through time, such as a video or an animation. Storyboards can be incredibly complex. The animators at Pixar compose intricate storyboards for their full-length features, which show each character or object’s movement as it impacts the narrative. Underneath each hand-drawn still in the example below (Fig. 6.8) is a short description of the action or sound effect for that part of the scene. Although these detailed storyboards are ideal in some situations (particularly ones that require dozens or hundreds of animators to come together on a single, multi-million dollar Hollywood project), they are usually not practical or necessary for shorter multimodal compositions. Effective storyboards can be surprisingly simple, consisting of stick figures and a few arrows to show directionality. As with mockups, the important thing is not how artistic they are but that they indicate what
elements (images, audio) and action (movement, lighting, camera angle, etc.) need to occur at what point.

No matter its level of complexity, an effective storyboard's goal is to capture as much information as possible and decide what shots you'll need to film, what audio you'll need to record, or what images you'll need to capture before the filming, recording, or animating begins. Similar to a mockup, an author’s goal in making a storyboard is to get the basic design in a form that you can get feedback on, and to adjust your design if the one you had in mind isn't working for your audience. By getting feedback before you start capturing content, you'll save yourself lots of time later on by avoiding having to film or record a significant number of different/new segments and by avoiding capturing unnecessary content to begin with. Nothing is more dismaying for new multimodal authors than having a lot of fun shooting tons of footage or recording great interviews only to realize that all that content now needs to be watched or listened to (in real time) and edited, and that most of it didn't need to be recorded in the first place. Storyboards help prevent this time-suck.

For instance, let's look at the storyboard that a student named Tasha created in preparation for composing a video-based analysis about effective action films. Storyboarding helps her figure out how to film her video so that the analysis makes sense to her audience. Figure 6.9 is only a small segment of Tasha's entire storyboard—she had 64 panels for a 3-minute video—but you can get a sense of what a storyboard looks like. You can also see that you don't need to be an amazing artist to compose an effective storyboard; you just need to include enough detail—such as the setting, angle of shot, movement by characters or objects, script/dialogue notes, and soundtrack notes—to help.
your audience or instructor figure out what you intend to do so they can give you feedback on it.

Figure 6.9: Tasha’s storyboard (6 panels of 64) showing her introduction of the topic (Panel 1), where her narrative-based analysis begins (Panels 2-3; in her bedroom), and the main characters in the analysis (Panels 4-6; her and her “muse”).
Storyboards give you a way to share plans with your instructor or audience as well as provide you with a multimodal outline for your project. For Tasha, storyboarding made her process that much easier since she knew where and how to film each scene. We've given you some suggestions to consider when composing your storyboard (setting, movement, dialogue, soundtrack), but the possibilities are only limited to the genre of text you're designing.

**TO DO:**
How do the storyboards in Figures 6.10 and 6.12 use spatial, visual, and gestural drawings? How successful was the author at following the storyboards in her video, as represented by screenshots in Figures 6.11 and 6.13?
ASSIGNMENT: Revising Your Assets List

After you create a final storyboard or mockup, your Assets List from Chapter 4 probably needs revising. We recommend a two-columned approach in which you list needed assets on one side and where you’ll get them on the other.

Here’s an example of what Tasha’s assets list might look like. Using this, she made sure her room was clean, asked her actor-friends for help in advance, and made sure the camera’s battery was charged well before setting out to film anything. In the “Solutions” column, she’s hypothesizing how she might gather some of these assets. Once the list is completed, it’s a good opportunity to use your feedback loop to fill in any questions or missing information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Needs</th>
<th>Solutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bedroom setting</td>
<td>Use my (Tasha’s) bedroom when roommate is in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrator (actress)</td>
<td>Me/Tasha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muse (actress)</td>
<td>Sarah, my friend in the theater department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Release form for actress</td>
<td>Get a sample copy from instructor; print out before filming with Sarah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional research on genre features of action movies, including</td>
<td>o I own The Dark Knight, Inception, Star Wars, The Matrix. o I want to get copies (Netflix?) of The Lord of the Rings trilogy and Terminator 2. o I will create an annotated bibliography of five print and multimodal sources (per my teacher’s assignment requirements)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>video camera</td>
<td>Check this out from the school library (hours?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>video-editing program for PC</td>
<td>I can’t use the Mac lab at school because I work during open hours, so I’ll use my laptop, which has MovieMaker on it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A program to “rip” (for educational use!) the DVDs so I can quote from the movies</td>
<td>Ask instructor or on-campus technology support for suggestions?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assignment: Getting Feedback on Your Design Concept

(1) Create a mockup/storyboard.
Are you creating a static, visually-based project that would need a mockup? Or are you creating a temporally-based project such as a video, audio project or animation that would be better served by a storyboard? Decide which method will work best for your text and begin drafting! Keep in mind the following elements that each method might need to be
successfully understood by people who will give you feedback. Mockups and storyboards are genres that can benefit from analysis just like the texts they will later represent, so one kind of storyboard might differ significantly from another depending on their rhetorical situations. Other design elements may present themselves depending on what genre of text you're designing. Refer back to your genre conventions checklist from Chapter 3 to make sure you've included all major design features (or have purposefully not included them).

**Mockups:**

Is the proposed layout evident? Is it consistent across all possible iterations (pages?) of the text? If it needs to change to indicate different sections or areas of a text, do you have all of those variations indicated in separate/supplementary mockups?

Have you clearly indicated the color scheme?

Are images used and, if so, is their relative placement on the page/screen mockup purposeful and consistent across all versions?

Have you shown which example fonts you would like to incorporate? Do the fonts adequately reflect the rhetorical needs of the text (e.g., display type for headlines and body type for larger amounts of written content).

Are the navigational elements shown or indicated? Are they consistent across all iterations? If not, show the variations.

**Storyboards:**

Is the initial setting made evident? How is each setting change represented visually, spatially, or linguistically (via intertitles or the like)?

Is each character differentiated in some way (if necessary)?

Are important character or object movements indicated? (e.g., if it’s important that a character is seen rolling their eyes, have you used arrows around the eyeballs, or something else, to show that? Or, if a car leaves the scene from the right-side of the screen, how have you shown that?)

Have you included snippets of major dialogue underneath the visuals? (If you already have the script written out, use that. Otherwise, you can use the storyboard dialogue notes to help you write the script.)

Have you noted (under the dialogue, usually) when you need sound effects or musical scores, what they will be, and how long or loud they will be?

**(2) Use the Feedback Loop.**

After you’ve completed your mockups or storyboard, make arrangements to present them to your instructor or other stakeholders for feedback. Your presentation may be formal (presenting to a client) or informal (conferencing with a teacher or workshopping with classmates), depending on your writing situation. Once you know which style you’ll need, research the genre requirements for your situation and prepare your presentation accordingly. This may be similar to your pitch in Chapter 4.

Be able to say why you’ve made the design choices you have – such as why you chose the color scheme and navigation system for your website mockup to match its intended
audience's interests or why the nontraditional sequence of your storyboard's scenes is crucial to your text's purpose. Your readers will perform a similar kind of rhetorical analysis (although, unless it's your instructor, they probably aren't calling it that) so they can forecast whether your design draft will successfully match what they want, need, and expect from the finished project. If it doesn't, they'll tell you, and you should make changes to the draft and re-represent it until the draft is on track according to its rhetorical situation. It's MUCH easier to change a storyboard than to change a finished multimodal project, so take advantage of your feedback loop.

Comment: You don't want to start composing the project itself if you're not sure it will suit the rhetorical situation. That's when revision becomes even more complicated than it is when dealing with primarily linguistic texts. Cutting and pasting a few paragraphs is easy compared to re-filming and re-editing whole scenes.