Overview

Collaboration is a frequent approach to writing. More than just something your professors ask you to do, collaborative writing allows people to focus on personal strengths and benefit from a range of abilities. Working collaboratively with other writers can definitely be a challenge, but it can also be a way to learn and do more.

For this next assignment, you and several of your classmates will work together as a team to write a collaborative PSA. This piece will be a Public Service Announcement/ Ad (PSA). PSAs aim to address a large public audience and attempt to raise awareness or change attitudes and behaviors about a social issue. PSAs are typically brief and aim for memorability and immediate impact.

Your options for a PSA are quite extensive. You could work with text (e.g. a script for an audio PSA); you could take the next step and record that script. You could create a print PSA, incorporating text and image. You could create a video-based PSA, incorporating text, sound, and image. Use this collaborative project as an opportunity to create something that you wouldn’t have time or skill to create otherwise. PSAs can be serious or funny, shocking or heartwarming. The goal is to have an impact in a short amount of time. Since PSAs are so ubiquitous, they are often the subject of parody. Creating a Parody PSA is also an option for this project.

Identify an Opportunity

As a group, identify a social issue that you feel needs more awareness or action. Then, craft a PSA that addresses the problem in a concise and compelling way. Looking back to previous work can help you with brainstorming and with background research, but you can come up with a new topic as well; your group just needs to agree on the issue to address.

Identify a Purpose and Locate an Audience

Your topic should be based on research. Your audience is up to you and will depend on the issue you select and the change you want to see. As a group, be sure to have a shared sense of audience and purpose to guide your writing.

Identify a Fitting Response

Public Service Announcements/ Ads come in a variety of forms: As a group, you can choose to create anything from a written script for a radio PSA to a fully multimodal video commercial.
Reflecting
As a group, you will submit one Public Service Announcement. In addition, I want each group member to submit an individually written reflection about the collaborative process. This reflection should be about 1 page. In this reflection, tell me about your experience working as a group. What went well? What was challenging? What would you do differently next time?

PSA Resources: Information and Examples

Below are a variety examples for you to explore to get some ideas for your group’s PSA.

The Wikipedia page on PSAs may give you a good (brief) intro and access to some interesting examples: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_service_announcement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_service_announcement)

Text/Audio PSA
For this option, write a script for an audio PSA. You could also record the PSA.

- A collection of audio PSAs: [http://www.radiospace.com/psahome.htm](http://www.radiospace.com/psahome.htm)
- Centers for Disease Control H1N1 Awareness: [http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/psa/](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/psa/)
- International Rescue Committee: [http://soundcloud.com/voeastfrica/irc-audio-psa](http://soundcloud.com/voeastfrica/irc-audio-psa)

Print PSA
For this option, combine text and image to create a clear impact. Think magazine/ newspaper ad, poster, etc.

- Public Service Posters from the Works Progress Administration: [http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/wpaposters/highlights.html](http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/wpaposters/highlights.html)
- Adaptations of the WPA posters with a Futurama Spin: [http://www.ineedcaffeine.com/content/this-is-why-i-love-futurama/](http://www.ineedcaffeine.com/content/this-is-why-i-love-futurama/)
- PETA's print ads (note: Some of these include graphic content): [http://www.peta.org/mediacenter/ads/print-ads.aspx](http://www.peta.org/mediacenter/ads/print-ads.aspx)

Video PSA
- One of the most famous PSAs—“This is Your Brain on Drugs”: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ub_a2t0ZfTs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ub_a2t0ZfTs)
- Anti-drug PSA w/ Ninja Turtles: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s2kKjpNWHks](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s2kKjpNWHks)
- A small collection of PSA videos: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s2kKjpNWHks](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s2kKjpNWHks)
Explore a little more.

Many organizations create audio, print, and video PSAs to convey their message. Explore these examples to see how the same message can be delivered in multiple formats:

- Safe Boating Campaign  
  http://www.safeboatingcampaign.com/ipsas.htm
- World Wildlife Fund  
  http://www.worldwildlife.org/who/media/PSAs/psas.html
- EPA radon awareness  
  http://www.epa.gov/radon/media_campaigns.html
- St. Jude’s Children’s Hospital  
  www.stjude.org/psa
- Save the Manatee  
  http://www.savethemanatee.org/video_audio_psas.htm
- CDC Hurricanes  
  http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/psa.asp
- Nature Conservancy  
  http://www.nature.org/photosmultimedia/psas/index.htm
- Department of Homeland Security  

Course Outcomes: The PSA will address the following course goals.

- Write in multiple genres.
- Appropriately adapt strategies of argumentation for a given writing situation.
- Appropriately adapt style and design for a given writing situation.
- Approach reading and research critically and rhetorically, choosing appropriate research strategies for a particular writing task.
- Conceive, draft, and revise many kinds of documents, and manage these processes independently.
- Understand and respond critically to a civic conversation and become a legitimate participant in that conversation.
- Cite sources appropriately for the writing situation, including using an academic system of citation with a high degree of proficiency.
- Work collaboratively on writing tasks with other writers.
- Edit writing so that it contains a minimum of surface error.