

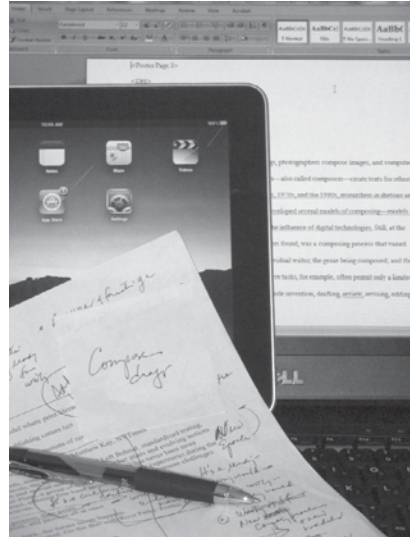
# Composition

## Definition

To compose is to create. Artists compose paintings, photographers compose images, and computer programmers compose software. Likewise, writers—also called composers—create texts for others to read, review, and respond to. During the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, researchers in rhetoric and composition, working with adults and students, developed several models of composing—models that are currently undergoing review given the influence of digital technologies. Still, at the heart of all these composing models, the researchers found, was a composing process that varied according to at least three factors: the individual writer, the genre being composed, and the rhetorical situation. Shorter tasks and time-sensitive tasks, for example, often permit only a limited composing process, while longer writing tasks include a recursive mix of invention, drafting, review, revising, editing, and publishing.

## Importance to the Field

Although composition has been a school subject in the United States for over a century, the development of models of composing, based in the practices of writers, has meant that teachers could shift from teaching writing through analysis of other's texts to teaching writing through engaging students in composing itself. Equally important, as composing becomes increasingly digitized, the word *composition*—because of its relationship to



composing in other fields—helps us think about how we can compose with images, sounds, and video as well as with words.

## Resources

- Atkinson, Dwight. "L2 Writing in the Post-Process Era: Introduction." *Journal of Second Language Writing* 12 (2003): 3–15. Print.
- Bartholomae, David. "Inventing the University." *When a Writer Can't Write: Studies in Writer's Block and Other Composing-Process Problems*. Ed. Mike Rose. New York: Guilford P., 1985. Print.
- Faigley, Lester. "Competing Theories of Process: A Critique and a Proposal." *College English* 48.6 (1986): 527–42. Print.
- Flynn, Elizabeth. "Composing as a Woman." *Gender in the Classroom: Power and Pedagogy*. Ed. Susan L. Gabriel and Isaiah Smithson. Urbana: U of Illinois P., 1990. Print.
- Perl, Sondra. "Early Work on Composing: Lessons and Illuminations." *History, Reflection, and Narrative: The Professionalization of Composition, 1963–1983*. Ed. Mary Rosner, Beth Boehm, and Debra Journet. Greenwich: Ablex, 1998. 83–98. Print.
- Royster, Jacqueline Jones. "When the First Voice You Hear Is Not Your Own." *College Composition and Communication* 47.1 (1996): 29–40. Print.

