
GENRE AND DESIGN

Once a writer has a purpose in mind, the first design decision is to choose a genre. Sarah Huang began by writing an article, which did not require her to think much about design because that was a decision made by the newspaper, not the writer. She needed only to limit her text to three hundred words, and so her primary decisions were about content. Given the space restrictions, she planned carefully what facts she would present. She also thought carefully about her tone. Knowing that some of her neighbors would be upset by her proposal to euthanize deer, she needed to convince her readers that she was concerned about the health of people and deer alike.

When she decided to create a brochure, however, she had to make many decisions about design, starting with size and format. These decisions were guided by her knowledge of her audience (thus the large red title, to catch their attention) and goals. Her computer offered her many design options—the ability to scan in photos, create bulleted lists, and so on—and she kept her readers and purpose in mind as she made her design choices. Had she chosen another genre—a poster or a Web site—her design options would have been different.

