

## Essay 2: Circulation Report & Analysis

In “Made Not Only in Words: Composition in a New Key,” Kathleen Yancey writes, “Texts circulate: they move across contexts, between media, across time. Writers compose in the context of other writers and thinkers and speakers.” In Essay 2, we’ll be focusing on rhetorical velocity—don’t worry if this term isn’t familiar; we’ll cover it in class!—and circulation online. As you write, you’ll be working toward answering the question, “What can tracing rhetorical velocity and circulation help us know about writing, particularly writing in digital environments?”

To complete Essay 2, the Circulation Report, you’ll be choosing some internet artifact that comes from a community you belong to online—e.g. a meme, a fanfiction trope, a *Reddit* post that circulated around *Reddit* and beyond, etc.—and rhetorically analyzing it by focusing on its message, where it traveled on the internet, how it has been referenced by other texts, and why it might have been relevant to audiences beyond its original intended audience.

### As You Write, You Should:

- ✓ Include a thesis that addresses your overall argument about your artifact and its circulation
- ✓ Describe your artifact in a way that will make sense to a general writing studies audience
- ✓ Provide specific examples of different instances of your artifact (if there are different instances, e.g. if it is a meme)
- ✓ Include a link to your artifact or incorporate the actual image or video into your essay
- ✓ Analyze the artifact rhetorically: Who might be the intended audience? What is the intended message? What is the purpose of the artifact?
- ✓ Analyze the circulation of the artifact—has it circulated widely? Why? If it hasn’t, why is it important to recognize that? What may have made it popular when it was popular?
- ✓ Use at least two class readings to support your analysis of your artifact.
- ✓ Include a conclusion that addresses the overall importance of understanding circulation when studying or writing in digital writing environments?

### Questions for Getting Started

- What communities do you belong to online? What artifacts matter in that community?
- What internet-based artifacts matter to you? What artifact will you focus on in this essay?
- What is the message of the artifact? Who created it? Why did they create it? Who was the intended audience? What community was this artifact created for?
- What is most interesting about this artifact?
- How does the artifact deliver its message?
- If it is mostly visual, what is important about the visual aspect of the artifact?
- If it is mostly text, what is important about the textual features of the artifact?
- Why would people have felt compelled to share the artifact when/where they did?
- Where did you originally encounter this artifact?
- If you didn’t find it in its original form, what is its original form and what was its origin?
- Where is the most current place you can find it (outside of its original context)?
- What were some important points in the artifact’s circulation?
- Does Google Trends have anything to report about your artifact? (We’ll look at how to use Google Trends in class.)
- Why is any of this information important to know about your artifact? How does it help you answer the main question of this assignment?
- Is there a KnowYourMeme entry for your artifact? What does it have to report?

## Artifact Examples

When choosing your artifact, it should be something you can write about in a classroom-appropriate manner. Some examples of artifacts that may work for this assignment include:

- A Spongebob meme
- A [cospypasta](#)
- A viral video
- A vine format that was reused multiple times and has multiple examples you could pull from
- A YouTube challenge trend
- A trending hashtag



## Requirements and Reminders

- You should choose *one* specific artifact and focus your argument on that artifact.
- You should provide a clear, concise thesis statement that addresses the overall argument of your essay.
- Your essay should be between 1,500 and 2,000 words.
- You should use at least two class readings to support your argument.
- You do not need to analyze every instance of your artifact's circulation—you will be responsible for identifying the key points in its circulation and reporting on/analyzing those.
- Your essay does not need to be a traditional essay; you can create a website, a magazine, anything you would like as long as it fits the assignment requirements for the focus, length, and citations.
- As usual, you will submit your essay online via Webcourses; if it is a traditional essay, you should submit a PDF, .doc, or .docx; if it is another format, please see me so we can discuss how best to submit it.
- You should include an MLA Works Cited or an APA References page/section for any work that is not your own that you cite in this piece, including any versions of the artifact you choose that you include in your essay.
- Remember to ask yourself “so what?” as you conclude your essay. Why is what you have written important?
- Give your essay a unique title—call it something other than “Circulation Report & Analysis” or “Essay 2.”
- Your work will be evaluated using the rubric provided on Webcourses.

## Important Dates

Informal Writing 5 (Proposal) Due: Friday, September 28, 2018

First Draft Due & Peer Review: Monday, October 22

Individual Conferences: Wednesday, October 24 – Friday, October 26

Final Draft Due: Monday, October 29

### Works Cited

“What is cospypasta?” *Techopedia.com*. 2018, <https://www.techopedia.com/definition/31470/cospypasta>

“I’ll take it but I’m only a little excited about it.” *FunnyStatus.com*. May 14, 2018, <https://funnystatus.com/memes/2/spongebob-meme/>