

Assignment for Chapter 1: Planning Audience Analysis Assignment

This assignment will give students practice analyzing audiences for documents. Although this particular assignment is designed to help students analyze the audience for a report, it can be adapted for other documents as well.

Overview of Assignment for Students

Writing down what you know about your audience will help you focus your writing for the needs of the reader. Technical writing is primarily written for the reader, not the writer. The more you know about your audience, the more you can help that audience understand your work. In this assignment, you will describe and analyze your audience for your final report. In particular, you will determine how your audience will help shape your final report.

Requirements

The audience analysis assignment should be 1-2 typed, double-spaced pages.

For this assignment, you should begin by describing in detail what you know about the audience for your report, including the primary and secondary readers. Describe their relationships to you, positions in the company or organization (tasks and roles), backgrounds, education, obvious (expressed) or perceived needs, possible biases or attitudes toward your topic, motivations, etc. Be sure to explain why you think your intended audience will have an interest in your proposed research.

Once you have described your audience, then analyze your results. Explain how the information about your audience will affect the way you plan, write, design, and present your report. In other words, how does the audience analysis **shape** your report? For example, will you need to include a glossary? Establish credibility with your audience by citing various experts in the field? Use a particular tone, pace, or style?

Use the attached Audience Analysis Worksheet to help you consider various characteristics of your audience.

Audience Analysis Worksheet

1. Who will read this document?
 - Is your audience simple and homogeneous? or multiple and heterogeneous?
 - Do any of your audiences have multiple needs?
 - How will the above affect the contents of your communication?
2. What are your audiences' needs?
 - What problem of your audience are you trying to solve?
 - What are your audiences' job classifications?
 - What are your audiences' roles: transmitters? action takers? advisors? implementers? a combination?
 - How will the above affect the contents of your communication?
3. What are your audiences' attitudes toward you and toward what you have to say?
 - What do your audiences think of you as a person and co-worker?
 - What will your audiences' responses be to what you have to say or write?
 - How motivated are your audiences to attend to you and your communication?
 - How will the above affect the contents of your communication?
4. What does your audience know and not know?
 - Do you need to supply any background information, explanation of terms, or other information to your audience?
 - What do your audiences know already that you can build on?
 - What are your audiences' professional backgrounds, educational backgrounds, and field(s) of expertise?
 - Do your audiences have experience with the ideas and concepts you are presenting?
 - How will all that affect the contents of your communication?
5. Under what conditions are your audiences reading your communication?
 - Is there anything unusual or less than ideal about the time and place that your audience will read your communication?
 - How does that affect the contents and design of your communication?