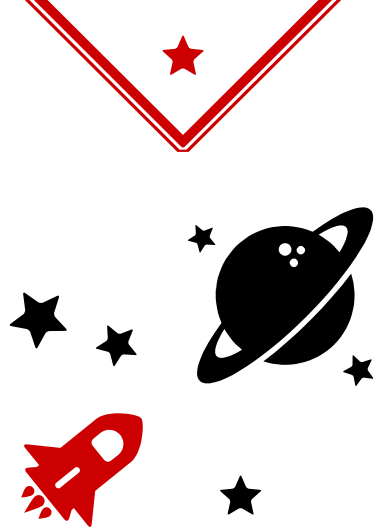# AUDIENCE ANALYSIS

STW EX20003

AUDIENCE

Intended or potential reader/ listener/ viewer

Most important consideration in planning, writing, and reviewing document

Adapt writing to meet needs, interests, level of understanding, and background of audience

AUDIENCE TYPES & IDENTIFICATION

TYPE	DESCRIPTION
EXPERTS	People who know the business, the organization and the product (they designed it) inside and out They often have advanced degrees and operate in academic settings or in research and development areas of the government and technology worlds
TECHNICIANS	People who build, operate, maintain, and repair the items that the experts design They have highly technical knowledge of a more practical nature (hands-on)
EXECUTIVES	People who make business, economic, administrative, legal, governmental, or political decisions about the products They frequently have little technical knowledge about the subject They are usually the primary audience for documents such as proposals and reports (the CEOs, committees, hiring managers)

TYPE	DESCRIPTION
GATEKEEPERS	People who oversee the writer and the document They decide if the document is compliant with rules, regulations, company policies, legal obligations, and purpose for the client
NON-SPECIALISTS or LAYPEOPLE	People with the least technical knowledge of the topic They want to use the new product to accomplish tasks They need to understand the new technology, products, or procedures enough to use them in a particular situation
MIXED AUDIENCE	Combination of audience types and backgrounds Wide variability within audience, and/or unknown audiences

| TYPE	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE	NECESSITY
PRIMARY AUDIENCE	Main reader of the document	Safety protocol document to be displayed in a laboratory Primary audience will be the technicians who use the laboratory	Clear, unambiguous language, as unclear instructions could lead to physical harm and damage
SECONDARY AUDIENCE	They will read or be interested in a document, but are not the main (primary) reader	Experts who enforce laboratory regulations and safety standards Non-specialist, non-technical staff that clean and maintain the lab	Experts ensure that safety standards are met Non-specialists may need to follow the displayed protocols in an emergency

AUDIENCE IDENTIFICATION

◈ Primary Audience: Particular group of people (or a single person) the document is aimed at

◈ Information for the secondary audience should also be included

◈ For example, a set of new procedures for a company's technicians

◈ Primary audiences: technicians

◈ Additional information to be included: legal clauses or business descriptions (not part of procedure)

◈ Necessary for secondary audience i.e. the technicians' bosses (executives) who need to be aware of legal implications etc.

AUDIENCE IDENTIFICATION

◈ If a document is unlikely to be used by the secondary audience(s), it can be written for the primary audience only

◈ For example, a set of instructions for "How to Change a Tire" for a website

◈ Assumption: Most readers will be non-specialists (users) who need assistance with the task (not mechanics, designers, or engineers in the automotive industry)

◈ If the document is likely to be used by multiple audiences, it can be written in simplified language so that all audiences can understand it

◈ For example, a research report over the use of a city's public park facilities

◈ It will be read by community members (non-specialists), city council members (executives), the head of the Parks Department (experts), and those who maintain the parks (technicians)
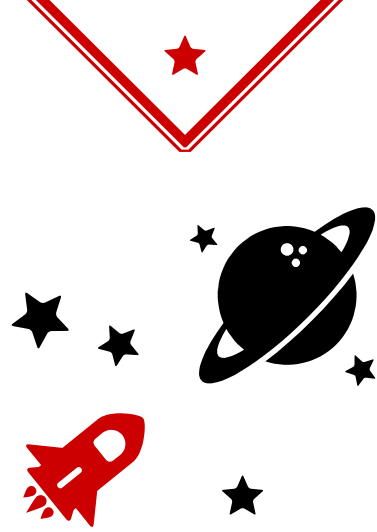
AUDIENCE ANALYSIS
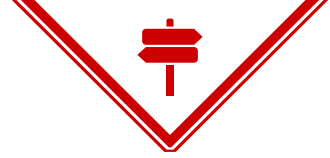
BACKGROUND

- Knowledge, experience, and training of intended audience

- For example, user's guide to a software running under Microsoft Windows

- If basic information is not given, the customers who do not have much knowledge about Windows may be frustrated

- If extra information is provided, work effort increases, and page count and cost might increase, and knowledgeable customers may be annoyed

- Decision depends upon what % of the audience needs background information
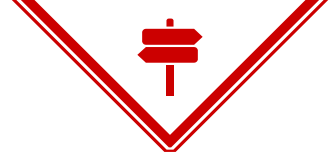
NEEDS & INTERESTS

◈ Writer needs to know what the audience is going to expect from that document

◈ For example, a manual on how to use a new smartphone

◈ Do the users want to quickly find answers to specific user questions?

◈ Do they expect a comprehensive breakdown of each phone function?

◈ Decisions are to be made on what readers want to read about as well as what they do not want to read about

CULTURE & VALUES

◈ Both influence how an audience approaches new ideas

◈ Culture consists of shared beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, values, and assumptions shared by an identified group of people

◈ Values are the deeply held principles that guide thoughts and actions

◈ Culture is the social dynamic that sets the tone

◈ Values are the by-products of the culture that affect decisions

◈ These are learnt, dynamic, systemic, and symbolic

OTHER DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

◈ Age groups, type of residence, area of residence, gender, political preferences, etc.

◈ For example, a proposal to install decorative street lights in an area

◈ Need to consider the neighbourhood's habits

◈ Do most residents drive, walk, or take public transportation?

◈ Age of residents (older residents may appreciate more lights; younger residents may think it is a non-issue), political preference (local politician could be against infrastructure spending), and so on
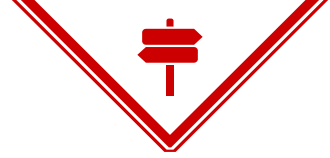
COMPLICATING FACTOR 01: MULTIPLE AUDIENCES

◈ **Primary and Secondary Audience**

◈ **Tertiary Audience:** People who are removed from the situation but may have cause to read the document at some point

◈ Depending on the context, these readers might include lawyers, accountants, journalists, shareholders, or the public

◈ Either all the sections are to be written so that all audiences can understand

◈ Or headings and section introductions are to be systematically introduced to alert audience about where to find information most relevant to their area of interest

COMPLICATING FACTOR 02: MIXED AUDIENCES

- Although an audience fits into only one category, its background may vary widely

- Document written specifically for the readers with very little or no technical knowledge, will become cumbersome and tedious

- Document written for highly specific and technical readers will be full of jargon

- However, the needs of both readers need to be addressed

- Many writers focus on majority of readers and sacrifice minority who needs help

- Other writers put supplemental information in appendices or insert cross-references to basic level documents
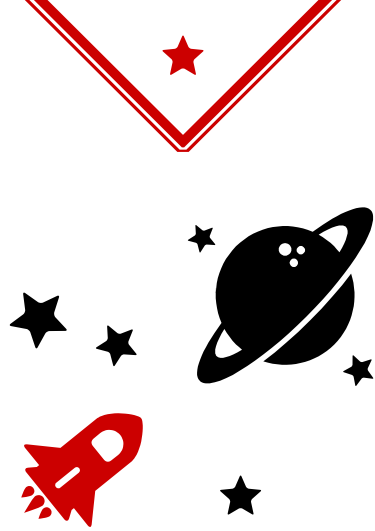
Audience analysis facilitates document creation
★ Use of appropriate language
Information to be included or eliminated
Which terms to use or which need to be defined
Effective design for the document including arrangement and navigation

THAT'S ALL, FOLKS!