Audience Analysis

Writing any document requires a thorough understanding of your audience. Analyzing the audience’s intention, attitude, and experience will help you improve your document’s purpose and give it a clear focus. This assignment will conduct an audience analysis for the [**US State Department’s guide to renewing a passport by mail**](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports/have-passport/renew.html).

# Purpose and Audience

The purpose of this guide is to teach the reader how to renew their passport by mail. US citizens who fit the eligibility requirements for mail renewal are the target audience. The beginning infographic outlines the eligibility requirements for mail renewal.

Ineligible readers are directed to the [**Apply in Person**](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports/need-passport/apply-in-person.html) guide on the same website. While US citizens living in Canada can renew their passports by mail, they have separate instructions [on another page](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports/need-passport/outside-us.html). Online renewal is another alternative suggested in a light blue box. Redirecting readers outside the target audience to a better guide or alternative prevents wasted time and increases customer satisfaction.

The **Processing Times** card on the right side of the page states that the renewal process routinely takes 6-9 weeks, with the option to expedite the process to 3-5 weeks with a $60 fee. Since shorter time frames require in-person approval at a Passport Agency, urgent travelers are also not in the target audience for mail renewal.

# Needs

Even after passing the eligibility requirements, the audience may have other concerns that still need addressed. Can they still get a passport if they’re behind on child support? Will they get a new passport number after renewal? The **FAQ** at the bottom of the page addresses these common questions and concerns.

Now the audience needs to know *how* to renew their passport by mail. Each step is the header for a gray, collapsible tab. The collapsed content reveals forms, tips, visual aids, and other helpful details for completing that step. Without the hidden content, the steps are too vague for anyone new to mail renewal to understand. Readers who have renewed by mail before, but have since forgotten the process, may prefer it for a quick refresher.

Generally, the audience will not need to redirect the instructions or information to another person. One exception is readers looking to renew multiple passports under one envelope, which is acceptable according to the FAQ. The audience needs wording and visuals clear enough for the reader to relay the information to a family member or spouse.

# Intentions and Attitude

The audience intends to renew their passport by mail, regardless of their reason for travel. Work travelers will be the most interested because a passport is critical for their job. While not as important, vacationers and other travelers looking to plan ahead will also be interested.

Many readers will have preconceived notions about the passport process based on previous experience, either from applying for a passport for the first time or renewing their passport online or in person. First-timers and those with negative experiences in passport renewal may come in overwhelmed because they want everything to go smoothly. They want reassurance that all the required documents are available and correctly filled out.

Because the guide is on an official government website, the audience expects the writer to provide credible information. They trust that the eligibility requirements, steps, and FAQ has all the information they need to successfully renew by mail.

# Knowledge and Background

Because the guide concerns passport renewal, the audience already knows what a passport is and how to apply for one. Familiarity with the passport renewal process may vary. Many readers will have no experience with any method of renewal. Those with renewal experience may have just never renewed by mail. A select few may even have renewed by mail before but have since forgotten the process. The audience will not know or remember the address to mail in their application.

While US passport holders with no experience in mail renewal are the primary audience, as long as the readers meet the eligibility requirements, their background or experience with passport renewal is irrelevant. Though the DS-82 form wants to know your occupation and employer, your role or position is irrelevant to understanding the instructions.

# Conclusion

An audience analysis is critical in improving your document’s intention and focus. Because a passport is an important government document, the audience expects a trustworthy guide with clear instructions and requirements. The US State Department’s mail passport renewal guide has a solid grasp of the audience’s needs and intentions. Even for those not in the target audience, the guide still helps them navigate to the right place.