

2

Meeting the Needs of Specific Audiences

Analyze Your Document's Audience and Purpose

Assess the Audience's Technical Background

Identify the Audience's Cultural Background

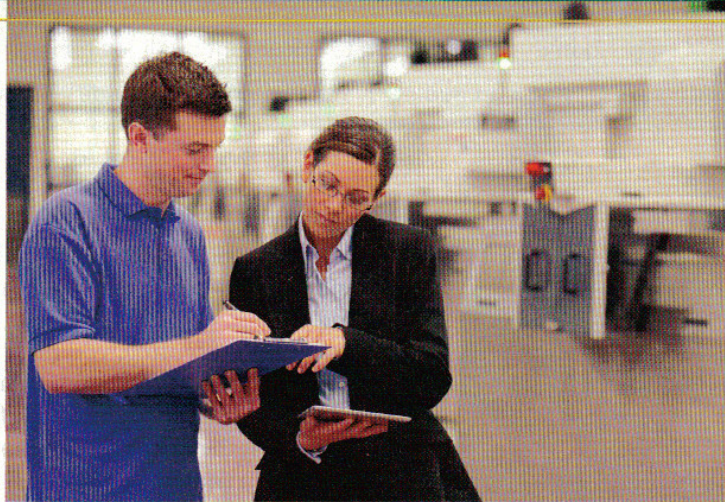
Anticipate Your Audience's Preferences

Guidelines for Analyzing Your Audience and Its Use of the Document

Develop an Audience and Use Profile

Checklist: Analyzing Audience and Purpose

Projects



"Audience is key. I write for people who have different levels of technical expertise, including service technicians, managers, engineers, and customers. I also work with the marketing team on proposals for commercial clients and with the legal department to write regulatory documents. It's important for me to understand how much background information and technical explanations are required for a particular set of readers. Also, in terms of the document's overall length, I need to consider the primary way people will read the material: on paper, on a computer, or on a phone."

—John Bryant, Technical Communication Project Lead

LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR THIS CHAPTER

- ▶ Ask the right questions to analyze your audience and purpose
- ▶ Assess your audience's technical background
- ▶ Consider your audience's cultural background
- ▶ Identify the appropriate document qualities for your audience
- ▶ Develop an audience and use profile to guide your work

All technical communication is intended for people who will use and react to the information. These people are considered to be the *audience* for your document: people who are reading the material in order to do something or learn something.

Before you start writing, you need to identify precisely who will be reading the document and understand how that particular audience will use your material. For example, you might need to *define* something—as in explaining to insurance clients what the term “variable annuity” means. You might need to *describe* something—as in showing an architectural client what a new office building will look like. You might need to *explain* something—as in instructing an auto repair technician how to reprogram the car’s electronic ignition. Or you might need to *propose* something—as in arguing for change in your company’s sick-leave policy. Preparing an effective document requires systematic analysis of your audience and the ways in which they will use your document (Figure 2.1).

Because people’s basic requirements vary, every audience expects a message tailored to its own specific interests, social conventions, ways of understanding problems, and information needs.

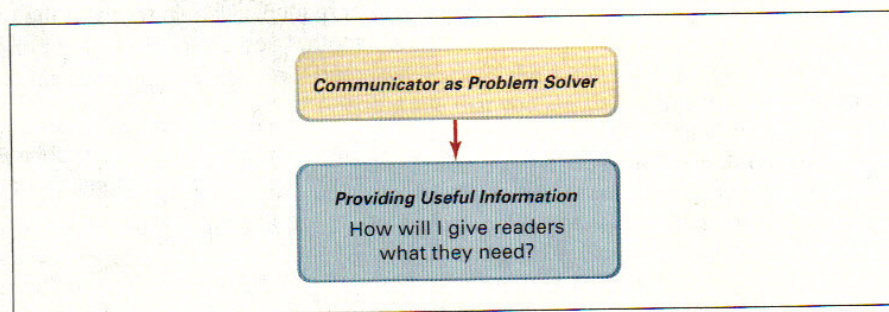


FIGURE 2.1 Communicators Begin by Considering Their Audience

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ANALYZE YOUR DOCUMENT'S AUDIENCE AND PURPOSE

► Ask the right questions to analyze your audience and purpose

Explore all you can about who will use your document, why they will use it, and how they will use it. Begin by analyzing your audience and the background, needs, and preferences of these readers. Among the questions you must answer are these:

- Who is the main audience for this document?
- Who else is likely to read it?
- What is your relationship with the audience?
- Are multiple types of relationships involved?
- What information does this audience need?
- How familiar might the audience be with technical details?
- Do these readers have varying levels of expertise?
- What culture or cultures does your audience represent?
- How might cultural differences shape readers' expectations and interpretations?
- Will the material be viewed on a computer? On a phone or tablet? On paper?

Questions for
analyzing a
document's
audience

Answer these questions by considering the suggestions that follow.

Primary and Secondary Audiences

When writing a technical document, keep two audiences in mind. Most documents are geared to an immediate audience of readers. This is your primary audience. For instance, a set of instructions for installing new email software for an office network might be directed primarily toward the computer support staff who would be doing the installing.

But most documents also have a secondary audience, those individuals outside the immediate circle of people who will be needing the information directly. For example, a secondary audience for software instructions might be managers, who will check to see if the instructions comply with company policy, or lawyers, who will make sure the instructions meet legal standards.

Generally, primary readers are decision makers who requested the document. Secondary readers are those who will carry out the project, who will advise the decision makers, or who will be affected by this decision in some way.

"Who is the main
audience for this
document?"

"Who else is likely
to read it?"

Your Relationship to Your Readers

Besides identifying your audience in a general way, you also need to understand your relationship with everyone involved. In your situation, will the readers be superiors, colleagues, or subordinates? Your answer will help you determine the

"What is my
relationship with
this audience?"

level of formality and authority to use in the document. Are the readers from inside or outside your organization? Answering this question will help you decide how confidential you need to be. Do you know the readers personally? If so, perhaps you can adopt a more informal tone. Are they likely to welcome or to resist your information? Knowing the answer will help you decide how persuasive you need to be. Are they a combination of people from various levels, both inside and outside the company? The answer will help you tailor your document for various readers.

Purpose of Your Document

Spell out precisely what you want your document to accomplish and how you expect readers to use it. In other words, determine your purpose. Ask these questions:

- What is the main purpose of the document?
- What other purpose or purposes does the document serve?
- What will readers do with this information?

Answer these questions by considering the suggestions in the sections that follow.

Primary and Secondary Purposes

Most forms of technical communication fulfill a specific primary purpose. As discussed in Chapter 1, the primary purpose (to inform, to instruct, or to persuade) will affect the document's overall shape and substance.

Many documents have one or more secondary purposes. For example, the primary purpose in a typical instruction manual is to instruct, that is, to teach an audience how to assemble or use the product. But for ethical and legal reasons, companies also want people to use the product safely. A manual for a power tool or a lawnmower, for instance, almost always begins with a page that spells out safety hazards and precautions, before instructing readers about how to proceed with the mechanism.

In planning your document, work from a clear statement that identifies the target audience as well as the document's primary and secondary purposes. For example [italics added], "The purpose of my document is *to inform* company employees of the new absentee policy and *to instruct* them on how to follow the procedures properly," or "The purpose of my document is *to inform* my division's programmers about the new antivirus software, as well as *to instruct* them on how to install the software and *to persuade* them of the importance of running weekly virus scans."

Intended Use of the Document

In addition to determining purposes of a document from your own perspective, also consider how and why it will be used by others. As you plan your document, answer these questions:

Questions for deciding on the purpose of your document

Write a clear audience and purpose statement

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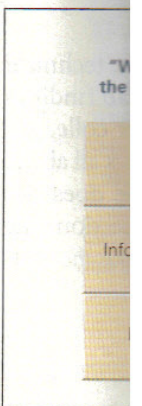


FIGURE 2.2

- Do my readers simply want to learn facts or understand concepts? Will they use my information in making some type of decision?
- Will people act immediately on the information?
- Do they need step-by-step instructions?
- In my audience's view, what is most important about this document?

Questions for anticipating how your document will be used

Besides answering these questions, try asking members of your audience directly, so you can verify what they want to know.

ASSESS THE AUDIENCE'S TECHNICAL BACKGROUND

► Assess your audience's technical background

When you write for a close acquaintance (coworker, engineering colleague, chemistry professor who reads your lab reports, or supervisor), you adapt your report to that person's knowledge, interests, and needs. But some audiences are larger and less defined (say, for a journal article, a computer manual, a set of first-aid procedures, or an accident report). When you have only a general notion about your audience's background, decide whether your document should be *highly technical*, *semitechnical*, or *nontechnical*, as depicted in Figure 2.2.

"How much expertise does this audience possess?"

Highly Technical Audience

Readers at a specialized level expect to be presented the facts and figures they need—without long explanations. In Figure 2.3, an emergency-room physician reports to the patient's doctor, who needs an exact record of symptoms, treatment, and results.

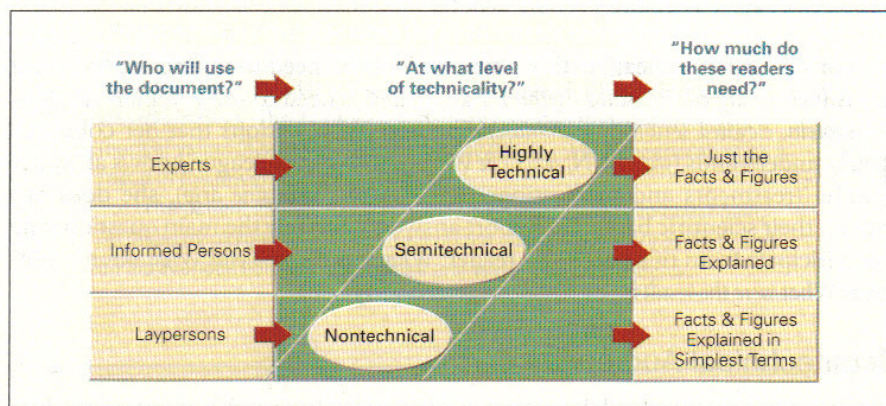


FIGURE 2.2 Deciding on a Document's Level of Technicality

Expert readers
need facts and
figures, which
they can
interpret for
themselves

The patient was brought to the ER by ambulance at 1:00 A.M., September 27, 2010. The patient complained of severe chest pains, dyspnea, and vertigo. Auscultation and EKG revealed a massive cardiac infarction and pulmonary edema marked by pronounced cyanosis. Vital signs: blood pressure, 80/40; pulse, 140/min; respiration, 35/min. Lab: wbc, 20,000; elevated serum transaminase; urea nitrogen, 60 mg%. Urinalysis showed 4+ protein and 4+ granular casts/field, indicating acute renal failure secondary to the hypotension.

The patient received 10 mg of morphine stat, subcutaneously, followed by nasal oxygen and 5% D & W intravenously. At 1:25 A.M. the cardiac monitor recorded an irregular sinus rhythm, indicating left ventricular fibrillation. The patient was defibrillated stat and given a 50 mg bolus of Xylocaine intravenously. A Xylocaine drip was started, and sodium bicarbonate administered until a normal heartbeat was established. By 3:00 A.M., the oscilloscope was recording a normal sinus rhythm.

As the heartbeat stabilized and cyanosis diminished, the patient received 5 cc of Heparin intravenously, to be repeated every six hours. By 5:00 A.M. the BUN had fallen to 20 mg% and vital signs had stabilized: blood pressure, 110/60; pulse, 105/min; respiration, 22/min. The patient was now conscious and responsive.

FIGURE 2.3 A Technical Version of an Emergency Treatment Report This version is written for medical experts.

For her expert colleague, this physician doesn't need to define the technical terms (*pulmonary edema*, *sinus rhythm*). Nor does she need to interpret lab findings (4+ protein, *elevated serum transaminase*). She uses abbreviations that her colleague clearly understands (*wbc*, *BUN*, 5% D & W). Because her colleague knows all about specific treatments and medications (*defibrillation*, *Xylocaine drip*), she does not explain their scientific bases. Her report answers concisely the main questions she can anticipate from this particular reader: *What was the problem? What was the treatment? What were the results?*

Semitechnical Audience

In certain cases, readers will have some technical background, but not as much as the experts. For instance, first-year medical students have specialized knowledge, but less than advanced students. Yet all medical students could be considered

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FIGURE 2.4
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semitechnical. Therefore, when you write for a semitechnical audience, identify the lowest level of understanding in the group, and write to that level. Too much explanation is better than too little.

The partial version of the medical report in Figure 2.4 might appear in a textbook for medical or nursing students, in a report for a medical social worker, or in a monthly report for the hospital administration.

This version explains the raw data (highlighted in yellow). Exact dosages are omitted because no one in this audience actually will be treating this patient. Normal values of lab tests and vital signs, however, help readers interpret the report results. (Experts know the normal values.) Knowing what medications the patient received would be especially important in answering this audience's central question: *How is a typical heart attack treated?*

Examination by stethoscope and electrocardiogram revealed a massive failure of the heart muscle along with fluid buildup in the lungs, which produced a cyanotic discoloration of the lips and fingertips from lack of oxygen.

The patient's blood pressure at 80 mm Hg (systolic)/40 mm Hg (diastolic) was dangerously below its normal measure of 130/70. A pulse rate of 140/minute was almost twice the normal rate of 60–80. Respiration at 35/minute was more than twice the normal rate of 12–16.

Laboratory blood tests yielded a white blood cell count of 20,000/cu mm (normal value: 5,000–10,000), indicating a severe inflammatory response by the heart muscle. The elevated serum transaminase enzymes (produced in quantity only when the heart muscle fails) confirmed the earlier diagnosis. A blood urea nitrogen level of 60 mg% (normal value: 12–16 mg%) indicated that the kidneys had ceased to filter out metabolic waste products. The 4+ protein and casts reported from the urinalysis (normal value: 0) revealed that the kidney tubules were degenerating as a result of the lowered blood pressure.

The patient immediately received morphine to ease the chest pain, followed by oxygen to relieve strain on the cardiopulmonary system, and an intravenous solution of dextrose and water to prevent shock.

← Informed but nonexpert readers need enough explanation to understand what the data mean

FIGURE 2.4 A Semitechnical Version of an Emergency Treatment Report This version is written for readers who are not experts but who have some medical background.

Nontechnical Audience

People with no specialized training (laypersons) look for the big picture instead of complex details. They expect technical data to be translated into words most people understand. Laypersons are impatient with abstract theories, but they want enough background to help them make the right decision or take the right action. They are bored or confused by excessive detail, but frustrated by raw facts left unexplained or uninterpreted. They expect to understand the document after reading it only once.

The nontechnical version of the medical report shown in Figure 2.5 might be written for the patient's spouse who is overseas on business, or as part of a script for a documentary about emergency-room treatment. Nearly all interpretation (highlighted in yellow), this version mentions no specific medications, lab tests, or normal values. It merely summarizes events and briefly explains what they mean and why these particular treatments were given.

In a different situation, however (say, a malpractice trial), the layperson jury would require detailed technical information about medication and treatment. Such a report would naturally be much longer—basically a short course in emergency coronary treatment.

Laypersons need everything translated into terms they understand

Heart sounds and electrical impulses were both abnormal, indicating a massive heart attack caused by failure of a large part of the heart muscle.

The lungs were swollen with fluid and the lips and fingertips showed a bluish discoloration from lack of oxygen.

Blood pressure was dangerously low, creating the risk of shock. Pulse and respiration were almost twice the normal rate, indicating that the heart and lungs were being overworked in keeping oxygenated blood circulating freely.

Blood tests confirmed the heart attack diagnosis and indicated that waste products usually filtered out by the kidneys were building up in the bloodstream. Urine tests showed that the kidneys were failing as a result of the lowered blood pressure.

The patient was given medication to ease the chest pain, oxygen to ease the strain on the heart and lungs, and intravenous solution to prevent the blood vessels from collapsing and causing irreversible shock.

FIGURE 2.5 A Nontechnical Version of an Emergency Treatment Report This version is written for readers who have no medical background.

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Audiences with Varying Technical Backgrounds

The technical background of large and diverse audiences can be variable and hard to pin down. When you must write for audiences at different levels, follow these suggestions:

- If the document is short (a letter, memo, or anything less than two pages), re-write it at different levels for different backgrounds.
- If the document exceeds two pages, address the primary readers. Then provide appendices for secondary readers. Transmittal letters, informative abstracts, and glossaries can also help nonexperts understand a highly technical report. (See Chapter 21 for use and preparation of appendices and other supplements.)

How to tailor a document to address different technical backgrounds

For an illustration of these differences, consider the following case.

CASE Tailoring a Single Document for Multiple Audiences

You are a metallurgical engineer in an automotive consulting firm. Your supervisor has asked you to test the fractured rear axle of a 2013 Delphi pickup truck recently involved in a fatal accident. Your assignment is to determine whether the fractured axle *caused* or *resulted from* the accident.

Different readers have differing information needs

After testing the hardness and chemical composition of the metal and examining microscopic photographs of the fractured surfaces (fractographs), you conclude that the fracture resulted from stress that developed *during* the accident. Now you must report your procedure and your findings to a variety of readers.

Because your report may serve as courtroom evidence, you must explain your findings in meticulous detail. But your primary readers (the decision makers) will be nonspecialists (the attorneys who have requested the report, insurance representatives, possibly a judge and a jury), so you must translate your report, explaining the principles behind the various tests, defining specialized terms such as "chevron marks," "shrinkage cavities," and "dimpled core," and showing the significance of these features as evidence.

"What do these findings mean?"

Secondary readers will include your supervisor and outside consulting engineers who will be evaluating your test procedures and assessing the validity of your findings. Consultants will be focusing on various parts of your report, to verify that your procedure has been exact and faultless. For this group, you will have to include appendices spelling out the technical details of your analysis: *how* hardness testing of the axle's case and core indicated that the axle had been properly carburized; *how* chemical analysis ruled out the possibility that the manufacturer had used inferior alloys; *how* light-microscopic fractographs revealed that the origin of the fracture, its direction of propagation, and the point of final rupture indicated a ductile fast fracture, not one caused by torsional fatigue.

"How did you arrive at these conclusions?"

In the previous scenario, primary readers need to know *what your findings mean*, whereas secondary readers need to know *how you arrived at your conclusions*. Unless it serves the needs of each group independently, your information will be worthless.

Web-Based Documents for Multiple Audiences

Web pages are ideal for providing information for readers from a wide range of backgrounds. Web-based information can be viewed on a computer, tablet, or phone. Figure 2.6 uses tabs and links to accommodate different levels of interest and expertise.

IDENTIFY THE AUDIENCE'S CULTURAL BACKGROUND

► Consider your audience's cultural background

"What cultural differences exist in this audience, and how can I bridge those differences?"

Within North America and beyond, information needs and preferences often are culturally determined. For example, certain cultures value thoroughness and complexity in their documents, with lists of data and every detail included and explained. Some cultures place high value on a formal, businesslike tone. Other cultures prefer multiple perspectives on the material, lots of graphics, and a friendly, encouraging tone (Hein 125–26).

North American business culture is accustomed to "plain talk" that gets right to the point, but Eastern cultures tend to consider this rude, preferring indirect, more ambiguous messages, which leave interpretation up to the reader (Leki 151; Martin and Chaney 276–77). To avoid seeming impolite, some people might hesitate to ask for clarification or additional information. In certain cultures, even disagreement or refusal might be expressed as "We will do our best" or "This is very difficult" instead of "No"—to avoid offending and to preserve harmony (Rowland 47).

Consider how cultural differences might create misunderstanding in your situation, and seek an approach that bridges these differences.

ANTICIPATE YOUR AUDIENCE'S PREFERENCES

► Identify the appropriate document qualities for your audience

Readers approach any document with certain preferences: its desired length and details, the format and medium in which it should be presented, and the appropriate tone, as well as deadline and budget expectations.

Length and Details

The length and amount of detail in your document depends on what you can learn about your audience's needs. Were you asked to "keep it short" or to "be comprehensive"? Are people more interested in conclusions and recommendations, or do they want everything spelled out?

Give readers only what they need and want

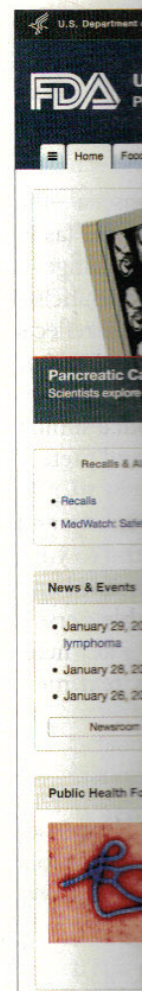


FIGURE 2.6
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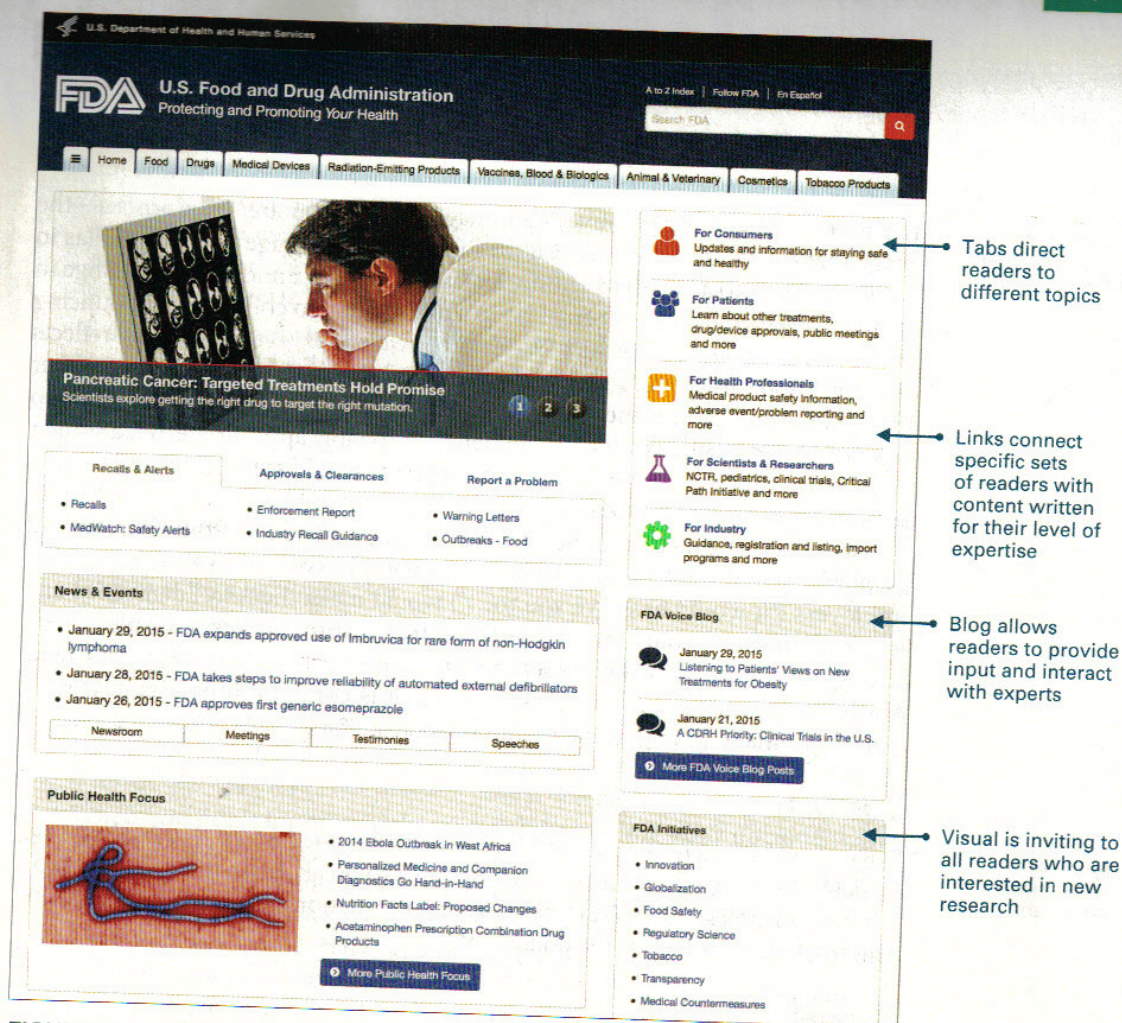


FIGURE 2.6 A Web Page Designed for Multiple Audiences. This page uses links and tabs to provide information for people from a range of backgrounds including consumers, patients, health professionals, and scientists. A blog allows readers to share their views. The site is available in both English and Spanish.

Source: U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Format and Medium

Does your audience expect a letter, a memo, an email, a short report, or a long, formal report with supplements (title page, table of contents, appendixes, and so on—see pages 514–17)? Can visuals and page layout (charts, graphs, drawings,

Decide how your document will look and will be distributed



GU

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GUIDELINES for Analyzing Your Audience and Its Use of the Document

- ▶ **Picture exactly what these readers need and how they expect to use your document.** Whether it's the company president or the person next to you in class, that person has specific concerns and information needs. Your readers may need to complete a task, solve a problem, make a decision, evaluate your performance, or take a stand on an issue. Think carefully about exactly what you want your readers to be able to do.
- ▶ **Learn all you can about who will use your document.** Are your primary readers superiors, colleagues, or subordinates? Are they inside or outside your organization? Who else might be interested or affected? What do readers already know about this topic? How much do they care? Are they likely to welcome or reject your information?
- ▶ **In planning your document, work from a clear statement of audience and purpose.** For example, "The purpose of my document is to [describe using verbs: persuade, instruct, inform] the target audience [identify precisely: colleagues, superiors, clients]."
- ▶ **Consider your audience's technical background.** Colleagues who speak your technical language will understand raw data. Managers who have limited technical knowledge expect interpretations and explanations. Clients with little or no technical background want to know what this information means to them, personally (to their health, pocketbook, safety). However, none of these generalizations might apply to your situation. When in doubt, aim for low technicality.
- ▶ **When you don't know exactly who will be reading your document, picture the "general reader."** A nontechnical audience will expect complex information to be explained in ways that have meaning for them, personally, and insofar as possible in everyday language. (For example, refer to "heart and lungs" instead of "cardiopulmonary system." Instead of "A diesel engine generates 10 BTUs per gallon of fuel compared with 8 BTUs generated by a conventional gasoline engine," write "A diesel engine yields 25 percent better gas mileage than its gas-burning counterpart.")
- ▶ **Consider readers' cultural backgrounds.** Identify as closely as possible your audience's specific customs and values. How might cultural differences play a role in readers' interpretation of your presentation?
- ▶ **Anticipate your audience's reactions.** If the topic is controversial or the news is bad, will some people resist your message? Will some feel threatened or offended? Should you be bold and outspoken or tread lightly? No matter how accurate your information or how sensible your ideas, an alienated audience will reject them out of hand.



- ▶ **Anticipate your audience's questions.** Based on their needs and concerns, readers have questions such as these: What is the purpose of this document? Why should I read it? What happened, and why? Who was involved? How do I perform this task? How did you perform it? What action should be taken, and why? How much will it cost? What are the risks? Give readers what they need to know, instead of what they already know. Give them enough material to understand your position and to react appropriately.
- ▶ **Anticipate your audience's preferences.** Try to pinpoint the length, detail, format, medium, tone, timing, and budget preferred by this audience. As the situation allows, adjust your document accordingly.

- Develop an audience and use profile to guide your work

In order to focus sharply on your audience, purpose, and the many factors discussed in this chapter, develop your own version of the Audience and Use Profile Sheet shown in Figure 2.7 (page 30) for any document you prepare. Modify this sheet as needed to suit your own situation, as shown in the following case.

Assume that you face this situation: First-year students increasingly are dropping out of your major because of low grades or stress or inability to keep up with the workload. As part of your work-study duties, your department chairperson asks you to prepare a “Survival Guide” for next year’s incoming students to the major. This one- or two-page memo should focus on the challenges and the pitfalls of the major and should include a brief motivational section along with whatever additional information you decide readers need.

Audience and Use Profile

Audience and Purpose

- ▶ *Who is my primary audience?* Incoming students to the major
- ▶ *Any secondary audiences?* Department faculty

- *What is the league's mission?* What must apply?
- *What is the league's role?* Inform, inform, inform.
- *Audience* Who is the incoming audience? How the league can and explain the benefits.
- *Intended* What is the plan based on the document?
- *Information* What do we need every day?
- *Technical* What is the league's role? Considered last.
- *Cultural* What is the league's role? Cultural and cultural designate.
- *Probable* What is the league's role? "How do we need to do it in a part-time if I'm having a hard time?"
- *Probable* What is the league's role? And take it to the failure might be that the league is not a failure.

Audience Prefe

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- ▶ *Due date a* next fall—b tration pap
- ▶ *Budget:* Th involved.

- ▶ *What is my relationship with everyone involved?* Primary audience: student colleagues who don't know me very well; secondary audience: major faculty, who must approve the final document.
- ▶ *What is the purpose of the document?* This document has multiple purposes: to inform, instruct, and persuade.
- ▶ *Audience and purpose statement:* The purpose of this document is to explain to incoming students the challenges and pitfalls of year 1 of our major. I will show how the number of dropouts has increased, describe what seems to go wrong and explain why, suggest steps for avoiding common mistakes, and emphasize the benefits of enduring the first year.
- ▶ *Intended use of this document:* To enable students to craft their own survival plan based on the information, advice, and encouragement provided in the document.
- ▶ *Information needs:* Incoming students know very little about this topic. They need everything spelled out.
- ▶ *Technical background:* In regard to this topic, the primary audience can be considered laypersons.
- ▶ *Cultural considerations:* The document will refer readers from other countries and cultures (exchange students, nonnative speakers of English, and so on) to designated advisors for additional assistance.
- ▶ *Probable questions (along with others you anticipate):* "How big is the problem?" "How can this problem affect me personally?" "How much time will I need to devote to homework?" "How should I budget my time?" "Can I squeeze in a part-time job?" "Why do so many students drop out?" "Whom should I see if I'm having a problem?"
- ▶ *Probable reaction to document:* Most readers should welcome this information and take it seriously. However, some students who don't know the meaning of failure might feel patronized or offended. Some faculty might resent any suggestions that courses are too demanding.

Audience Preferences about the Document

- ▶ *Length and detail:* Because the document was requested by the department and not by the primary audience, I can't expect students to tolerate more than a page or two.
- ▶ *Format and medium:* PDF attachment emailed to each student (along with a brief, welcoming cover letter). PDF version also posted to the department Web site.
- ▶ *Tone:* Since we students are all in this situation together, a friendly, informal, and positive (to avoid panic) but serious tone seems best.
- ▶ *Due date and timing:* This document must be available before students arrive next fall—but not so early that it gets forgotten or overshadowed by other registration paperwork.
- ▶ *Budget:* This document will be sent as a PDF via email. No printing costs are involved.

Audience and Purpose

Primary audience: _____ (name, title)

Secondary audience(s): _____ (technicians, managers, other)

Relationship with audience: _____ (colleague, employer, other)

Purpose of document: _____ (inform, instruct, persuade)

Audience and purpose statement: _____

Intended use of document: _____ (perform tasks, solve a problem, other)

Information needs: _____ (background, basic facts, other)

Technical background: _____ (layperson, expert, other)

Cultural considerations: _____ (level of detail or directness, other)

Probable questions: _____ ?

_____ ?

_____ ?

_____ ?

Probable reaction: _____ (resistance, approval, anger, other)

Audience Preferences about the Document

Length and detail: _____ (comprehensive, concise, other)

Format and medium: _____ (letter, memo, email, other)

Tone: _____ (businesslike, confident, informal, other)

Due date and timing: _____ (meet deadline, wait for the best time, other)

Budget: _____ (what can be spent on what)

FIGURE 2.7 Audience and Use Profile Depending on your situation, you can adapt this sheet, as shown in the case that begins on page 28. For a completed profile in a persuasive situation, see Figure 3.5, page 35.



(Number

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CHECKLIST: Analyzing Audience and Purpose **MyWritingLab™**

(Numbers in parentheses refer to the first page of discussion)

- ☐ Have I identified primary and secondary audiences? (17)
- ☐ Have I identified my relationship to these readers? (17)
- ☐ Have I researched the technical background of my audience? (19)
- ☐ Have I considered the cultural backgrounds of my audience? (24)
- ☐ Have I identified the primary and secondary purposes of the document? (18)
- ☐ Have I considered other audience preferences, including media format? (29)
- ☐ Have I developed an audience and use profile? (28)



Projects

MyWritingLab™

GENERAL

1. Find a short article from your field (or part of a long article or a selection from your textbook for an advanced course). Choose a piece written at the highest level of technicality you can understand and then translate that piece for a layperson, as in the example on page 23. Exchange translations with a classmate from a different major. Read your neighbor's translation and write a paragraph evaluating its level of technicality. Submit to your instructor a copy of the original, your translated version, and your evaluation of your neighbor's translation.
2. Assume that a new employee is taking over your job because you have been promoted. Identify a specific problem in the job that could cause difficulty for the new employee. Assume that you will need to write instructions for the employee to help him or her avoid or cope with the problem. Create an audience and use profile based on Figure 2.7 (page 30). Use the page 28 Case as a model for your responses.

TEAM

Form teams of 3–6 people. Teammates should be of the same or similar majors (electrical engineering, biology, graphic design, etc.). Research the job market for graduates in your major, including specific types of skills that employers seek beyond those courses in your specialty (such as technical communication, public speaking, oral presentations, Web design, or the like). The final document will be posted to the department's Web site.

Before you can prepare this document, you need a thorough analysis of your audience and purpose. Complete your audience and use profile using the worksheet on page 30 or a modified version of this worksheet. Include a clear and specific audience and purpose statement.

Appoint a team member to present the complete Audience and Use Profile for class evaluation, comparison, and response.