

FIGURE 4.6**Writer's Guide for Planning for Usefulness**

To download a copy of this Writer's Guide, go to Chapter 4 in your English CourseMate at www.cengagebrain.com.

Writer's Guide
PLANNING FOR USEFULNESS

Plan Content

1. What questions and subquestions will your readers want your communication to answer?
2. What additional information do your readers need?
3. Is there a superstructure you use? If so, content does it include?

Organize

1. What will be your readers' reading tasks?
2. What organization will best support your readers as they perform these tasks?
 - ☐ Group together the information your readers will use together.
 - ☐ Create a hierarchical organization.
 - ☐ Adapt the organization of an appropriate superstructure, if one exists.
 - ☐ Give the bottom line first.
 - ☐ Outline your organizational plan, if this will be helpful.

Provide Quick Access to Information

1. What headings and other signposts would help your readers find the information they want?
2. Would a modular design help, if you have readers with different needs?

Help Your Readers Quickly Understand Your Meaning

1. What background information about your topic do they need?
2. What background information about the situation do they need?
3. What cultural expectations should you take into account?
4. What tables, drawings and other graphics would increase your readers' understanding?

Write Ethically

1. Who, besides your readers, are the stakeholders in your report?
2. How might they be affected by it?
3. What do you need to do to treat your readers and other stakeholders ethically?

USE WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED

EXPLORE ONLINE

Develop a list of questions that high school students might ask about studying in your major at your college. Then try to answer these questions by going to your college's website. How accessible are the answers? How complete are they from the viewpoint of high school students? How could the website be made more useful for these students?

COLLABORATE WITH YOUR CLASSMATES

Imagine that you have been hired to create a brochure or website that presents your college department in a favorable light to entering first-year students and students who are thinking

EXERCISE YOUR EXPERTISE

For additional exercises, go to Chapter 4 in your English CourseMate at www.cengagebrain.com. *Instructors:* The book's website includes suggestions for teaching the exercises.

Imagine that you are employed full-time and have decided to take a course at a local college. First, name a course you might like to take. Next, by following Guideline 1 on page 89, list the questions and subquestions your employer would want you to answer in a memo in which you ask the employer to pay your tuition and permit you to leave work early two days a week to attend class.

of changing their majors. Working with another student and following the guidelines in this chapter, generate a list of things that you and your partner would want to say. How would the two of you group and order this information?

APPLY YOUR ETHICS

Think of a policy of your college or employer that you would like to change. Imagine that you are going to write a report

recommending this change. After identifying all the stakeholders, tell how you could gain a complete understanding of the relevant concerns and values of each stakeholder or stakeholder group. Which stakeholders' concerns and values would be most difficult for you to learn about? Why? Would you have more difficulty listening sympathetically to some stakeholders than others? If so, who and why? How would you ensure that you treat these stakeholders ethically?

CASE

Filling the Distance Learning Classroom

For additional cases, visit Chapter 4 in your English CourseMate at www.cengagebrain.com. Instructors: The book's website includes suggestions for teaching the cases.

You knock on the office door softly, unsure why the Chair of the English Department has asked to meet with you. "Welcome," Professor Rivera says, immediately putting you at ease. "I'm glad you could come. Professor Baldwin suggested you might be able to help me with a sort of marketing project."

What a relief. At least you haven't done anything wrong.

"Have you heard about our new distance learning classroom?" Professor Rivera asks. You tell her you know that a large room in the English building is being redesigned as a computerized classroom.

"Well, in addition to computers, the room will have video cameras, projection equipment, special software, and a very large screen. By means of this equipment, it can be paired with a similar classroom elsewhere in the world so that students in both locations can become part of the same class.

"In fact, we're getting ready to conduct a few experimental sections of First-Year English in which students here will be paired with students in a similar course at a university in Brazil. A team of faculty from both schools has planned a common syllabus and paired sections here and in Brazil to meet at the same hours. When the Brazilian instructor or students speak, the students and instructor here will be able to see and hear them, and vice versa. Also, students in the two locations will exchange drafts via the Internet, and they will even be able to project a draft of a student's paper in both locations so that all the students can talk jointly about it."

"But isn't Portuguese the native language of Brazil?" you ask.

"Yes," Professor Rivera replies. "All of the Brazilian students will be studying English as a second language, although they will also have studied several years of it before attending their university. Of course, English is a second language for many students here at our own university as well."

"What an interesting project," you observe.

"Yes," Professor Rivera responds. "The faculty members involved think it will have several benefits for students. It's increasingly important for college graduates to be able to work in an international economic and intellectual environment. This course will help prepare them for such

work. In addition, many businesses are now using exactly the kind of technology we have placed in the distance learning classroom to hold meetings that involve employees or clients located at various points around the globe. Students in the experimental classes will gain experience with such technology that could give them a tremendous boost in the job market."

"Sounds great," you say. "But what does it have to do with me? I've already completed that course."

"What we'd like you to do is to write a pamphlet we can send this summer to incoming students to entice some of them to sign up for the experimental distance learning sections of First-Year English."

"Sounds easy," you say.

"Well, there are some complications," Professor Rivera explains. "This is an experiment of sorts. Many tests will be run to determine the effects of the distance learning environment. The experiment is important because some faculty members are skeptical about the program, worried that it might focus on technology in ways that will detract from the quality of the writing instruction.

"Because this is an experiment, the faculty members who designed the program want the students in the distance learning sections to represent a cross section of students in First-Year English. It can't be populated with just students who have a high interest in technology or international studies. Therefore, they have asked the Admissions Office to generate a list of 240 randomly selected incoming students to whom the pamphlet will be sent. The aim of the pamphlet is to persuade at least half of the recipients to enroll in six special sections."

"In that case, writing the pamphlet will be a challenge," you agree.

"Will you accept the challenge?" Professor Rivera asks.

"Sure. Why not?"

YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Following the guidelines in Chapter 3, define the objectives for your pamphlet. Then, by following the guidelines in this chapter, list the things you would say in the pamphlet to the incoming students. Identify the things you would need to investigate further before writing.