

Audience Analysis – Written Communication

Due dates for this assignment

First Draft (10 points):

Submit in MyCompLab *before* class time.

Monday, February 6 (11:00 & 2:00 Sections)

Tuesday, February 7 (4:30 Section)

Final Draft (20 points):

Submit in MyCompLab *before* class time.

Thursday, February 9 (all sections)

CAUTION: Assignments that fail to follow the instructions will NOT be graded. If they are revised and resubmitted within a week, they will be graded for no higher than a C (80% of the total point value of the assignment).

WARNING: All assignments are due **BEFORE** the beginning of class. Submit assignments at least an hour before class starts so you have time to contact me for help. If MyCompLab simply won't work, email your assignment to me to get it in on time. **LATE ASSIGNMENTS RECEIVE A ZERO WITH NO OPPORTUNITY FOR REVISION.**

Scenario for this assignment

One year ago, you became the manager of a financially struggling bar called Moe's. In the past year, you have managed to draw up plans to refurbish the tavern and broaden its appeal. However, the investors whom you have attracted will fund renovations only under one condition: You can no longer allow patrons to run up a bar tab without a credit card, to which all purchases must be charged before the customer leaves the building.

Your best customers, many of whom have been coming to Moe's for years, have always been able to charge drinks to their "tab" and then pay at the end of the month. Although many patrons pay their bar tab at the end of each week, Homer Simpson, Carl Carlson, Lenny Leonard, and Barney Gumble expect to receive their bar bill in the mail once a month. When you send out this month's bill, you plan to include a letter notifying those patrons of the planned changes.

Content requirements for this assignment

For this assignment, you are going to create an audience analysis for a letter notifying one of the men listed in the above scenario that you will no longer be allowing customers to run a bar tab. **DO NOT WRITE A LETTER!!** Your AUDIENCE ANALYSIS should be 2-3 paragraphs that identify and describe:

- Who* the target audience is.
- Relevant *characteristics* your reader may have. This can include demographic information we discussed in class, but can include other descriptions as well. Consider only characteristics that more narrowly defines your target audience or could affect how your readers interpret your message.
- Possible *concerns* the reader might have that would make your message seem more appealing, relevant and/or interesting. Do NOT say that your reader is concerned about your concerns (your business, your profits, your investors, etc.). They are not. Think of what else might be important to your reader so you can focus on those things as much as possible.
- The reader's general level of *education* and what he already knows and does not know about your topic.
- Relevant *experiences* that might influence how your reader interprets your message.
- Possible *attitudes* the reader might have toward your purpose and message. (Do NOT say "positive" or "negative" – use the ranges of attitudes covered on page 15 of your Pearsall text.)
- Reasons *why* your reader might have those attitudes (this can also be accomplished in the other parts of your analysis—through concerns, characteristics, education, or experiences).

HINT: If your audience analysis includes large chunks of information from the "Scenario" description above, you are on the *wrong* track.

Helpful questions

If you are having trouble coming up with ideas for an audience analysis, answering the questions below may help you generate the kind of depth and detail you need to write a useful audience analysis:

1. Who, specifically, are your target readers?
2. What significance might your message have for them? Why would they think it is important?
3. What do you think may make your readers want to read about your topic?
4. If they wanted information about your topic, how do you think your readers would go about getting it?
5. What concerns might your readers have that are competing with their interest in your message and objectives? Time? Money? Health? Job responsibilities? Family responsibilities? Other priorities?
6. What questions or opinions might your readers already have about your message or your objective?
7. What characteristics do your readers possess that might influence how they interpret your message or your objective? Race? Ethnicity? Religion? Class? Gender? Age? Job? **NOTE:** Focus only on *relevant* and *specific* kinds of characteristics. For example, if your age range is extremely broad (18-50), that's not going to be helpful.
8. What education, in general, do your readers have that is relevant to your message? High school? 2- or 4-year College? Graduate school? Trade school? Special training? How does that influence their reading level and ability to understand technical information (if relevant)?
9. What personal or work-related experiences might your readers have that would influence how they interpret your message or your objective? **NOTE:** Focus only on *relevant* experiences.
10. What do you predict your readers already know about your topic?
11. What will your readers need you to tell them?
12. What likely attitudes may your readers have that might influence how they interpret your message or your objective? Hostility? Agreement? Trust? Skepticism? Passion? Indifference? Eagerness? Reluctance?

Additional Tips

To receive the highest grade possible, include as much depth and *relevant* detail as you can. Things to remember:

- Concerns:** Do not just list your main points and call them your readers' concerns. They don't care about your topic; they care about other aspects of their lives such as time, money, health, convenience, happiness, etc. Think of what else they might be concerned about so you can find ways to relate your message to things they actually value.
- Also think about any questions or opinions your readers might have about your message or your objective.
- Characteristics:** Don't bother listing characteristics that cover extremely broad ranges ("Ages 18-98," or "all religions," for example) unless it's somehow important for you to consider (it's likely not). Focus only on the most relevant characteristics.
- Attitudes:** Discuss all four scales mentioned in lecture and the textbook, not just one. (Yes, I know the example in the textbook discusses only one. I still want you to discuss all four.)

Grading scale for final Audience Analysis

20 points: A

18 points: B

16 points: C

15 points -↓: Revision required