

Audience Awareness

When writing, it's important to keep in mind who your audience is. Knowing who you are writing *for* is just as important as knowing what you are writing *about*. Thinking about *who* will read your essay can help you determine tone, language, and even the level of detail you should use in your writing.

Questions to Ask Yourself

- Does your assignment or instructor tell you to imagine a particular audience?
 - **Tip:** Even if your instructor knows the material, it may be beneficial to write like you're explaining it to someone who is learning it for the first time. Provide background information and context for an audience who has not read or discussed what you have with your instructor in class.
- What does your audience already know or assume about the topic?
- What might your audience expect from your essay?

Language and Tone

When writing to an educated or academic audience, it's important to use formal language and tone. Avoid using casual language or slang that you might use with your friends or family. However, you also want to avoid sounding robotic or being overly mechanical in your tone. Be sure to write clearly and define any terms you may use to help provide context for your audience.

Anticipate Questions or Confusion

To anticipate concerns your audience may have, ask yourself the following questions:

- What might my audience not understand here?
- Have I defined all my terms?
- Could a counter argument be made here? And if so, how can I acknowledge it and form a coherent rebuttal?
- Have I supported my ideas well enough?

Revise with Your Audience in Mind

Read your essay out loud. This will help you catch sentence-level errors. Additionally, it will help you hear your tone and assess its effectiveness for your audience. As you read your essay aloud, imagine your audience hearing it for the first time. As another idea, have a peer or friend read your essay aloud to you and listen to it as if you are your intended audience. Or read it aloud to a friend who can take on the role of your intended audience. Ask your friend to identify your main point and provide feedback from your audience's perspective.