Audience Analysis

For your message to be effective, it must be written for your audience/reader.

During your analysis, you will identify the needs, interest, and personality of your audience/reader.

The 5 steps to complete audience/reader analysis:

1. Who is your primary audience? You identify the primary person in order to personalize your message towards this individual. This is the individual who ultimately makes the decision.

2. What is your relationship with the audience/reader? Does your audience/reader know you? If not, you will need to establish your credibility as a writer by ensuring you use the proper tone (formal vs. informal) and by including content that helps prove you are a credible source of information. For tone: Do you need to be more formal or informal? For content: Do you need to give more information about the issue being discussed and why your thoughts are valid?

3. How will the audience/reader likely react to you or your message? Here your choices are positive, negative, or neutral. Determining how your audience will react enables you to determine content and organization of your message.
   a. If the audience/reader will react positively to your message, place your conclusion or recommendation at the beginning, and then supply the needed details.
   b. If the audience/reader will react neutrally to your message, start with an opening to grab their attention. Your goal is to make sure they will continue to read your message.
   c. If the audience/reader will react negatively to your message, you will need to supply extra evidence, build your case using facts, other experts, etc. In this case, indirect organization is always used. Your recommendations or conclusions will be placed at the end of your message.

4. What does the audience/reader already know? Answering this question is a critical step to help you determine content and writing style. How much background knowledge does your audience have about your topic? Can you use jargon? What words will your audience/reader understand? Always write for their level of knowledge.

5. What is unique about your audience/reader? Answering this question helps you determine content, organization, and tone. Questions to consider: What are the audience/reader’s interests? Would they prefer a more formal tone? Demographic items such as age, education, etc., also help you determine the uniqueness of your audience/reader.