



Center for Writing and Speaking

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Audience Analysis

*According to Steven and Susan Beebe, authors of *Public Speaking: An Audience Centered Approach*, audience analysis is "the process of examining information about the listeners whom you expect to hear your speech." Audience analysis plays into all aspects of speaking, ranging from selecting the topic all the way to your voice level when presenting.*

The purpose of giving a speech is to give the audience something valuable. Whether it is a persuasive speech or an informative presentation, if the audience does not understand it, the purpose will be lost. Be an audience-centered speaker and ask these three questions before presenting:

"Who am I speaking to?"

"What do I want them to know, believe, or do because of my speech?"

"How can I present the information in a way that will best convey my message?"

When evaluating who the audience is and how they perceive you, look at demographic and socioeconomic, psychographic, and environmental factors.

Demographic and Socioeconomic Factors:

- Age
- Sex
- Marital status
- Income level
- Education level
- Sexual orientation
- Occupation
- Geographic region
- Religion, cultural, racial, and ethnic background

Psychographic Factors:

- Attitudes, beliefs, and values
- Lifestyle
- Knowledge of topic
- Personality
- Political views
- Loyalties

(continued on reverse)

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Audience Analysis, Continued

Environmental Factors:

- Size of group
- Seating arrangement
- Time of day
- Occasion
- Stage or platform
- Distance between speaker and audience

Develop a way to bond with the audience from the very beginning.

"Are you over 17 years old? Do you weigh more than 110 pounds? Do you believe you're fairly healthy? Do you want to save lives? If so, then you should donate blood." Because your audience will have a tendency to say "yes" to all these questions, they will be more inclined to listen and feel that you are really speaking to them.

Target a particular audience.

Determine what part of your audience will most benefit from your message and speak directly to them. Give them information that they can use to take action.

Talk to your audience, not at them.

Change your vocabulary to fit the knowledge of your audience. If your audience has little knowledge of your topic, define basic terms for them to understand. If your audience is well versed in the topic, feel free to go in depth with the issue and skip the definitions. The first group will not feel bombarded with information, and the latter will not feel that the topic has been oversimplified.

Make enough physical adjustments to suit the audience.

This can be anything from changing where you stand to ensure the best visibility, speaking loudly and clearly for those sitting far in the back, and making sure that your visual aids are clear and effective for all.

Although not everyone can be specifically targeted, if the speech is presented with the audience in mind, they will feel a more personal connection and be more likely to remember the presentation.

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