

5

Analyzing and Adapting to the Audience

UPON COMPLETING THIS CHAPTER'S TRAINING, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO:

1. Analyze your audience using formal and informal tools
2. Use the makeup of the audience as a guide
3. Plan your speech to reflect audience demographics
4. Plan your speech to reflect audience psychographics
5. Plan your speech to reflect the nature of the situation



JupiterImages/Stockbyte/Thinkstock

Speeches are meant to be delivered to and for an audience. Successful speakers do not speak to inform, convince, motivate, or entertain themselves. Rather, the goal is to gain and maintain an attentive audience. In public speaking, the audience is central, directing the public speaker's performance. Each audience is the speaker's compass.

Your success depends on reaching the audience—building your relationship and sharing your message. That's why you need to learn about **audience analysis**, the process of gathering and interpreting information about receivers, so you can adapt your message to meet and reflect their needs and interests.

COACHING TIP

When I get ready to talk to people, I spend two thirds of the time thinking about what they want to hear and one third thinking about what I want to say.

—Abraham Lincoln

ACTORS ARE A LOT LIKE SPEAKERS. ACTORS WHO ARE IN TUNE WITH AUDIENCE MEMBERS REACH THEM ON A LEVEL THAT THOSE WHO PERFORM ONLY TO HEAR THEMSELVES SPEAK CAN NOT HOPE TO ATTAIN. IF YOU CONSIDER ONLY YOUR WORDS WITHOUT CONSIDERING THE NEEDS AND WANTS OF AUDIENCE MEMBERS, YOU RISK HAVING THE WORDS THAT ARE SO IMPORTANT TO YOU FALL ON DEAF EARS. FOR THE SPEECHES YOU GIVE TO ACCOMPLISH YOUR GOALS, TAKE TIME TO CUSTOMIZE THEM TO SPEAK TO THE PEOPLE YOU ARE TRYING TO REACH WHETHER YOUR PURPOSE IS TO INFORM, PERSUADE, OR ENTERTAIN THEM.

CONTENTS

Play 5.1 Reach Out to Your Audience

- 5.1a Consider the Audience's Make-Up, 94
- 5.1b Be Audience Centered, 94

Play 5.2 Answer Preliminary Questions

Play 5.3 Compose a Demographic Snapshot

- 5.3a Consider Age, 97
- 5.3b Consider Gender, 98
- 5.3c Respect Sexual Orientation, 98
- 5.3d Gauge Knowledge Level, 99
- 5.3e Understand Racial, Ethnic, Religious, and Cultural Ties, 100
- 5.3f Identify Affiliations, 100
- 5.3g Consider Socioeconomic Background, 101

Play 5.4 Compose a Psychographic Snapshot

- 5.4a Understand Values, Beliefs, and Attitudes, 102
- 5.4b Understand How the Audience Perceives Your Topic, 103
- 5.4c Understand How the Audience Perceives You, 103

Play 5.5 Consider the Speaking Situation

- 5.5a Analyze the Occasion, 104
- 5.5b Consider the Location, 104
- 5.5c Consider the Time, 105
- 5.5d Gauge Audience Size, 105

Play 5.6 Get Information About Your Audience

- 5.6a Ask Your Contacts, 106
- 5.6b Use Personal Knowledge and Observations, 106
- 5.6c Research Audience Attitudes, 107

PLAY 5.3

COMPOSE A DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT

Developing an understanding of the audience starts with drawing their demographic profile. A **demographic profile** is a composite of characteristics including age; gender; educational level; racial, ethnic, or cultural ties; group affiliations; and socioeconomic background.

For example, imagine that you are asked to speak to two different audiences on the value of taking socioeconomic diversity into consideration in college admissions. Your first audience is composed primarily of middle-aged, well-educated, wealthy people employed in professional or executive jobs. Your second audience is composed primarily of middle-aged, high-school educated Americans who live in the inner city, work in service or trade jobs, and occupy the lower or lower-middle rungs on the socioeconomic ladder. Which group do you believe would be more sympathetic to your position? Why? Would a successful speaker give the same speech to both groups? Without sacrificing your own stand on the issue, how could you adapt your message to these and other groups?

A **homogeneous audience**—one whose members are similar in age, have similar characteristics, attitudes, values, and knowledge—is rare. More often than not, you will speak before a **heterogeneous audience**—one composed of persons of diverse ages with different characteristics, attitudes, values, and knowledge. When this is the situation, your goal is to be sure you include, rather than exclude, any and all groups, paying attention to the kinds of demographic data you can use to help enhance communication with them.

5.3a Consider Age

5.3b Consider Gender

5.3c Respect Sexual Orientation

5.3d Gauge Knowledge Level

5.3e Understand Racial, Ethnic, Religious, and Cultural Ties

5.3f Identify Affiliations

5.3g Consider Socioeconomic Background

5.3a Consider Age

How old are the members of your audience? One of your key goals is to diminish the age difference between you and those you hope to reach. To accomplish this you need to be sensitive to the references you employ and the language you use. Ask yourself questions like:

- Will they give the same meanings to the words I use?
- Will they be able to identify with my examples and illustrations?
- Are they old or young enough to be familiar with persons and events I refer to?

Speakers would be wise to understand how generational differences influence receivers. For example, according to Lynne Lancaster and David Stillman's *When Generations Collide*, age is a key determiner of audience attitudes.⁵ They note, for example that those born before 1945 are more apt to lean toward the conservative end of the spectrum, respecting both authority and symbols such as “the flag,” and are less likely to be easily persuaded. Their guideword is *loyal*. Baby Boomers, born between 1946 and 1964, tend to be belongers, competitive, more cynical and less likely to bow to authority. Their guideword is *optimism*. Generation X members, born between the mid-1960s and 1980, were more apt to have grown up in blended or single-parent households, tend to be more independent and media savvy. Their watch word is *skeptical*. Finally, members of Generation Y, also known as the Millennial Generation, were born between 1981 and 2000, have grown up with technology, and are both friendship and safety focused.⁶ Their watch word is *reality*. Speakers can use the events and trends that serve as generational markers to guide them in appealing to different audience segments. For example, delivering the commencement address at The Ohio State University, President Barack Obama began this way: “Hello, Buckeyes!” He continued, “Class of 2013, your path to this moment has wound you through years of breathtaking change. You were born as freedom forced its way through a wall in Berlin, and tore down an Iron Curtain across Europe. You were educated in an era of instant information that put the world’s accumulated knowledge at your fingertips. And you came of age as terror touched our shores; an historic recession spread across the nation; and a new generation signed up to go to war.”⁷

Of course, age is more relevant to the development of some topics than others. For example, the age of listeners is crucially significant if you were speaking on life after retirement, but it would be less important if your topic were taking care of planet Earth.

5.3b Consider Gender

Another key variable to consider when analyzing your audience is the ratio of males to females. According to sociolinguist Deborah Tannen, whereas “women speak and hear a language of connection and intimacy . . . men speak and hear a language of status and independence.”⁸ Whether you are a male or a female speaker addressing a predominantly male, female, or mixed sex audience, this finding should affect the amount of time you spend building rapport with your listeners and could alter the approach you select to deliver your information and ideas to them. For example, a speaker at an event such as the Million Man March (where the audience is primarily male) might well focus on the role and status men have in their communities and their homes. In contrast, if national security is the speaker’s topic, and the speech is being given in local school auditoriums to audiences composed primarily of students’ mothers, the speaker might well acknowledge the concerns that mothers share that their children be able to learn in environments that are safe. The speaker would also be certain to tell the mothers what their local schools are doing to protect the safety of their children.

5.3c Respect Sexual Orientation

Although sexual orientation is often an invisible variable, it is important to recognize that not everyone in your audience will be heterosexual. Just as using racially insensitive remarks or demeaning the race or ethnicity of receivers is inappropriate, so is speaking disparagingly of, or displaying a bias against, someone’s sexual orientation. It is important that the examples you incorporate into your presentation include the recognition that not all couples are two members of the opposite sex. By making the effort to include supporting materials that feature gays and lesbians and not just heterosexuals, you ensure that you include all types of receivers. For example, if you were to speak about adoption, you may include in your speech information about local and state resources for both heterosexual couples and same-sex couples who seek to adopt.

5.3d Gauge Knowledge Level

Knowing the average level of education of receivers will help you make choices regarding vocabulary, language style, and supporting materials. Your goal is to adapt your words to your listeners’ knowledge. If you miss your mark and speak above their knowledge level, they will not understand you; if you speak below their knowledge level, you will insult and bore them. An audience that knows either more or less than you think they do is an audience that could stop listening to you at any moment. And that’s the last thing you want your audience to do.

When speaking before a more knowledgeable audience, you will want to deliver a **two-sided presentation**, that is, a presentation that allows audience members to consider alternative perspectives, rather than the more simplistic **one-sided presentation**.⁹ For example, if you were speaking on the trade policies of the United States to a college educated audience, you would want to show receivers how familiar you were with the variety of viewpoints on this issue and explain why, after reviewing existing trade stances, you chose the position you now want them to adopt. Because better-educated individuals are used to processing complex communication and distinguishing among a variety of options, they will be more accepting of your ideas if you present them with strong evidence to back them up and include arguments that are logically sound.¹⁰



Experts or beginners? Adjust your presentation to match your audience’s level of knowledge about the topic.

5.3e Understand Racial, Ethnic, Religious, and Cultural Ties

As you prepare your speech, keep in the front of your mind any potential misunderstandings that racial, ethnic, religious, and cultural differences could foster. For example, a predominantly Catholic or Orthodox Jewish audience is likely to support the abolition of abortion on demand. An audience composed primarily of Japanese individuals will not support a program calling for organ donation because most Japanese do not believe in organ transplants.

If you have an audience of diverse listeners, it is helpful to acknowledge that some of your listeners may disagree with your stance or point. However, it is also up to you to find ways to encourage them to explore and consider different ideas.

Whatever your audience's makeup, do your best to ensure that you open the door to all in your audience and bridge racial, ethnic, religious, or culture differences rather than permit them to get in the way of effective communication.

5.3f Identify Affiliations

Memberships in occupational, political, civic, and social groups also provide speakers with a pretty accurate prediction of the way audience members will react to a topic. Group affiliations serve as a bond. Workers who belong to the same union, citizens who support a political candidate, parents who are active in the PTA (Parents and Teachers Association) probably share a number of key interests, attitudes, and values with others in the group.

For example, addressing the graduating class at the California Institute of Technology, Mary Sue Coleman, the president of the University of Michigan, noted the shared experiences of the audience: "Every undergraduate here took humanities courses, along with plasma physics, fluid dynamics, and polymer chemistry. You leave today with degrees in engineering, math, science and more, but the humanities—art, literature, history and more—will allow you to fully experience the world."¹¹

Whenever you function as a speaker, you need to consider how the various affiliations of audience members could influence both your topic and your approach. Remember, your goal is to identify clues regarding how listeners will respond to your presentation.

5.3g Consider Socioeconomic Background

People from different socioeconomic backgrounds naturally look at situations, events, and issues from very different perspectives. A wealthy audience might not appreciate what it means to grow up in poverty. It is up to you to find the common denominator you can use to increase audience understanding of, and identification with, your subject.

Writing about this issue some years ago, journalist Anthony Lewis noted, "Upper-income Americans generally, whether in public or private employment, live not just a better life but one quite removed from that of ordinary families. They hardly experience the problems that weigh so heavily today on American society." How can you as a speaker close the perceptual gap created by this disparity?

First, you need to develop insight into how income affects life experiences. For example, if you were speaking against the Affordable Health Care Act, a more privileged audience member might not understand how an additional cost of \$400 a month for health insurance for a family of four currently living on \$4,000 a month pushes them beyond their means once rent, food, utilities, and transportation costs are paid. Second, you need to locate examples and appeals that relate your topic to the varied experiences of the different groups that make up your audience and make direct references to them during your speech.

In summary, although each member of your audience is a unique individual, he or she is also a composite of a set of demographic factors. For some audience members, age will be the most significant factor. For others, it will be the groups to which they belong, or their racial and ethnic backgrounds. Rather than functioning as a means for stereotyping receivers, demographic variables should guide you in knowing your audience.

To learn about your audience, you also need to draw a second kind of audience picture: an attitudinal or psychographic profile.

COACHING TIP

There is no director who can direct you like an audience.

—Fanny Brice, performer

BE WISE. USE THE AUDIENCE AS YOUR COMPASS. FEED OFF THEIR ENERGY. SEE YOUR SPEECH THROUGH THE EYES OF AUDIENCE MEMBERS. HEAR YOUR WORDS THROUGH THEIR EARS. USE WHAT YOU LEARN FROM THE DEMOGRAPHIC, ATTITUDINAL, AND SITUATIONAL ANALYSES YOU CONDUCT. ADAPTING TO THE AUDIENCE DOES NOT MEAN ABANDONING THE INTEGRITY OF YOUR IDEAS. RATHER, IT MEANS YOU ARE GUIDED BY YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT IS IN YOUR SPEECH FOR THEM!

PLAY 5.4

COMPOSE A PSYCHOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT

Learning about your audience members' **psychographics**—understanding how they see themselves; their attitudes toward various issues; their motives for being there; and how they feel about your topic, you, and the occasion or event—provides additional clues to their likely reactions. To draw this kind of audience picture, you need to understand the beliefs and values that support audience members' attitudes.

5.4a Understand Values, Beliefs, and Attitudes

5.4b Understand How the Audience Perceives Your Topic

5.4c Understand How the Audience Perceives You

5.4a Understand Values, Beliefs, and Attitudes

Values illustrate what is important to us; they indicate what we judge to be good and bad, ethical or unethical, worthwhile or worthless. They represent our conception of morality and are the standards against which we measure right and wrong. Knowing that respect for elders is among the core values shared by Chinese people, machismo and saving face are core values shared by Mexicans, devoutness and hospitality are valued by Iraqis, and family, responsibility to future generations, and a healthy environment are valued by Americans, how might you adapt a speech on the importance of vaccinations to appeal to the members of each group?¹²

Beliefs are what we hold to be true and false. They are also the building blocks that help to explain our attitudes. For example, those who believe that workers should own their Social Security accounts often favor privatizing Social Security. Because our belief systems are composites of everything we hold to be true and untrue, they influence the way we process messages. Some beliefs are more important to us than are others. The more important our beliefs, the harder we work to keep them alive and the less willing we are to alter them.

Our values and beliefs feed into our attitudes, the favorable or unfavorable predispositions, those mental sets that we carry with us everywhere we go. The attitudes we hold help direct our responses to everything, including a speech. Attitudes are evaluative in nature and are measured on a continuum that ranges from favorable to unfavorable, pro to con, for to against. For example, some hold favorable attitudes toward privatizing prisons, others do not. Our attitudes reflect our likes and dislikes and are shaped by myriad influences including family, education, culture, and the media.

5.4b Understand How the Audience Perceives Your Topic

Knowing your audience's attitudes toward your topic can help you determine how to handle your material. If you can estimate in advance your audience's predisposition to respond favorably or unfavorably, you can adapt your approach so that you address their beliefs and reflect their values and more readily identify the kind of information you need to add, or the misconceptions you need to correct. And if you can demonstrate for them how your message supports values they already hold dear, you are much more likely to succeed.

If you plan to talk about gender bias in schools, you might first want to identify how your listeners feel about equal treatment for males and females, teacher training, gender stereotyping in textbooks, formal policies against sexual harassment, and special programs in math and science for women. Do they feel the topic is an important one?

If, however, you were going to give a speech on what constitutes mutual respect in a relationship, you might explore how audience members feel about sex, the images of relationships portrayed in popular culture, and the concept of commitment.

5.4c Understand How the Audience Perceives You

No matter how audience members feel about your topic, if they believe you to be a credible source, they are much more apt to listen to what you have to say.

What if you know audience members don't look favorably on you? Ask yourself whether they lack information, have received misinformation, or have a legitimate reason for holding the judgment. Then identify what you can do to influence them to view you more favorably. For example, if they don't believe you are an authority on your subject, you can work into your presentation experiences you've had that qualify you to speak on the topic. One speaker gained instant credibility when addressing her audience about how to get out of an abusive relationship by sharing her personal experience with the topic: she had been an abused wife. Another student who asked his audience to accept that the U.S. government should significantly increase social services to the homeless made his message more appealing by telling them his own experiences as a homeless person some years earlier.

What your audience thinks of you could change the way they respond to your message. Your credentials and your reputation accompany you to the podium.



Picture your audience. Consider how your audience may feel about you and your topic.

CONSIDER THE SPEAKING SITUATION

An important component of doing your audience analysis is considering the reason for their attendance, as well as the occasion, location, and time at which your speech will take place.

5.5a Analyze the Occasion

Is your audience attending the speech voluntarily or are they a captive audience? If you know in advance the reasons why people are present for your speech, you can adjust your remarks accordingly.

When thinking about the occasion, you also need to consider the kind of speech audience members are expecting you to deliver. If, for example, you are to speak after dinner, they probably expect to listen to an “after-dinner speech.” If you are speaking to commemorate someone who has passed away, they have a right to expect you deliver a eulogy. If you are speaking at a rally to encourage fund-raisers, listeners might well anticipate a motivational speech.

Whenever possible, it is wise for you to fulfill audience expectations. Thus, be sure you can answer these questions:

- What is the nature of the group you are to address?
- What is your reason for speaking?
- What is the length of time allotted for your presentation?

Environmental variables like place, time, and audience size similarly affect the audience, influencing their reaction to you and your presentation. Consider how these factors could affect your style, language, and manner of delivery, and take steps to ensure that “little things” like the room being too small or the presentation running overtime don’t stand in the way of communication.

5.5b Consider the Location

Consider some of the ways that physical setting could affect the receptivity of listeners by answering these questions:

- Why do we find it difficult to concentrate when we’re too hot or too cold?
- Why do we find it tough to focus on or pay attention to a speaker when a room is poorly lit or noisy?
- Why might an environment that is unattractive, or too attractive, adversely affect audience response?

It is up to you to adapt your presentation to reduce listener discomfort and promote understanding and acceptance. That could mean talking louder or more softly, turning a thermostat down or up, bringing extra lights, or working extra hard to attract and maintain audience interest.

5.5c Consider the Time

If you are giving a speech early in the morning, right after lunch, later in the evening, or late in the week, you probably will have to wake up members of your audience by doing something unusual or by including some intriguing or startling example or illustration that compels their attention. Your goal is to keep your listeners from drifting off into daydream land, and time is of the essence. You might, for example, ask a question or relate an experience that reveals your understanding of the situation.

Another aspect of time is worthy of your attention: the length of time you are given to speak. If you go over the time allotted, don’t expect audience members to necessarily listen. If you drastically shorten your speaking time, don’t expect that audience members will necessarily be pleased. Instead, find out the amount of time you are given, and work to fill that time with as stimulating and as informative a presentation as you possibly can.

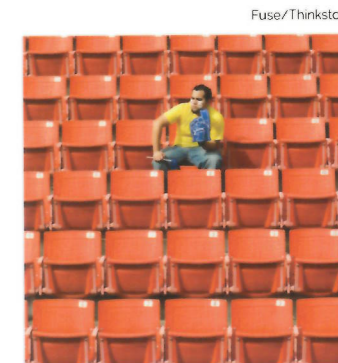
Another consideration is the number of speakers sharing the program with you. Will you speak first, last, or somewhere in between? Will you be flexible enough to tie your remarks to the remarks of those who precede you? Will you be sensitive to the lethargy that could affect your audience after a long evening of virtually uninterrupted listening? Communication consultant Roger Ailes observes that speakers need to be aware that during their speech the minds of audience members might wander off to thoughts of baby sitters or other personal concerns. It is up to the speaker to draw them back in, even shortening the speech to maintain their interest. As he put it, “If the time is short, don’t talk *faster*. Talk *less*. Edit your text.”¹³

Speakers need to empathize with what the audience is feeling and decide how best to communicate that empathy. Accurate perception can prevent audience rejection. How could time affect your presentation?

5.5d Gauge Audience Size

How many people will be in your audience: ten, fifty, a hundred, a thousand, tens of thousands, or millions?

Audience size and formality are directly related. As audience size increases, speaker formality increases. Audience size also directly influences the amount of interaction you are able to have with members of your audience, the kinds of visual aids you use, and whether you will use an amplification system and a podium. Adept speakers are ready to vary their manner and means of presentation to meet the requirements of different audience sizes. In fact, audience size is one of those variables that help make every speech situation different. When you are sensitive to it, you increase your chances for success.



One or many? You may need to adapt your presentation format and style in response to audience size.

PLAY 5.6

GET INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR AUDIENCE

By now you should understand the kinds of information it would benefit you to have about your audience. How can you collect it? What do you ask, where do you go, and what kinds of tools can you use to gain insight into the audience?

5.6a Ask Your Contacts

A sensible starting point is the person who invites you to speak. Ask that individual about the group he or she represents. Questions such as the following will yield valuable information:

- Why does the group exist?
- What goals does the group hope to fulfill?
- What is the nature of the occasion at which I will speak?
- How many people do you anticipate will be in attendance?
- Can you share any insights about the composition of the audience?
- What expectations do you believe audience members will bring with them to the presentation?
- Are you aware of any attitudes held by audience members on the whole that could positively or negatively affect how they receive my presentation?
- How much time will be allotted for the presentation?
- Will any other speakers be sharing the program with me?
- At what point in the program will I speak?
- What will the physical setting be like?
- Will I be introduced?

Of course, your sponsor is not the only person you might query. If you know anyone who has spoken to the group before, or if you know members of the group, you might also ask them similar questions.

5.6b Use Personal Knowledge and Observations

If you'll be speaking before a group that you belong to, such as a class, club, or civic organization, you can make decisions regarding your presentation based, at least in part, on prior conversations you have had with audience members, your perceptions of their opinions of you, and insights you have gained from hearing many of them voice personal opinions. Don't be afraid to watch people in action prior to the speech and to make educated guesses regarding ages, education and income levels, and cultural backgrounds.

5.6c Research Audience Attitudes

The library and the Internet hold clues to the attitudes of audience members. By researching what local, regional, and national opinion polls reveal about the attitudes of various groups on a variety of social and political issues, you might be able to make a number of assumptions regarding the attitudes of those before whom you will speak.

To increase specificity and add to the knowledge you are gathering about the group you will address, you can also use a questionnaire.

The Questionnaire

Your instructor may allow you to distribute questionnaires in class. A well-thought-out questionnaire helps you estimate the amount of knowledge your listeners already possess about your subject and their attitudes toward it. Questionnaires generally contain three different kinds of questions: closed-ended questions, scaled questions, and opened-ended questions.

Closed-ended questions are highly structured, requiring only that the respondent indicate which of the provided responses most accurately reflects his or her answer in a question. The following are examples of closed-ended questions:

Do you think prayer should be permitted in public schools?

Yes No Undecided

Should pregnant teenagers be allowed to attend public schools?

Yes No Undecided

Questions like these usually generate clear, unambiguous answers.

In contrast, **scaled questions** make it possible for a respondent to indicate his or her view along a continuum or scale that ranges by degree from polar extremes such as *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*, *extremely important* to *extremely unimportant*, and *extremely committed* to *extremely uncommitted*, thereby allowing the respondent more leeway than do closed-ended questions.

5.6a Ask Your Contacts

5.6b Use Personal Knowledge and Observations

5.6c Research Audience Attitudes

Developing a comprehensive understanding of your audience will have profound effects on your speechmaking. If diversity means difference, then your challenge as a speaker is to find ways to make your message inclusive of the different ages, religions, education, sexual preferences, races, cultures, group memberships, and psychographic profiles represented among the receivers. As you prepare and plan your speech, keep in mind everything you have learned about the various constituencies that comprise your audience, as well as the specifics of the speaking situation. You need to:

- Phrase your topic in such a way that audience members will not be turned off by it or tune it out.
- Resist the urge to concentrate exclusively on what you want to say; spend more time understanding what the audience wants to hear.
- Convince audience members early in your presentation that what you are communicating will solve a problem they have, help them reach their goals, or otherwise enrich their lives.
- Use your creative powers to encourage your listeners to care about your subject.
- Build on whatever common ground exists between you and your audience; make a personal connection with them.
- Always refer first to areas of agreement before speaking about areas of disagreement.
- Demonstrate that you respect your listeners; if they sense that you think you're superior to them, chances are they won't listen to you. If you communicate to them in words they don't comprehend, your speech won't matter even if they listen to it.

- Hear and see yourself and the speaking environment through the ears and eyes of the members of your audience. Put yourself in their place and they will more readily give you their attention.

istockphoto.com/Paul Calbar

GAME PLAN

ANALYZE YOUR AUDIENCE

- I HAVE CONSIDERED THE DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS OF MY AUDIENCE AND STRATEGIZED THE BEST APPROACH FOR MY SPEECH.
- I HAVE A GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF MY AUDIENCE'S VALUES, BELIEFS, AND ATTITUDES TOWARD MY TOPIC.
- I UNDERSTAND THE PURPOSE OF MY SPEECH, AND I KNOW WHAT MY AUDIENCE EXPECTS OF ME.
- I HAVE QUERIED MY CONTACT ABOUT THE PHYSICAL SETTING AND ORDER OF SPEECHES, AND I'VE ADJUSTED THE LENGTH OF MY SPEECH TO SUIT THE OCCASION.

WORKOUT EXERCISES

AUDIENCE ANALYSIS

Participating in the following activities will enhance your audience adaptation abilities.

1. What Do You Know?

Use what you know about demographics and psychographics to analyze the members of this class and another class. Explain how you will apply the information in your next speech or presentation in each class.

2. Adapt This

Imagine that you were asked to deliver a speech on the contributions of the women's movement to an audience composed of primarily profeminist receivers, and an audience composed of predominately antifeminist receivers. Describe how you might prepare your address to appeal to members of these diametrically opposed audiences without sacrificing your personal principles.

3. Analyze the Audience: Do Audience Members Want to Be Present?

Some audiences attend speeches voluntarily. Others have to be present. Whether audience members are interested in what you have to say or attending simply because they have to affects how you go about presenting your message. If audience members don't want to be there, but must attend, explain what you will do to try and win them over. Specifically, what will you do to make your speech relevant and of interest to them?

4. Approach the Speaker's Stand

Develop a survey to analyze an audience on an issue of your choice; your survey should contain closed-ended, scaled, and opened-ended questions. Once you are sure your survey's questions are clear and unambiguous, have class members complete it. Then, based on what survey results and personal knowledge tell you about your listeners' knowledge of and attitudes toward your chosen issue, explain how you would take that information into account when planning a presentation.

Specifically, in a two- to three-page paper explain how conducting such an analysis helps in addressing both the needs and interests of receivers, and describe how you could use the insights you gained from surveying receivers to guide you in:

- Formulating your objective
- Creating an introduction and a conclusion
- Organizing your main points, and
- Wording a speech

Once this is done, develop a presentation that puts your plan into action.



© iStockphoto.com/olegkalina

RECAP AND REVIEW

1. **Analyze your audience using formal and informal tools.** In addition to drawing three key audience analysis profiles—a demographic profile, a psychographic profile, and an environmental situational profile—speakers need to query contacts, use their personal knowledge and observations, and when possible also research the attitudes of their audience using a questionnaire.
2. **Use the makeup of the audience as a guide.** Speakers need to adapt their speeches to account for the makeup of the audiences they address. In addition to acknowledging differences, speakers also need to discover how much they and their audience members have in common.
3. **Plan your speech to reflect audience demographics.** By developing an understanding of audience characteristics including the age, gender, educational level, racial, ethnic, or cultural ties, group affiliations, and socioeconomic status of audience members, public speakers are better able to customize and adapt their messages to reflect the specific needs and interests of receivers.
4. **Plan your speech to reflect audience psychographics.** By learning about audience member psychographics—what's going on in the minds of receivers, and their attitudes, beliefs, and values—speakers are better able to fine tune their speeches and develop presentations that speak to the lifestyle choices and preferences of receivers.
5. **Plan your speech to reflect the nature of the situation.** By conducting environmental or situational profiles, speakers develop a fuller understanding of how the "where and when" of presentations affects speech content, delivery, and audience reaction. Finally, after delivering your presentation, ask your classmates to rate your speech on a five-point scale indicating:
 - How relevant it was to them, and
 - How interesting it was to them

If the outcome is not what you anticipated, discuss steps you might have taken to increase receptivity and interest.

KEY TERMS

Audience analysis 93

Belief 102

Closed-ended questions 107

Demographic profile 96

Heterogeneous audience 96

Homogenous audience 96

One-sided presentation 99

Open-ended questions 108

Psychographics 102

Scaled questions 107

Two-sided presentation 99

SAGE edge™

Sharpen your skills with SAGE edge at edge.sagepub.com/gamblepsp.

SAGE edge for students provides a personalized approach to help you accomplish your coursework goals in an easy-to-use learning environment.

TOPIC AND RESEARCH

Chapter 6: Select a Topic and Purpose

Chapter 7: Finding and Evaluating Research

Chapter 8: Integrating Support

© iStockphoto.com/Minerva Studio

