



Writing for an Audience

Most students can grasp the concept of changing how they write or speak depending on whom they are addressing with one mini-lesson. This handout offers free materials to teach the lesson. Included is a PowerPoint, card activity, and Boom Learning Deck. You will also find a foldable organizer. After practice, your students will be able to change how they write and speak based on the audience in no time.

Teaching students how to adapt their writing and speaking based on their audience is a crucial skill that aligns with Common Core State Writing and Speaking and Listening standards. Educators can enhance their students' communication skills by helping students understand the importance of considering their audience.

Discussion

Could you go to the store and buy clothes for someone if you didn't know the size of the person?

Would it make a difference if you were buying clothes for one of your parents or a smaller brother or sister?

Writing can be the same way.

Would you write the same if the audience was

- a group of teachers?
- a group of classmates?
- the mayor of Mountain City?
- people reading a newspaper article?



Activity 1: Brainstorm

I like beginning a “Writing for an Audience” lesson by asking students to brainstorm. I ask students to name people for whom they could write. The students will surprise you with their answers. You will receive the names of famous sports athletes, movie stars, and musicians. Naturally, the names of friends and family members are common. I write what they say in the brainstorming session on the board. Instead of naming each person individually, I change the answers to categories of people. For example, Sallie, Mr. Jones, and Beyoncé may become friends, adults, teachers, famous people, etc.

adults	peers	relatives such as aunts or uncles	grandparents
teachers	classmates	Governor of Tennessee	the President of the U.S.
young children	principal	senators or congressmen	counselor
president of a company	mayor	doctor	best friend

After listing the names, I ask questions to get students to think. I want students to determine if a letter to this person should be formal or informal. Questions include the following:

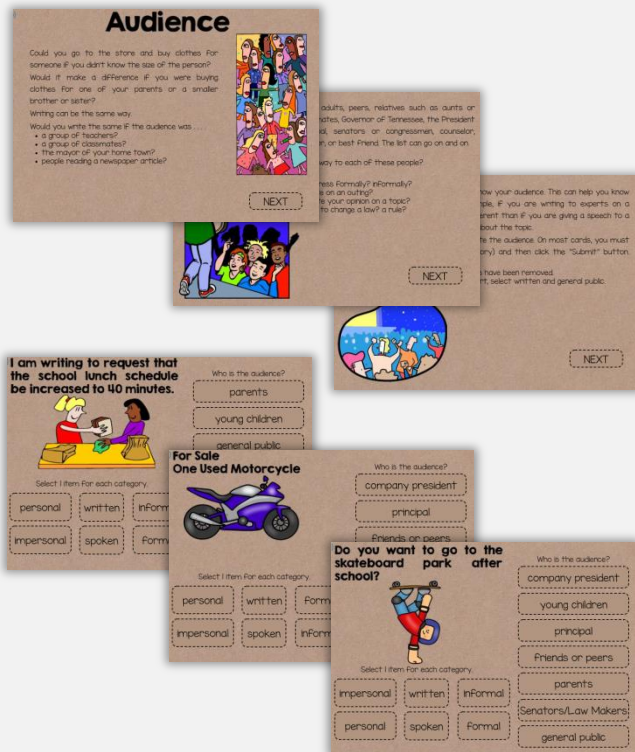
- Would you write the same way to each of the people listed during the brainstorming activity?
- Which people would you address formally? informally?
- Which people from the list would you invite on an outing?
- Which people from the list would you state your opinion on a topic?
- Which people from the list would you ask to change a law? a rule?
- When writing a letter, which people would you begin with ‘Dear?’
- Is it okay to say ‘What’s up?’ to everyone on this list?
- When writing this person, could you use acronyms like ‘lol’ for “laugh out loud”?

Activity 2 Card Activity

Students name who the intended audience is for the snippet of text. "Name the Audience" links are provided in three formats: Boom Learning Decks, a printable, and a PowerPoint presentation.

Get this activity three ways:

This card activity can be found on [Boom Learning](#).

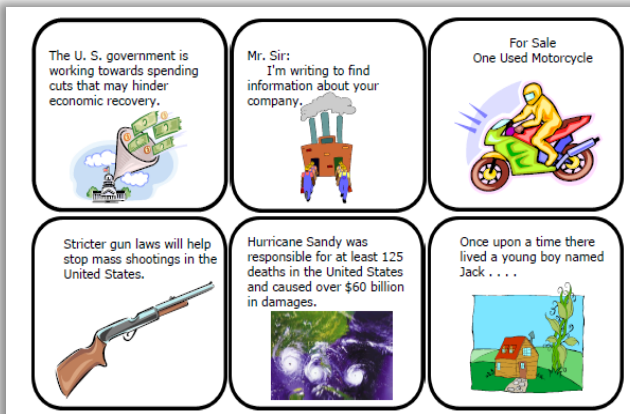


On the following three pages you will find cards with writing samples. Run these on cardstock and laminate for repeated use. Have students work in small groups to identify the audience for each type of writing.

Sort cards by categories.

For example:

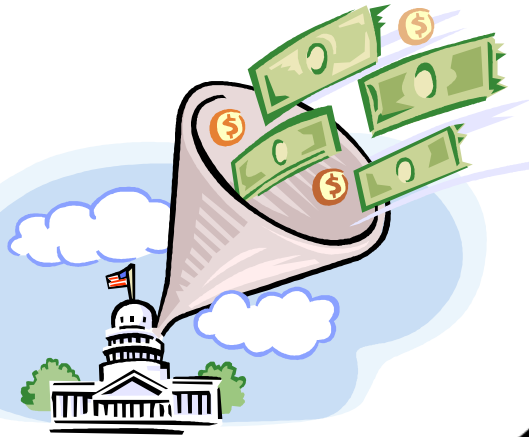
- Formal/Informal
- Personal/Impersonal
- Written/Spoken Language



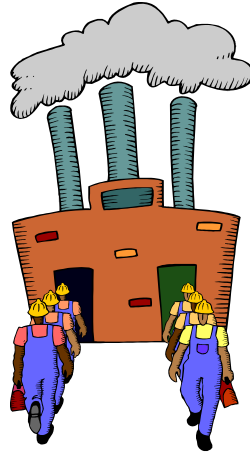
Get the [editable PowerPoint Lesson](#) here.



The U. S. government is working towards spending cuts that may hinder economic recovery.



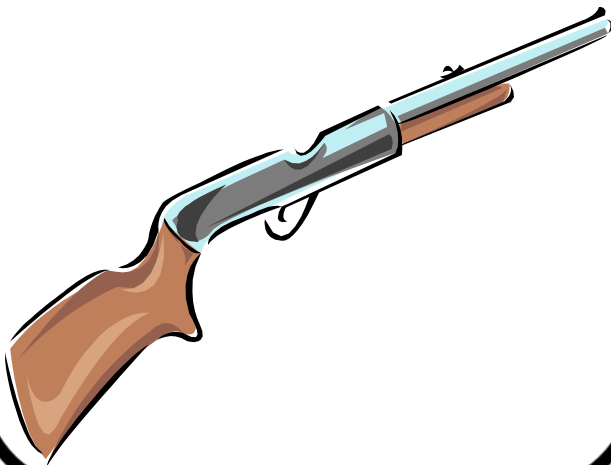
Mr. Sir:
I'm writing to find information about your company.



For Sale
One Used Motorcycle



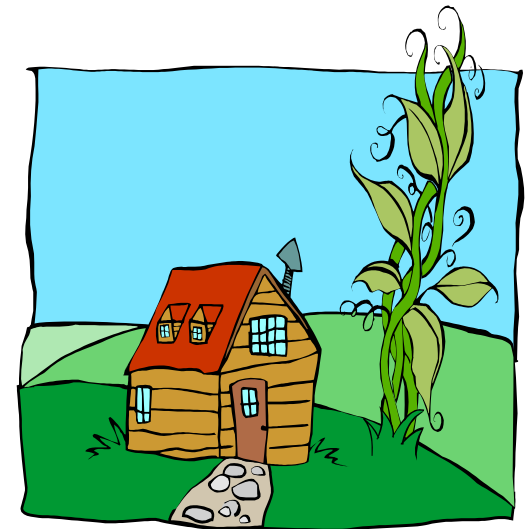
Stricter gun laws will help stop mass shootings in the United States.



Hurricane Sandy was responsible for at least 125 deaths in the United States and caused over \$60 billion in damages.



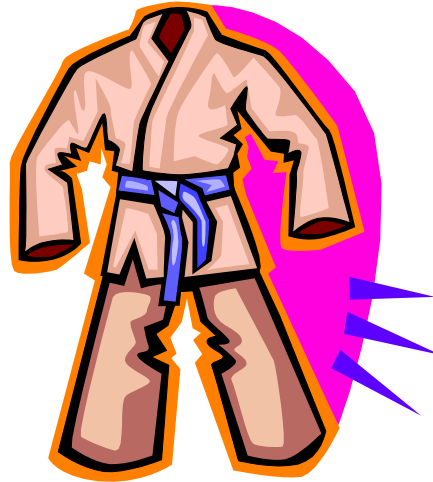
Once upon a time there lived a young boy named Jack...



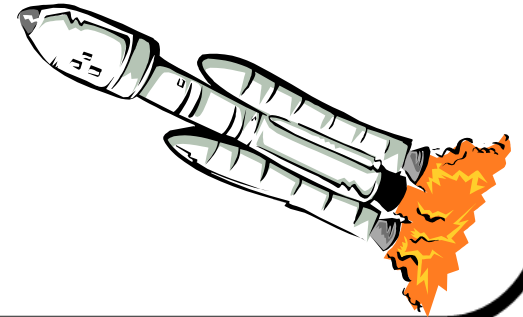
U. S. Secretary of State
John Kerry gives a
statement regarding the
Syrian rebels



Your outfit is so totally
cool, man!



A third unmanned
commercial spaceship was
launched by the Space
Exploration Technologies
Corp.



Salmonella was found
in chocolate-covered
marshmallow eggs.



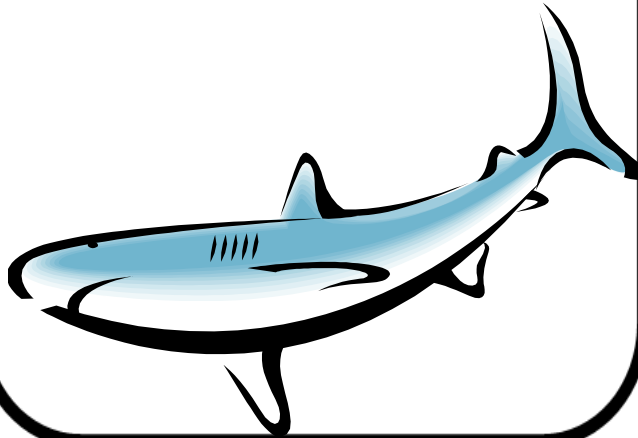
The best movies ever were *Toy
Story* and *Batman Begins*.
Have you seen *The Incredibles*
or *Wall-e*?



Twelve states report that this
year's flu is no longer
widespread.



In a recent poll, *Jaws* was named the top action and adventure movie of all time.



NASA scientists discover an unknown belt of radiation surrounding the Earth.



The yo-yo I purchased is defective.



For our Valentine's Day party we need the following items:

vegetables and dip
cupcakes
chips
fruit



I am writing to request that the school lunch schedule be increased to 40 minutes



Do you want to go to the skateboard park after school?



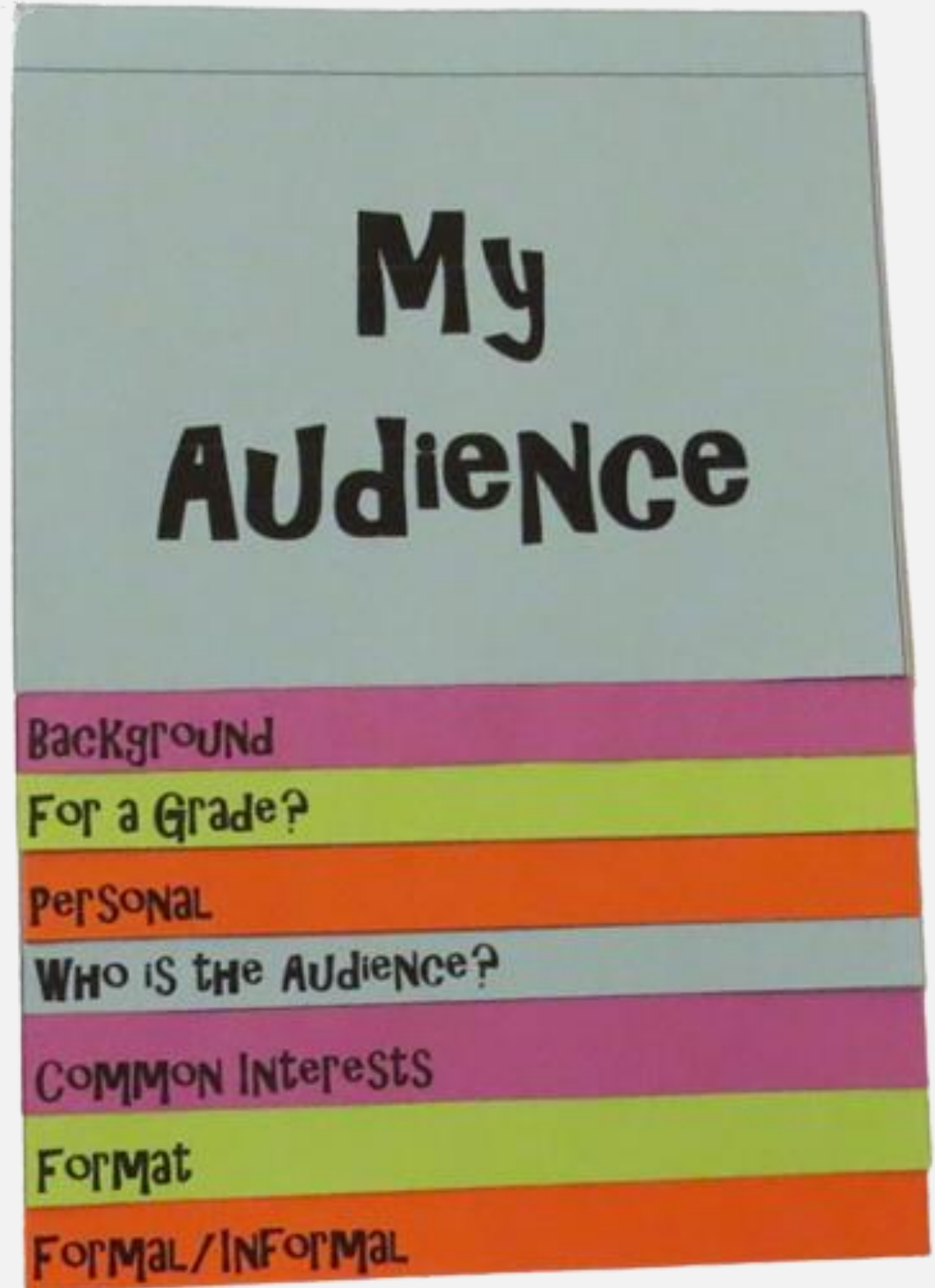
Activity 3 Flip Chart

I love for my students to have reference materials to use as a guide in their interactive notebooks. This staggered flip organizer contains questions students ask themselves to determine details about the audience before they begin writing a piece.

The flip chart organizer contains a series of questions students must ask themselves when beginning a writing project. The questions are intended to help students focus on audience expectations.

To create the organizer, make copies using colorful paper. Cut out the rectangles on the lines indicated. Place a thin line of glue across the top of each rectangle on the back side. Glue the pages at staggering lengths so that the title across the bottom of each page may be read.

Have student use this organizer when beginning each new writing project. In time after repeated use, students will begin to ask themselves these questions without the use of the organizer.



My Audience

Is this writing for . . .

young children?
peers?
adults?
males?
females?

Who is the Audience?

Does my writing need to be formal or informal?

Is this writing for . . .

friends or family?
experts?
a person with authority?

Formal/Informal

Do I need to start with an introduction?

Should I start my writing with a personal story?

Should my text be written in first-person or third-person point of view?

Personal

What does this audience have in common?

Does my audience have specific political, social, or religious beliefs?

COMMON INTERESTS

What is the background of my audience?

Will my audience understand technical terms?

Will my audience need explanations or definitions?

Will my audience expect me to cite references?

Will my audience want primary or secondary sources?

Will my audience expect my facts to be current?

BACKGROUND

Does my writing need to be a specific format...

essay?
article?
report?

Does my writing need . . .

a table of contents?
reference list?
title page?
headings and subheadings?
graphs or charts?

Format

Is this writing for a grade?

Have I checked the rubric to determine if I have included all requirements?

For a Grade?

Activity 4: Media Analysis

Engage students in analyzing various forms of media to identify the target audience and the strategies employed to appeal to that audience. Provide examples such as advertisements, news articles, and social media posts.

Students can work individually or in groups to examine these examples and discuss how the language, tone, and visuals are tailored to specific audiences. Encourage them to consider how they could apply similar techniques in their own writing and speaking tasks.

Advertisement: Title: "PowerMax Energy Drink: Unleash Your Inner Superhero!"



Who do you think this energy drink advertisement targets? Why?

News Article: Title: "Study Reveals Startling Facts About Sleep Deprivation in Teens"



Who is the intended audience for this news article? How can you tell?

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Social Media Post: Title: "Get Ready to Level Up Your Style!"
Platform: an Instagram post promoting a new clothing line



Which age group do you think this Instagram post targets? What elements make you think so?

Public Service Announcement (PSA): Title: "Take Action: Save Our Environment!"



Who is the intended audience for this PSA? Why do you think so?

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Personal Blog Post: Title: "The Ultimate Guide to Surviving High School: Tips from a Senior"



Who is the target audience for this blog post? How do you know?

Video Game Trailer: Title: "Unleash Your Adventure in 'Realm Quest'"



Who do you think this video game trailer is targeting? What elements in the trailer support your answer?

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Video Game Trailer: Title: "Unleash Your Adventure in 'Realm Quest'"



Who do you think this video game trailer is targeting? What elements in the trailer support your answer?

Advertisement: Title: "PowerMax Energy Drink: Unleash Your Inner Superhero!"



Who do you think this energy drink advertisement targets? Why?

This advertisement targets young adults between 18 and 25. The vibrant visuals, high-energy activities, and the tagline "Fuel Your Superpowers" suggest that the drink appeals to active and adventurous individuals in that age range.

News Article: Title: "Study Reveals Startling Facts About Sleep Deprivation in Teens"



Who is the intended audience for this news article? How can you tell?

The intended audience for this news article is parents and educators. The article focuses on the effects of sleep deprivation on teenagers, which is a concern typically relevant to parents and educators. The language used is informative.

Social Media Post: Title: "Get Ready to Level Up Your Style!"
Platform: an Instagram post promoting a new clothing line



Which age group do you think this Instagram post targets?
What elements make you think so?

This Instagram post targets teenagers between 13 and 18. The use of a popular teenage influencer, trendy outfits, casual language, and emojis are all elements that indicate it is tailored to appeal to teenagers who are interested in fashion and follow social media influencers.

Public Service Announcement (PSA): Title: "Take Action: Save Our Environment!"



Who is the intended audience for this PSA? Why do you think so?

The intended audience for this PSA is the general public. The message of taking action to save the environment is relevant to everyone. The use of emotive language, visuals showing the contrast between polluted and clean environments, and a persuasive tone indicate that it aims to reach a broad audience and inspire individuals from all walks of life to contribute to environmental conservation.

Personal Blog Post: Title: "The Ultimate Guide to Surviving High School: Tips from a Senior"



Who is the target audience for this blog post? How do you know?

The target audience for this blog post is incoming first-year high school students. The title mentions "surviving high school," and a senior's perspective suggests that it is intended to help and guide students who are about to enter high school.

Video Game Trailer: Title: "Unleash Your Adventure in 'Realm Quest'"




Who do you think this video game trailer is targeting? What elements in the trailer support your answer?

This video game trailer targets gamers, specifically those between 12 and 18. The epic visuals resonate with gamers in this age group.


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Free Interactive Vocabulary Practice Game for Google Slides




Movable Tiles




Video Spinner



Play with any vocabulary list.



Heathcliff Vocabulary List

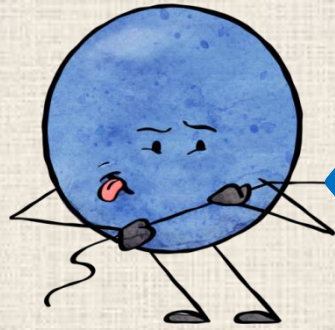


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Credits

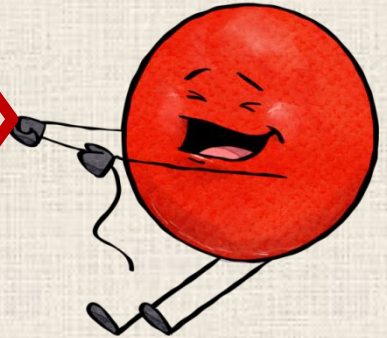




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