

Identifying Your Audience

Audience:

With the exception of diaries and journals, everything that you write addresses an audience—a specific set of readers. There are multiple ways in which you can address different audiences—as a citizen, consumer, member of a group, civic, political, or religious group, or as a response to a social, economic or political problem (6-8).

The Academic Audience:

Students most often write for an audience of one—the instructor who gives the assignment. The instructor wants to know what you know about the subject matter and wants to see if you are able to express your knowledge in a clear and accurate manner.

Checklist: *How to Identify Your Audience*

- Who will read the paper?
- What are the audience's needs? Expectations? Biases? Interests?
- Does the audience need you to supply definitions for full understanding? Overviews? Examples? Analogies?
- What does the audience expect as far as document design? Format? Documentation style? Method of collecting and reporting data? Use of formulas and symbols or special vocabulary?

*All information on this handout came from 6th ed. The Holt Handbook and/or the 4th ed. Brief Handbook.
If you distribute this handout, please note that it came from the University of South Carolina Aiken Writing Room.
For more information, please see the 4th ed. Brief Holt Handbook chapter 1, pages 5 and 6.
You can also visit <http://kirsznermandell.wadsworth.com> for additional help.