

Analyzing Your Audience

Adapted from “A Proactive Approach to the Writing Process”
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Readers of transactive writing are reading for the specific purpose of obtaining new information about a topic of interest to them. Being very specific about who your audience is and what you put in your piece is what makes transactive writing different from expressive and imaginative writing. The writer must consider not only who needs this information, but also what the audience already knows and how well they already understand what you are writing about.

After you have chosen a topic for a transactive piece, answer the following questions for yourself about your targeted audience. **Remember, depending upon the type of piece you are writing, it is possible that not every question will apply to your piece.**

- Who might want or need to know this information?
- What do I want my audience to know or understand after reading my piece?
- Why does my audience need to know this information?
- What does my audience already know about this information? How well does my audience already understand what I am writing about?
- What do I want my audience to *do* after reading my piece?
- Does my audience have the authority to take any action, if that is what I am suggesting?
- What about the audience’s personality or position might affect how they react to what I am writing?

Editor’s Note: Kentucky’s state Writing Portfolio is assessed at the fourth-, seventh-, and twelfth-grade levels. Seventh graders are required to include at least one transactive piece—either informative or persuasive—in their portfolios.