Audience:
The Readers Of Lab Reports
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**WHAT IS “AUDIENCE” IN LAB REPORTS?**

Any group of people who will read a particular piece of writing (the lab report!)

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<th>Instructors</th>
<th>Classmates</th>
<th>President of an organization</th>
<th>Management company staff</th>
<th>Any other number of possibilities</th>
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Writing should meet the needs or expectations of the audience in order to convey information or argue for a particular claim.

Important to consider and know your audience before you start writing!
In general, readers of lab reports want two things:

- To understand the information presented from laboratory experiment
- To evaluate the legitimacy of that information

Knowing the audience will help determine the depth and the breadth your report needs to have.
WHY AUDIENCE MATTERS: DEPTH VS BREADTH

**Depth**

Refers to the extent in which specific topics are detailed and explored in the experiment

- i.e. studying the characteristics of materials, focusing on stress-strain curves

**Breadth**

Refers to the full span of knowledge of a subject studied in the experiment

- i.e. using cumulative knowledge from Materials Science to identify unknown polymers
IDENTIFYING YOUR AUDIENCE

Analyze your audience(s) in order to write effectively by considering:

- **Who** they are
- **What** their levels of expertise are
- **Why** they will be reading your report
IDENTIFYING YOUR AUDIENCE: WHO?

The audience could be an individual or group of people.

Consider the technical role(s) of your audience:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>General Readers?</th>
<th>Managers?</th>
<th>Experts?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


The audience could have varying levels of subject knowledge

Consider their **educational background(s)** on your topic:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Very little (Novices)</th>
<th>The basics (General Readers)</th>
<th>Quite a bit, but not the latest (Specialists)</th>
<th>A lot, including the latest (Experts)</th>
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IDENTIFYING YOUR AUDIENCE: WHY?

The audience could be reading for a particular purpose that is represented from the report.

Consider the context your audience will read your report:

- **Decision-making levels:** Will they make a decision based on report findings?
- **Interest in topic:** How interested are your audience members?
TYPES OF AUDIENCES

There are 3 main categories of audiences in lab reports:

The “Lay” Audience
- general readers with little to no knowledge of subject

The “Managerial” Audience
- supervisors or stakeholders that need your expertise to make a decision about the issue proposed in the report

The “Experts”
- academic peers, work colleagues, or scholars that know the theory and technical background involved in the report
Lab reports are pieces of technical writing.

**ADDRESSING YOUR AUDIENCES:**

**“LAY”**

- **Terms**
  - Think about technical words
  - Define phrases clearly

- **Concepts**
  - Explain complex concepts
  - Use relatable analogies

- **Language**
  - Be plain and straightforward
  - Be consistent with lab topics
**ADDRESSING YOUR AUDIENCES: “MANAGERIAL”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
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| • Think about what the report is supposed to do  
  • i.e. make a recommendation, present key results | • Present important and relevant information  
  • Think about the report’s organization (sections) | • Think of an inverted pyramid:  
  • Start with general info and move to specific facts |
ADDRESSING YOUR AUDIENCES: “EXPERTS”

These reports are typically to show understanding

**Content**
- Include technical terms and phrases
- Be precise in measurable info and findings

**Discussion**
- Interpret and analyze your results
- Describe experimental difficulties/improvements

**Conclusion**
- Reference how results relates to overall purpose
- Make recommendations for future work
REFERENCES


