

# Determine four important characteristics of your audience

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- Who are your readers?
- Why is the audience reading your document?
- What are your readers' attitudes and expectations?
- How will your readers use your document?

# Consider six factors about your most important readers:

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- the reader's education
- the reader's professional experience
- the reader's job responsibility
- the reader's personal characteristics
- the reader's personal preferences
- the reader's cultural characteristics

## Classify your readers into three categories:

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- a *primary audience* of people who use your document in carrying out their jobs
- a *secondary audience* of people who need to stay aware of developments in the organization but who will not directly act on or respond to your document
- a *tertiary audience* of people who might take an interest in the subject of the document

# Your readers have attitudes and expectations:

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- attitudes toward you
- attitudes toward your subject
- expectations about the document

# Why and how will your reader use your document?

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- Why is the reader reading your document?
- How will the reader read your document?
- What is the reader's reading skill level?
- What is the physical environment in which the reader will read your document?

# Learn about your readers

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- Tally what you already know and don't know about your audience.
- Interview people.
- Search for information on the Internet.
- Read documents your readers have written.

# Understand seven major cultural variables that lie on the surface

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- political
- economic
- social
- religious
- educational
- technological
- linguistic

# Understand six cultural variables that lie beneath the surface:

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- focus on individuals or groups
- distance between business life and private life
- distance between ranks
- nature of truth
- need to spell out details
- attitudes toward uncertainty

# Consider four points about cultural variables beneath the surface:

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- Each variable represents a spectrum of attitudes.
- The six variables do not line up in a clear pattern.
- Different organizations within the same culture can vary greatly.
- An organization's cultural attitudes are fluid, not static.

# Use these eight strategies for writing for readers from other cultures:

- Limit your vocabulary.
- Keep sentences short.
- Define abbreviations and acronyms in a glossary.
- Avoid jargon unless you know your readers are familiar with it.
- Avoid idioms and slang.
- Use the active voice whenever possible.
- Be careful with graphics.
- Be sure someone from the target culture reviews the document.

# Determine your purpose

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Ask yourself:

- What do I want this document to accomplish?
- What do I want readers to know or believe?
- What do I want readers to do?