

**A POCKET
GUIDE TO
PUBLIC
SPEAKING
4TH EDITION**

Chapter 6

Analyzing the Audience

Audience Analysis



- Audience analysis
 - ▶ Analyzing information about audience members' attributes
- Audience-centered approach
 - ▶ Consider the audience throughout speech preparation

Adapt to Audience Psychology: Who Are Your Listeners?

- Perspective taking
 - ▶ Helps you learn about your audience
 - ▶ Audience evaluates from their own viewpoint
- Attitudes
 - ▶ Evaluations of people, ideas, objects, events
 - ▶ People act in accordance with them

Adapt to Audience Psychology: Who Are Your Listeners? (cont.)

- Beliefs

- ▶ Ways in which people perceive reality

- Values

- ▶ Enduring judgments of good and bad
- ▶ Shape attitudes and beliefs
- ▶ Run deeper than attitudes and beliefs

Appeal to Listeners' Attitudes, Beliefs, and Values

- Evoke attitudes, beliefs, and values.
 - ▶ Makes your speech relevant and motivating

Gauge Listeners' Feelings toward the Topic

- Topic that is *new* to listeners:
 - ▶ Show why the topic is relevant.
 - ▶ Relate topic to familiar issues.

Gauge Listeners' Feelings toward the Topic (cont.)

- Topic listeners know relatively little about:
 - ▶ Stick to the basics.
 - ▶ Include background information.
 - ▶ Avoid jargon.
 - ▶ Define unclear terms.
 - ▶ Repeat important points.

Gauge Listeners' Feelings toward the Topic (cont.)

- Topic listeners are *negatively disposed* toward:
 - ▶ Focus on establishing rapport and credibility.
 - ▶ Begin with areas of agreement.
 - ▶ Discover root of their negative bias.

Gauge Listeners' Feelings toward the Topic (cont.)



- ▶ Tactfully introduce the argument's other side.
- ▶ Offer solid evidence.
- ▶ Use sources likely to be accepted.
- ▶ Justify developing a positive attitude.

Gauge Listeners' Feelings toward the Topic (cont.)

- Topic listeners hold *positive attitudes* about:
 - ▶ Stimulate audience to feel more strongly.
 - ▶ Emphasize the argument they agree with.
 - ▶ Tell stories with vivid language.

Gauge Listeners' Feelings toward the Topic (cont.)

- If listeners are a *captive audience*
 - ▶ Motivate them to pay attention;
 - ▶ Stress what is most relevant;
 - ▶ Pay attention to your speech's length.

Gauge Listeners' Feelings toward You as the Speaker

- Well-liked speakers are more accepted.
- Display characteristics of speaker credibility.
 - ▶ Establish identification with the audience.
 - ▶ Use eye contact and body movements.
 - ▶ Dress appropriately for the audience.

Gauge Listeners' Feelings toward the Occasion

- Different circumstances, different expectations and emotions
 - ▶ Captive audience
 - ▶ Less positively disposed than voluntary audience
- Anticipate and adjust for audience expectations.

Adapt Your Message to Audience Demographics

- Demographics: statistical characteristics of a population
 - ▶ Age
 - ▶ Ethnic or cultural background
 - ▶ Socioeconomic status
 - ▶ Religion and political affiliation
 - ▶ Gender

Adapt Your Message to Audience Demographics (cont.)

- Identify your target audience.
 - ▶ Individuals most likely to be influenced
 - ▶ Should establish a connection with them

Age

- Age groups share a familiarity with
 - ▶ Significant individuals;
 - ▶ Local and world events;
 - ▶ Noteworthy popular culture.
- Be aware of the audience's age range.

Ethnic or Cultural Background

- Audience's ethnic and cultural composition
 - ▶ Sensitivity required for a successful speech
 - ▶ People may
 - ▶ Speak a different language;
 - ▶ Belong to a co-culture.
 - ▶ All want recognition from the speaker.

Socioeconomic Status

- Socioeconomic status:
 - ▶ Income (influences many aspects of life)
 - ▶ Occupation (often reflects a person's interests)
 - ▶ Education (influences ideas, perspectives, and abilities)

Religion and Political Affiliation

- Religion
 - ▶ Many religious traditions in the U.S.
 - ▶ Different views common within religious groups
- Political affiliation
 - ▶ Beware of making unwarranted assumptions.
 - ▶ Many people are touchy about politics.

Gender

- Social, psychological sense of male/female
- Avoid making assumptions based on gender.
 - ▶ Can undermine receptivity to your message
- Try to anticipate attitudes about gender.
 - ▶ Plan accordingly.

Adapt to Cultural Differences

- Audience members hold different cultural perspectives.
 - ▶ May not mesh with your own
- Treat listeners with dignity.
- Act with integrity.

Consider Cross-Cultural Values

- Core values seen in the dominant culture:
 - ▶ Achievement and success
 - ▶ Equal opportunity
 - ▶ Material comfort
 - ▶ Hard work

Consider Cross-Cultural Values (cont.)

- ▶ Practicality and efficiency
- ▶ Change and progress
- ▶ Science
- ▶ Democracy
- ▶ Freedom

Consider Cross-Cultural Values (cont.)

- Sensitive message delivery requires understanding values.

Focus on Universal Values



- Focus on universally aspired-to values:
 - ▶ Love and unity
 - ▶ Truthfulness, fairness, and responsibility
 - ▶ Freedom and tolerance
 - ▶ Respect for life

Interview and Survey Audience Members

- Conduct brief interviews.
 - ▶ One-on-one in a group
 - ▶ In person or by telephone/e-mail
- Interview a sampling of the audience.
- Interview a knowledgeable audience representative.

Interview and Survey Audience Members (cont.)

- Survey the audience.
 - ▶ Distribute a questionnaire.
 - ▶ Closed-ended questions elicit specific answers.
 - ▶ Fixed-alternative questions (yes or no)
 - ▶ Scale questions (measure level of agreement)
 - ▶ Open-ended questions allow elaboration.

Consult Published Sources

- Organizations often publish information about themselves.
 - ▶ Web sites
 - ▶ Print articles
 - ▶ Annual reports

Consult Published Sources (cont.)

- Published opinion polls:
 - ▶ Pew Research Center
 - ▶ National Opinion Research Center
 - ▶ Roper Center for Public Opinion Research

Assess the Speech Setting and Context

- Where will the speech take place?
- How long am I to speak?
- How many people will attend?
- Will I need a microphone?

Assess the Speech Setting and Context (cont.)

- How will any necessary equipment function?
- Where will I stand or sit?
- Will I be able to interact with listeners?
- Who else will be speaking?
- Are there special circumstances that I should acknowledge (the rhetorical situation)?