

**Module: Writing**

**Lesson Title: Writing with a Purpose**

**Objectives and Standards**

Students will:

- Identify purpose in writing for the workplace or school
- Identify the audience to whom they are writing
- Understand the importance of identifying purpose and audience as part of the planning process when writing

Florida Adult Basic Education Reading Standards	Level Expectation
Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (CCR.WR.ABE.4)	NRS Level 3 - Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**Materials**

- Handout A: Begin with a Purpose in Mind
- Handout B: Who’s My Audience?
- Sample documents from the workplace: letters, memos, emails, handbooks, policies, other nonfiction text

**Instructional Plan**

*Overview*

An essential element in writing is the identification of both the purpose for which you are writing and the audience to whom the writing is intended. Many adult education students forget this step in the planning process, whether they are writing for school, home, or the workplace. Effective writing is all about communication and the more effective the writing, the better the student will be able to convey his/her thoughts and ideas.

In this lesson, students will learn the basic purposes for writing and strategies for determining their audience.

*Process*

Prior to introducing the lesson, pull some sample documents from your home or workplace. It is best that you pull authentic materials for this lesson so students are looking at items which they may have to produce in the future or that they may encounter in the workplace, home, or at school. These documents may include informal emails, an excerpt from a handbook, notice from the school’s bulletin board, letters, texts, advertisements, or other nonfiction text. Label each of the documents with a letter and place them around

the room. During the lesson, students will have an opportunity to move around the room, examine the documents, and determine the purpose and audience of each.

Introduce the lesson by asking students the purpose of writing. Students may give a number of different answers including: to let someone know what is happening, to tell someone something, etc. The key is to help students understand that writing, no matter the form, is about communication.

Explain that there are several purposes for writing. These include:

- To express ideas
- To inform someone
- To explain something
- To explore a topic
- To persuade someone

Emphasize that in the workplace, there are three general reasons for writing. These include:

- To give information – tells, explains, or instructor the reader on something
- To obtain action – gets someone to do something
- To communicate appreciation or displeasure – provides commendations for good work or recommendations for how to improve the work being done

Tell students that you have placed a variety of documents around the room. Explain that each document is labeled – A, B, C, etc. Divide the students into pairs. Give each pair a copy of **Handout A: Begin with a Purpose in Mind**. Have students move around the room and review each document. Have them list the type of document and the purpose. Explain that they will have an opportunity to review the documents more closely later in the lesson and that they should not fill in the “audience” portion of the handout at this time.

Debrief the activity by having students share their results. If there is any disagreement among the findings of the pairs, discuss the differences and then take a closer read through the document to identify its purpose. Remind students that each document must fit into one of the five purposes listed above.

Explain that the other factor that is essential in effective writing is recognizing the audience to whom the writing is directed. Ask students why they think understanding the audience would be important when writing, especially in the workplace. Students answer may vary, but should include the following:

- To determine the language that will be used (formal versus informal)
- To recognize what the audience already knows about the topic
- To provide information that the audience wants or needs to know
- To understand how the audience may feel about a position or issue

Have students return to their pairs and once again review the documents from around the room. Provide ample time for students to more closely read the documents and determine the audience for whom it was developed. Have them fill in column three of **Handout A**.

Debrief the activity by having students share their results. If there is any disagreement among the findings of the pairs, discuss the differences and then take a closer read through the document to identify its audience.

Distribute **Handout B: Who's My Audience?** to the students. Explain that this letter was written by an employee for her manager to send. Ask students if this circumstance when writing might cause any difficulty for the employee. Students may indicate that they would be afraid to write something for their boss, that they might not know what to say or how to say it the right way, etc. Explain that in the workplace, employees are often called on to use their writing skills for a supervisor. If that is the case, the employee must think carefully about the purpose and audience for which they are going to be writing. In addition, they must think of the format of the writing, such as a text, email, letter, etc. The purpose and audience will be extremely important in determining the appropriate format and tone for the writing.

Have students read the letter on **Handout B**. Have them identify

- The purpose of the letter
- The audience for whom the letter was written
- Key words that led them to an understanding of purpose and audience

After students have read the letter. Have them work in groups to evaluate the letter and its effectiveness. Discuss their results.

#### *Sample Debriefing Questions*

- Which did you determine first – the purpose or audience? Why?
- Which was easier – determining the purpose or identifying the audience?
- How could you use this skill in writing at home or in the workplace?

#### **Modifications for Different Levels**

At a lower complexity level, break the lesson into smaller parts by first having students work only with the purpose. After students are comfortable determining the purpose of something they have read. Have them work as a group to write a few sentences or a paragraph about that has a specific purpose.

For example, you may wish to ask the students how they would respond to a question on a job application that asks them why they would be a good fit for the company. Have students brainstorm ideas that could be included in their paragraph. If necessary, write the information gathered from the brainstorming session on the board and then develop the paragraph together. This method of collaboratively writing will allow students to express their ideas, but not worry about grammar or sentence structure issues.

At a more complex level give students a scenario and have them produce a document based on that scenario. The student would be expected to determine from the scenario the purpose and the audience for their document. Make sure that students plan, draft, revise, and edit their work before submission. Have other students critique their work for effectiveness in conveying the purpose and meeting the needs of the intended audience.

A sample scenario might include the following:

*Recently, there has been a lot of discussion about local utility companies raising their rates on both electricity and natural gas. It is almost summer, and you know that many people in your neighborhood are elderly and will depend on their air conditioning during the hot, humid months ahead. You also know that an increase in*

*rates could be a real challenge for many of your neighbors on a fixed income. You believe that another rate increase is not necessary at this time and want to help your neighbors avoid financial problems.*

*Who can you write about the problem and what are you going to say? Determine the purpose and audience for your writing sample.*

### **Assessments/Extensions**

Have students develop their own writing samples. Explain that they can select both the purpose and audience of their choice. Give the students five minutes to do some initial planning to determine the purpose and audience of their writing. If students have difficulty deciding what to write, provide an example such as: a note to their child's teacher about an upcoming doctor's appointment.

Students may use situations from home or the workplace to determine the purpose and audience for their writing sample. Have students plan, organize, and draft their responses. When students have completed their assignment, have them exchange their writing with another student. That student must

- Identify the purpose of the writing
- Identify the audience to whom it was targeted
- Identify parts or key words within the writing that enabled them to determine purpose and audience
- Make any recommendations for revisions to the document

After the assignment is complete, debrief the activity by asking students how they decided on the purpose and audience of their writing sample. Did they encounter any difficulties when writing? Have students critique their own writing and determine if there are things they could do that would make it more effective?

**Handout A: Begin with a Purpose in Mind**

Type of Document	Purpose	Audience
<b>Example</b> <i>Magazine article about a new method for losing weight</i>	<i>To persuade people to try the new diet or method for losing weight</i>	<i>Individuals who may think or feel that they need to lose weight</i>
<b>Sample A</b>		
<b>Sample B</b>		
<b>Sample C</b>		
<b>Sample D</b>		
<b>Sample E</b>		
<b>Sample F</b>		
<b>Sample G</b>		
<b>Sample H</b>		

## Handout B: Who's My Audience?

Read the following letter written by a staff member at a local hotel. Identify the purpose and audience for the letter.



Bayside Inn  
111 Bay Street  
Pensacola, FL 32501  
[www.baysideinn.com](http://www.baysideinn.com)

January 9, 2014

Mr. Hector Janssen  
784 Miracle Way  
Kalamazoo, MI 49001

Dear Mr. Janssen:

We would like to thank you for your kind letter of appreciation. As a company that prides itself on customer satisfaction, we are honored to be selected as your hotel of choice when you visit Pensacola.

Your business is much appreciated, and we will do our very best to continue to meet your travel needs. Your continued patronage and suggestions are a vital part of our hotel's growth. We appreciate your trust, and we'll do our very best to provide level of service you have come to expect from the Bayside Inn.

Thank you again for your kind words and for continuing to provide us with an opportunity to serve both you and your business associates. If there is anything that we can do to make your stay more enjoyable, please let us know.

Sincerely,

Rai Sellars  
Executive Manager