**Audience**

1. **General Considerations:**

You should consider your audience when choosing:

* Subject -- will it interest them?
* Tone -- is it suitable?
* Diction -- formal? informal? casual?
* Sentence Structure -- how intricate?
* Degree of Argumentation -- is your audience friendly, hostile, or indifferent?

1. **Attend to Demographics:**

You might consider demographic data about your audience (if known), such as age, sex, race, cultural background, level of education, religion, social class, etc., and tailor your essay accordingly. If you are writing for a general audience, assume your reader is intelligent and interested in any new analysis, new information, or new insight you can present. You should consider whether you're addressing a specialized audience (one with specific, perhaps technical knowledge of the subject) or a general audience (one that is educated and interested, but without special knowledge of the subject). Vary your diction, organization, and argumentation accordingly.

1. **Consider Expectations:**

You should consider the expectations of your audience--what do they expect to get out of your essay? And how will you meet those expectations? You might put yourself in your reader's place and imagine what you would like or dislike about the essay. Or, as you write, you might imagine a concrete, representative person before you, to whom you write as you would talk (that is, in a direct, natural voice). Or you might imagine that someone you actually know and respect is your representative reader. Being conscious of writing to someone will make your writing more relaxed and natural.

1. **Get Feedback:**

If you are unsure how much a general reader would know about your topic, ask someone. You can get valuable feedback about readers by asking a friend, family member, or colleague about their special interests and prior knowledge.

**5) Include Yourself:**

Don't eliminate yourself from your writing (unless perhaps in certain abstract or scientific essays, where person less "objectivity" is demanded), but be sure that the self you present to the reader is direct, unpretentious, and honest. You must win your audience's trust. Don't write like someone you're not.

1. **Be Provocative:**

Remember that each individual reader will have a different perspective which grows out of his or her culture, gender, and unique life experience. You don't want to offend your audience (consider your own experiences as a reader). At the same time, don't be afraid to challenge your audience, to make them reach a bit. Most good writers shake their readers up occasionally.

1. **Acknowledge Opposing Arguments:**

If you're trying to persuade a hostile audience to adopt your point of view, be fair and acknowledge the strength of the opposing arguments--but also be confident and present your arguments firmly. Be polite and professional, but never servile or arrogant.

1. **Don't Write to Impress:**

We all have a tendency to try to impress our audience. Fight this tendency. It generally leads to pretentious diction, obscurity, and even dishonesty, and you will quickly lose credibility as a writer.

1. **Remember Your Purpose:**

Perhaps your most important reader is ultimately yourself. You must be satisfied with the presentation of your ideas, your words. Draw confidently on your own insight, remembering that the purpose of writing is simply to communicate.