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Purpose and Audience

GLCEs: W.PR.06.01, W.PR.06.04



Getting the Idea

The **purpose** is the reason for writing. A writer may want to inform, persuade, entertain, or explain something to the reader.

The **audience** is the group of people that writing is meant for.

Writers match their **voice** to both their purpose and their intended audience. Voice consists of choice of words and also style of presentation.

A writer intending to tell an entertaining story to a general audience can be more informal than a writer intending to convey particular information about a specialized topic to a specific audience with that interest. The writer matches the **level of formality** of the writing to its intended readers. A general audience needs more everyday words, while a special interest audience can understand technical terms in their area of interest. It is important to maintain a consistent level of formality throughout a piece. Most writing is not too casual or too technical.

Here are some examples of purpose, kind of text, and audience/level of formality:

Signal Words to Show Organization Pattern

Purpose	Kind of Text	Audience / Level of Formality
Share a story	Narrative Fiction	General/Informal
Instruct	How to Guide	General/Informal Specialist/Formal
Explain/Inform	Informational Text	General/Informal Specialist/Formal
Share viewpoint	Persuasive Text	General/Informal

The chart shows that for most purposes, informal writing is best. Informal means writing that appeals to mature students and interested adults.

Guided Example

DIRECTIONS

Read this passage and answer the questions that follow. The hints can help you find the correct answers.

The Air Writer

The molecular structure of Airink consists of an undecahedron arrangement of helium atoms surrounding a molecule of Tintone. Tintone is a patented tetramere of four carbon atoms covalently bonded to a nanoparticle of squid ink. The undecahedral arrangement of helium atoms of Airink gives our product its unique ability to float in the air, while the covalently bonded tetramere of carbon atoms make our product flexible. A convenient dial is located on the nozzle of the Airink applicator to allow the Air Writer to select the desired color. Color is determined by the quantal arrangement of charge applied to the nanoparticle of squid ink via the convenient dial. Although our product is still at the experimental stage, we expect that soon, the entire world will be enjoying the freedom and creativity to Write In Thin Air!



Thinking It Through

- The intended readers of this piece would be
 - a general audience wanting to learn about Airink for the first time.
 - an audience of specialists wanting to learn more about Airink.
 - an audience of bored teenagers who might want to buy Airink.
 - parents who want to buy their children a new kind of ink.
- The voice of this piece is considered highly technical because
 - it uses formal language and specific terminology.
 - it is easy to read and uses many commonly understood words.
 - it uses casual grammar and a secret slang code known only to insiders.
 - it tells a story with universal themes.

HINT

The writer of the piece expects the readers of it to already know many of the terms and concepts discussed.

HINT

A scientific dictionary and advanced training in chemistry and physics are needed to understand the words.

Lesson Practice



Guided Reading

DIRECTIONS

Read the story below. While you are reading, think about the author's purpose and audience.

My Bad

"Why didn't you tell me that you went to see a movie with Arni last weekend," I shouted.

"But, but, . . . you're my best friend, Oliver," Sebastian said, "Why does it matter?"

"That's exactly my point," I said. "We were best friends, but now that you betrayed me with Arni, we are not!"

"I don't understand," Sebastian said. "Just because I'm friends with you does not mean that I can't be friends with Arni."

"I can't be your best friend if you're friends with Arni," I said.

"Why not?" Sebastian said. "There's nothing wrong with Arni."

"Well," I said, "I invited Arni to my birthday party in July, and he never showed up!"

Sebastian laughed and said, "Why don't we go ask him?"

Sebastian and I walked over to the lunch table where Arni was sitting with his friends.

"Hi, Arni," Sebastian said and shook his hand.

"Hi, Sebastian. Hi, Oliver," Arni said and held out his hand to me. I refused to shake.

"Oliver would like to know," Sebastian said, "why you didn't come to his birthday party in July."

"I'm sorry I couldn't come to your birthday party, Oliver," Arni said. "Every summer I go to camp on Beaver Island. I didn't see your invitation until I got back in August. You're right for being angry at me. I should have told you."

I was taken aback by Arni's politeness and my own brash arrogance. Of course I was privy to Arni's annual festival sojourns in the sticks. It had just slipped my mind.

"My bad," I said and held out my hand.

Reading Guide

How does the author's use of dialogue and em-dashes affect the voice of the piece?

What does the author's use of quotation marks say about his purpose for writing the piece?

Does the author maintain a consistent level of formality throughout the piece?

Independent Practice**DIRECTIONS**

Use the story to answer each question. Circle the letter beside the best answer.

- The passage can best be described as
 - folktale.
 - fable.
 - realistic fiction.
 - informational text.
- The author wrote, " 'My bad,' I said and held out my hand." *My bad* is an example of
 - a baseball term.
 - slang.
 - a highly technical term.
 - formality.
- Which best describes the author's purpose?
 - tell a story
 - promote a product
 - explain/inform
 - share a viewpoint
- The author writes, "Of course I was privy to Arni's annual festival sojourns in the sticks." Even without knowing the meanings of all the words in this sentence, it is easy to see that it
 - expresses the author's purpose.
 - makes use of a consistent voice.
 - contains a mix of levels of formality.
 - shows concern for the author's audience.