

Audience

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WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn about one of the elements of the basic speech communication model. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. Elements of Speech Communication: The Audience
2. Elements to Consider About Your Audience

1. Elements of Speech Communication: The Audience



At its simplest, communication consists of a speaker, a message, and a receiver. Following this model, your speech represents the message. Naturally, this makes you the speaker. To whom you speak then, represents the receiver: in this case, your **audience**.

When looking at this most basic model of communication, your audience represents one-third of the communication equation, proving it is one of the three most important elements to consider as you craft your

speech.



TERM TO KNOW

Audience

A group of people within hearing; specifically a group of people listening to a performance, speech etc.; the crowd seeing a stage performance.

2. Elements to Consider About Your Audience

Your audience may be represented by a variety of distinguishing characteristics and commonalities, often referred to as **demographics**.

It is important to remember that you should not stereotype or make assumptions about your audience based on their demographics; however, you can use these elements to inform the language, context, and delivery of your speech. The first question you should ask yourself before you begin crafting your speech is "Who is my audience?"

As you begin to answer this question for yourself, here are some key elements to consider as you begin to outline and define your audience:

- Age: What age ranges will be in your audience? What is the age gap between you and your audience members? Age can inform what degree of the historical and social context they bring to your speech as well as what knowledge base they have as a foundation for understanding information.
- Culture/Race: While these are two separate demographics, one informs the other and vice versa. Race and culture can influence everything from colloquialisms to which hand gestures may or may not be appropriate as you deliver your speech.
- Gender: Is your audience mostly women? Men? A mix of the two? It is important to consider your gender and your audience, as the gender dynamic between you and your audience can impact the ways in which your speech may be received.
- Occupation/Education: Just as age, culture, race, and gender factor into your audience's ability to relate to you as a speaker, so may occupation and education. These elements also help to give you an understanding of just how much your audience already may or may not know about your given subject.
- Values and Morals: While these may not be readily apparent, they can factor prominently into your ability to be likable to your audience. Particularly if you are dealing with controversial material, your audience may already be making judgments about you based on your values and morals as revealed in your speech and thus impacting the ways in which they receive your message.



TERM TO KNOW

Demographic

A demographic criterion: a characteristic used to classify people for statistical purposes, such as age, race, or gender.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned that before you start crafting your speech, you should identify your **audience**. Your audience may share commonalities and characteristics known as demographics. You should never stereotype or generalize your audience by their demographics, but you can use them to inform the language, context, and delivery of your speech. **Audience demographics to consider** include age, culture, race, gender, education, occupation, values, and morals.

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