

## 2.4.20: Writing for the Reader

### Learning Objectives

- Discuss strategies for creating reader-focused writing

The audience (your reader, if the message is written) is the receiver of the business communication. This model focuses on the choices a writer or sender of a message can make to best convey their message to the receiver. If all choices are related to considering the receiver's needs over those of the sender, the message is more likely to achieve its purpose quickly.

To understand this concept, think about learning to change a tire. One way people could learn about changing a tire is from a description in the owner's manual sent by the auto manufacturer. Many individuals, on the other hand, have learned from watching or participating in the process—gaining hands-on experience. Which is easier? For the manufacturer (sender) the information is easy and cheap to print. For the tire changer (receiver) a personal assistant is easier, but more expensive. The sender needs to find the best balance.

Or, think about a clothes washing machine. The manuals tend to be printed on inexpensive paper and the grayscale images depict the controls. Some companies have decided to include instructional DVDs that demonstrate the controls. Which of these examples is more focused on the receiver? Which is more effective? Put the receiver first.

### watch it

Please view this thirteen minute video about the impact and power in focusing on the audience. In this module, this concept is called **you-view**.

A link to an interactive elements can be found at the bottom of this page.

You-view, or putting the reader first, encompasses two skills:

1. Put the receiver's needs before the sender's needs
2. Start with what the receiver needs to know

### Finding a Lost Shipment

Lynnette has worked hard to find a lost shipment. She finally has enough information to email the customer and provide an update on the situation. She begins writing up her draft: "You won't believe how many people I had to contact to find this for you. I had to call Texas, send a copy to Dallas, and then....." Stop! It is likely Lynnette is thinking the customer will be impressed with her efforts and feel like a valued customer. However, nothing in this email so far has answered the customer's primary need.

Let's rewind and imagine Lynnette wrote her initial draft focusing on getting the customer's primary need instead: "I have found your product at the Texas depot, and I have scheduled delivery for March 30." Lynette is satisfied with this draft: it is direct and delivers the needed information. However, the email does not take the you-view.

Notice how she talks about herself first with the use of personal pronoun "I"? In a subtle, but important improvement, Lynette should write, "Your product is scheduled for delivery March 30. Your product was in the Texas depot." While both versions of the email let the customer know the product's delivery information, the second version places emphasis on the customer and makes the customer most important.

## Contributors and Attributions

CC licensed content, Original

- Writing for the Reader. **Authored by:** Susan Kendall. **Provided by:** Lumen Learning. **License:** CC BY: Attribution

All rights reserved content

- How to Write a Business Letter. **Authored by:** Catlin Tucker. **Located at:** <https://youtu.be/egeyiUpFsaw>. **License:** All Rights Reserved. **License Terms:** Standard YouTube License

2.4.20: Writing for the Reader is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **2.20: Writing for the Reader** by Nina Burokas is licensed **CC BY 4.0**. Original source: <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/wm-businesscommunicationmgrs>.