# Why Know Your Audience and Purpose?

* **Informed Decision-Making**
  + Understanding your audience and purpose helps you:
    - Decide what information to include.
    - Choose an appropriate tone.
    - Determine how to organize content.
* **Questions to Consider**. When deciding what details to include and what tone to use, ask yourself the below questions. Consider, for example, how your answers (and thus your tone and information) to these questions would change if you were discussing solar power with a child vs. a physics professor.
  + **Audience Knowledge**:
    - What does your audience already know about the topic?
    - What background information is essential for their understanding?
  + **Audience Influences**:
    - What might shape their position or feelings about the topic?
    - What outcome do you expect from communicating with them?
* **Structuring Your Writing**. It's important to determine your purpose for writing, as each purpose requires specific strategies (and, thus, organizational structure). Ask yourself "Why am I communicating?"
  + **Purpose-Driven Choices**:
    - **To explain**: Provide clarity.
    - **To persuade**: Influence opinions.
    - **To inform**: Share knowledge.
    - **To describe**: Paint a vivid picture.
    - **To entertain**: Engage and captivate.
    - **To analyze**: Break down and examine.
    - **To evaluate**: Assess and judge.

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