

2.1 Understanding an audience's beliefs and needs

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 11 marks

Objective

Build the skills to answer exam questions on how an **audience** 受众 shapes an argument.

You must be able to:

- infer an audience's beliefs, values and needs from a text
- explain how a writer accommodates or challenges those beliefs
- distinguish the addressed audience from a wider readership
- link an audience inference to specific textual evidence

1 Worked examples

Study these first. Each one shows the method for a task used later.

■ Reading the audience from the text

What a writer assumes without arguing tells you what the audience already believes. What is explained at length tells you what they do not. Both are visible on the page.

■ Accommodate or challenge

A writer may begin from shared ground and move the audience gradually, or confront a belief directly. Both are choices, and the passage will usually show which by where the concessions fall.

■ Addressed and wider audience

A speech may be delivered to a hall and printed for a country. The immediate audience shapes the tone; the wider one shapes what can safely be said. Noticing the gap often explains an otherwise odd choice.

2 Practice

2.1 State two things a text reveals about its audience.

[2]

2.2 Explain the difference between accommodating and challenging an audience’s belief.[2]

2.3 A writer spends a paragraph explaining a term and assumes another without comment.

(a) State what this tells you about the audience. [1]

(b) State how you would cite it as evidence. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 A speech opens by praising the audience’s past record. This is most likely intended to [1]

- **A** attack their beliefs
- **B** establish shared ground before a difficult claim
- **C** conclude the argument
- **D** define a technical term

3.2 A writer’s decision to explain a concept at length suggests the audience [1]

- **A** already accepts it
- **B** is unfamiliar with it
- **C** rejects the writer
- **D** is specialist

3.3 A politician addresses a conference hall but knows the speech will be broadcast.

(a) State one effect on what can be said. [1]

(b) Explain how the two audiences might pull in different directions. [2]

4 Go further

- work through the **2.1 Understanding an audience’s beliefs and needs** lesson on the **Learn** page;
- read the **Audience, Thesis, and Supporting Evidence** section of the AP English Language handout on the **Know** page.

Solutions

2.1 what is assumed without argument shows what they already believe; what is explained at length shows what they do not.

2.2 accommodating starts from shared ground and moves the audience gradually; challenging confronts the belief directly.

2.3 (a) they know the assumed term but not the explained one. (b) quote or name both, and state the inference each supports.

3.1 B. shared ground is established before the audience is asked to move.

3.2 B. explanation is supplied where knowledge is not assumed.

3.3 (a) claims that would be acceptable in the hall may be risky in public. (b) the immediate audience rewards partisan warmth while the wider audience rewards restraint, so the speech must satisfy both at once.