

Grades 6-8 Identifying audience and purpose

Strand Writing

SOL 6.7
7.7
8.7

Materials

- Copies of the attached “Writing Assignments” strips
- Wiki, blog, or other available technology
- Chart paper and markers if technology is unavailable
- Writer’s Craft Chart

Lesson

1. Tell the students to sit back in their seats, close their eyes, and listen carefully in order to visualize the following scenario as you read it aloud:

Imagine that you are in the middle of the school cafeteria and suddenly a food fight breaks out. You turn your head just in time to be hit with a blob of mashed potatoes. Without thinking, you grab your red jello and throw it. Just as it leaves your hand, you hear the cafeteria monitor yelling, and the principal’s voice comes over the intercom. Suddenly there is silence, and everyone is ordered back to class. Fifteen minutes later, you are called out of class and ordered to go to the office to see the principal.

2. Divide the class into groups. Distribute copies of the attached “Writing Assignment # 1” to the members of one group, the assignment # 2 to another group, and the assignment # 3 to the next group. Take care that each group sees only their own assignment.
3. Distribute the Writer’s Craft Chart. Preview the categories with the class. Remind the students to be mindful of how each of these are developed as they draft their responses to the writing assignments they are given.
4. Allow students to confer with their groups and write a group response to the writing prompt. When the members of each group are satisfied with their description, they should post it for others in the class to see.
5. Have students compare and contrast the descriptions, especially identifying ways in which they are different. Differences will undoubtedly include language, voice, tone, and selected information. Ask students why they are so different, and lead them to consider the purpose and intended audience of each piece. Have each group clearly identify the purpose and intended audience for their piece.
6. To conclude, ask students what their purpose would be if they were asked to write a note to the cafeteria workers and the custodial staff that had to clean up the mess after the food fight. Ask them to describe the tone and voice they would use. Have students individually write such an apology note as an exit slip.

Writing Assignments

Writing Assignment # 1

When you arrive in the office, the principal hands you a blank sheet of paper and tells you to write a description of the cafeteria incident and your role in it. Write your response to this “real-life” writing prompt.

Writing Assignment # 2

Imagine that your best friend was absent from school the day of the food fight, and you are anxious to describe the scene in the cafeteria. Write a description of the cafeteria incident and your role in it as you want to tell your best friend.

Writing Assignment # 3

You have been waiting to talk to the principal, and the dismissal bell rings. The principal’s secretary comes out and tells you to go ahead and board your bus; the principal will deal with you first thing in the morning. You run to your bus, worrying about what will happen tomorrow. You decide that you had better tell your parents something tonight. Write a description of the cafeteria incident and your role in it as you will tell your parents.

Writer's Craft Chart

Writer's Craft	Assignment #1	Assignment #2	Assignment #3
Language			
Voice			
Tone			
Selected Information			
Purpose			
Intended Audience			