

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This lesson will help you to:

- identify the text's audience and understand the purpose.

AUDIENCE AND PURPOSE

It is not always easy to appreciate a text unless you understand its purpose and who it was written for. Sometimes this is not difficult, such as when the reader is a member of the writer's intended audience. If you were a child born in Ghana or Jamaica, then the stories of Anansi the spider would be intended for you and there would be no additional context to learn about. However, in other cases, you may need some background knowledge: for example, Martin Luther King's speech, 'I have a dream...', does not mean all that it should if its reader is ignorant of the history and culture of the USA. Likewise, the poem, 'The Bright Lights of Sarajevo', means a great deal more if you know something about the Bosnian War of the 1990s.

HINT

Writers do not only write **from** a particular perspective. They also write with a particular '**view**' in front of them, which includes their purpose and audience, meaning that these three aspects are closely connected.

When you are reading, you should try to bear in mind the audience known as 'the general reader' or 'the general public'. These phrases are used to indicate that all kinds of people may want to read a book about an expedition to the Himalayas or up the River Amazon, and that you do not need to have any particular interests to find the book interesting. However, it would also be reasonable to suggest that such books will appeal to readers interested in adventurous travel. This group will cross boundaries of age, gender, race, and so on, as it is defined by interest only, although it may include more of one section of the population than another.

- ▶ Do a survey of people you know and find out if, for example, outdoor adventure books such as *Between a Rock and a Hard Place* might appeal more to male readers than female, or more to younger readers than older ones. You could try this on other texts.

ACTIVITY 1

A01

SKILLS

CRITICAL THINKING, ANALYSIS,
REASONING

▼ IDENTIFYING AUDIENCE AND PURPOSE

As you work through this book, you will read a wide range of texts written for different audiences and for very different reasons. The following table will help you to compare some of the passages that you have already encountered between pages 58 and 77. Copy and complete it as best you can.

▼ TEXT	▼ AUDIENCE	▼ PURPOSE
<i>The Diary of a Young Girl</i>	Herself; perhaps also for others.	To confide her thoughts with an imaginary friend.
Ellen MacArthur's autobiography	People interested in ocean yachting and racing or in tough sporting exploits.	
<i>In the Empire of Genghis Khan</i>		
Martin Luther King's 'I have a dream...' speech		