

From *A Writer's Reference* (Fifth Edition) by Diana Hacker, Boston/New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2003.

Planning

Checklist for assessing the writing situation

SUBJECT

- Has a subject (or a range of possible subjects) been given to you, or are you free to choose your own?
- Why is your subject worth writing about?
- How broadly should you cover the subject? Do you need to narrow it to a more specific topic (because of length restrictions, for instance)?
- How detailed should your coverage be?

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- Where will your information come from: Personal experience? Direct observation? Interviews? Questionnaires? Reading?
- If your information comes from reading, what sort of documentation is required?

PURPOSE

- Why are you writing: To inform readers? To persuade them? To entertain them? To call them to action? Some combination of these?

AUDIENCE

- Who are your readers? How well informed are they about your subject?
- How interested and attentive are they likely to be? Will they resist any of your ideas?
- What is your relationship to them: Employee to supervisor? Citizen to citizen? Expert to novice? Scholar to scholar?
- How much time are they willing to spend reading?

LENGTH AND DOCUMENT DESIGN

- Do you have any length specifications? If not, what length seems appropriate, given your purpose and audience?
- Must you use a particular design for your document? If so, do you have guidelines or examples that you can consult?

REVIEWERS AND DEADLINES

- Who will be reviewing your draft in progress: Your instructor? A writing center tutor? Your classmates? A friend? Someone in your family?
- What are your deadlines? How much time will you need to allow for the various stages of writing, including typing and proofreading the final draft?