

Exercise walk-through

Writing for an audience's beliefs and needs ■ 2.2

eXercise

You must be able to

- choose evidence a stated audience would accept
- adjust diction and level of explanation to that audience
- concede a point without abandoning the claim
- avoid the two failures: talking down and assuming too much

Method — Evidence for this reader

Before writing, name the reader and the objection they will raise. Choose evidence that answers that objection. A budget committee objects on cost; answer with cost.

Method — Diction and explanation

Use the vocabulary the audience uses, and explain exactly what they do not know. Explaining the known is condescension; assuming the unknown loses them.

Method — Concession that strengthens

Granting a real point — “the scheme will be expensive in its first year” — shows the reader you have understood their position, and lets you argue the rest from common ground. A concession that gives away the claim is not a concession but a surrender.

Practice 2.1 ■ 2 marks

State the two opposite failures in pitching writing to an audience.

Solution 2.1

Worked steps

talking down by explaining what the audience knows **B1**; assuming too much and losing them **B1**.

Practice 2.2 ■ 2 marks

Explain what makes a concession useful rather than fatal.

Solution 2.2

Worked steps

it grants a real but limited point, showing you understand the objection **B1**; it must not give away the central claim **B1**.

Practice 2.3 ■ 1 mark

You must persuade a school board to fund a later start time.

- (a) State the objection they will raise.
- (b) State the evidence that answers it.

Solution 2.3

Method: Evidence for this reader

Worked steps

(a) cost, or disruption to transport and staffing **B1**. (b) figures on cost or on outcomes that offset it **B1**.

Exam-style 3.1 ■ 1 mark

Explaining a term the audience uses daily risks

- A** losing them
- B** appearing condescending
- C** conceding too much
- D** weakening the thesis

Solution 3.1

Method: Diction and explanation

- A losing them
- B appearing condescending 
- C conceding too much
- D weakening the thesis

Worked steps

B. explaining the known reads as condescension.

Exam-style 3.2 ■ 1 mark

A concession is useful when it

- A** grants the central claim
- B** grants a real but limited point
- C** invents an objection nobody has
- D** is unrelated to the argument

Solution 3.2

- A grants the central claim
- B grants a real but limited point 
- C invents an objection nobody has
- D is unrelated to the argument

Worked steps

- B. a limited real concession builds common ground.

Exam-style 3.3 ■ 4 marks

Write two to three sentences persuading a sceptical parent group that a homework limit would help.

Solution 3.3

Worked steps

addresses a stated parental concern **B1**; evidence a parent would accept **B1**; a genuine concession **B1**; claim maintained throughout **B1**.