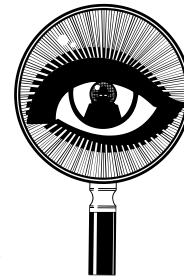


Audience Analysis for Tech Writers

Who, exactly, are you writing
this for?

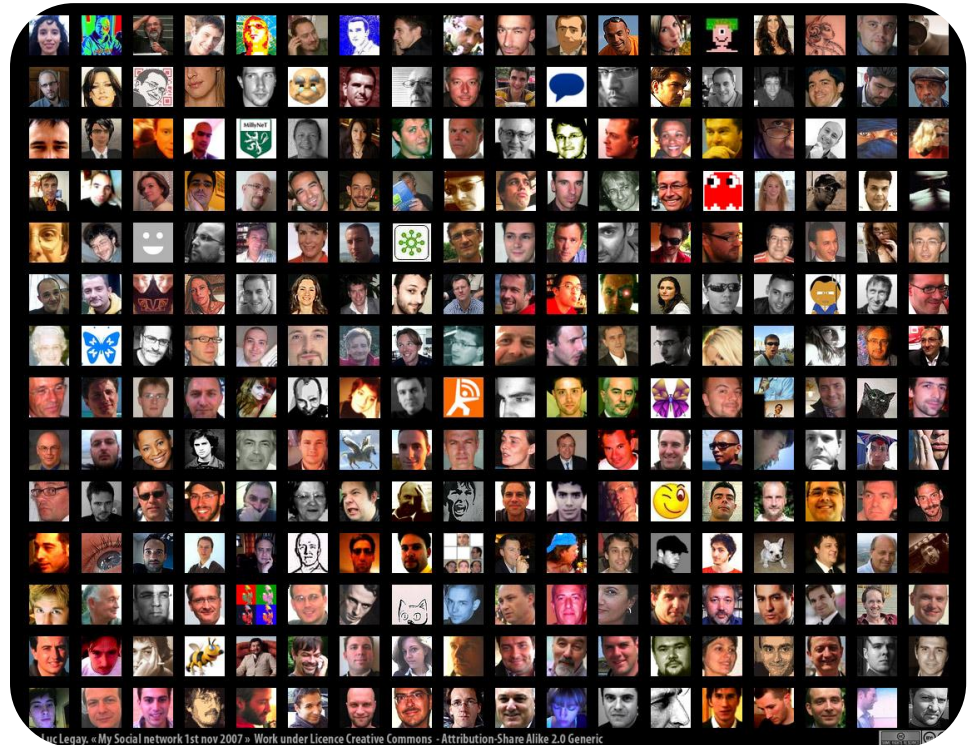


Andrew Rusnak

Who, exactly, are you writing this for?

How to analyze your audience

Perhaps the single most critical variable in determining the success of your user documentation is to perform a penetrating, accurate audience analysis.



Who, exactly, are you writing this for?

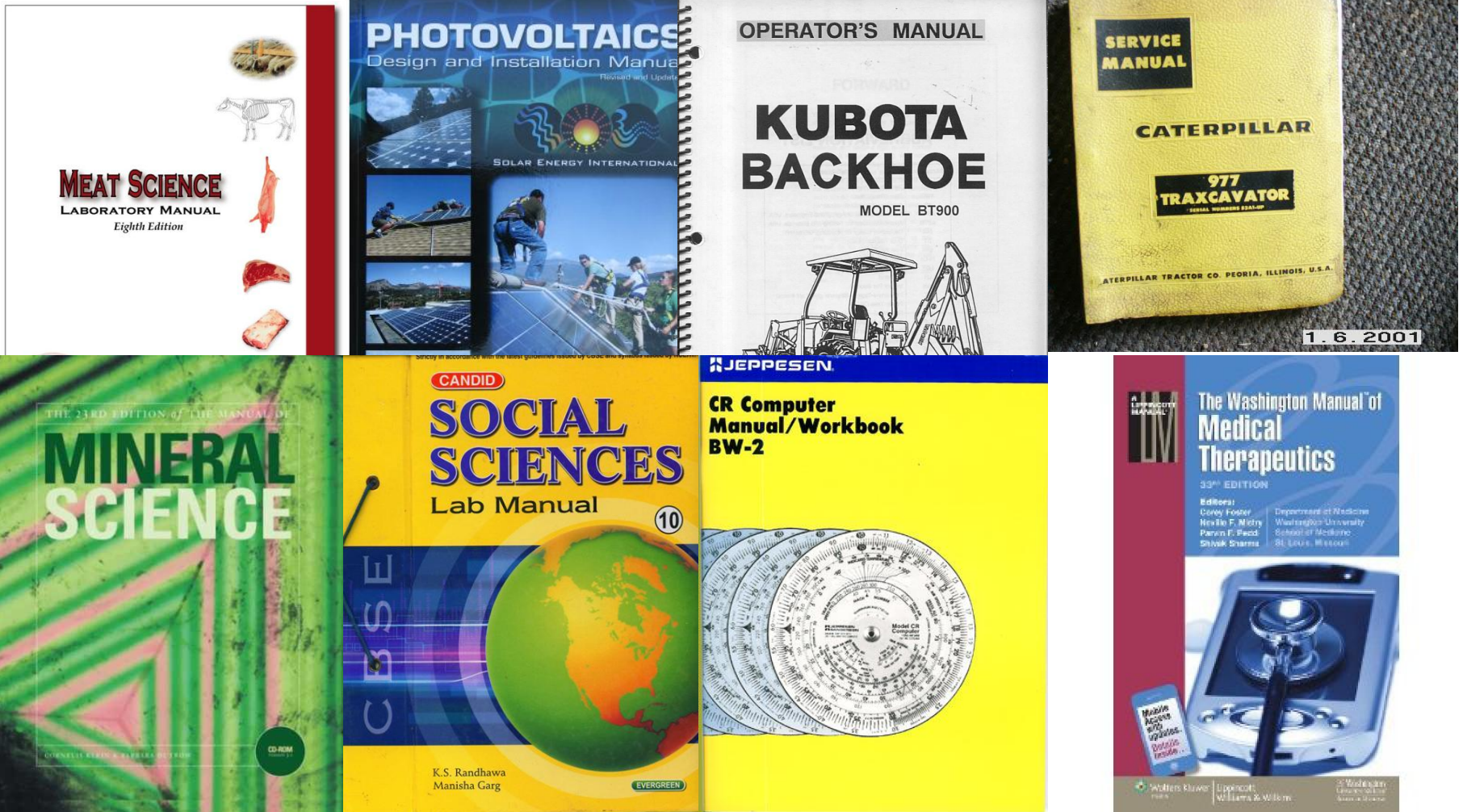
How to analyze your audience

Technical writers must invoke reality-directed imaginative thinking to distinguish facts, safe assumptions, and assumptions that require verification.



Who, exactly, are you writing this for?

How to analyze your audience



Who, exactly, are you writing this for?

How to analyze your audience

A technical writing audience can be defined as (usually) a group of people that share a common purpose to understand and comprehend a document and the intent or overall objective of that document in order to apply that objective.



Who, exactly, are you writing this for?

How to analyze your audience

Before analyzing any audience and preparing user documentation, tech writers must construct a clear, delineated statement of purpose. To what “purpose” am I analyzing this audience? What are my objectives?



Who, exactly, are you writing this for?

How to analyze your audience

About your audience. What's important to know?

- Type of audience;
- Demographic profile (age, language, relative cultural habits and distinctions;
- Background and experience;
- Level of education/skill level in interpreting documentation;
- Primary language;

Who, exactly, are you writing this for?

How to analyze your audience

About your audience. What's important to know?

- Relative familiarity level with product or process (What are safe assumptions and what are not?);
- Inhibiting factors that may interfere with the successful use of the document, product, or process;
- Under what conditions and circumstances will this audience use documentation? and
- Interest level and need.

Who, exactly, are you writing this for?

How to analyze your audience

Types of audiences who need user documentation:

- **Engineers** : (subject-matter-experts);
- **Technicians**: Those who build, maintain, install, fix/repair, or operate;
- **Program managers and directors/executive level**: Those who have purchasing power, make legal decisions, interact with customers who may be government or private business reps.

Who, exactly, are you writing this for?

How to analyze your audience

Types of audiences who need user documentation:

- **Communications personnel:** Those in media and public relations who communicate important information;
- **Marketing personnel:** Those responsible for promoting products and/or processes;
- **Sales reps:** Those responsible for selling products, processes, and services;

Who, exactly, are you writing this for?

How to analyze your audience

Types of audiences who need user documentation:

- **Front line personnel:** Those who may work in a large-scale, manufacturing capacity; and
- **Consumers:** Those who may use end products, processes, or services.

Who, exactly, are you writing this for?

How to analyze your audience

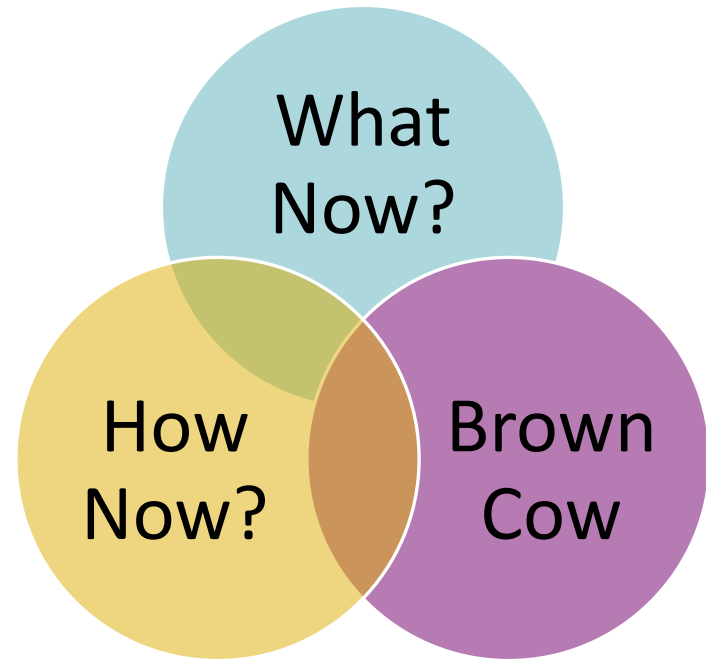
Remember, you might need to refine or modify your document so that it is easily interpreted by various audiences. You might not give the same document to an executive group that you would give to technicians or manufacturing personnel.



Who, exactly, are you writing this for?

How to analyze your audience

Some might need an explanation of processes, the “what” that is done and the sequence in which it occurs. Others might need a more procedural approach, or, a “how” of the “what” that is done.



Who, exactly, are you writing this for?

How to analyze your audience

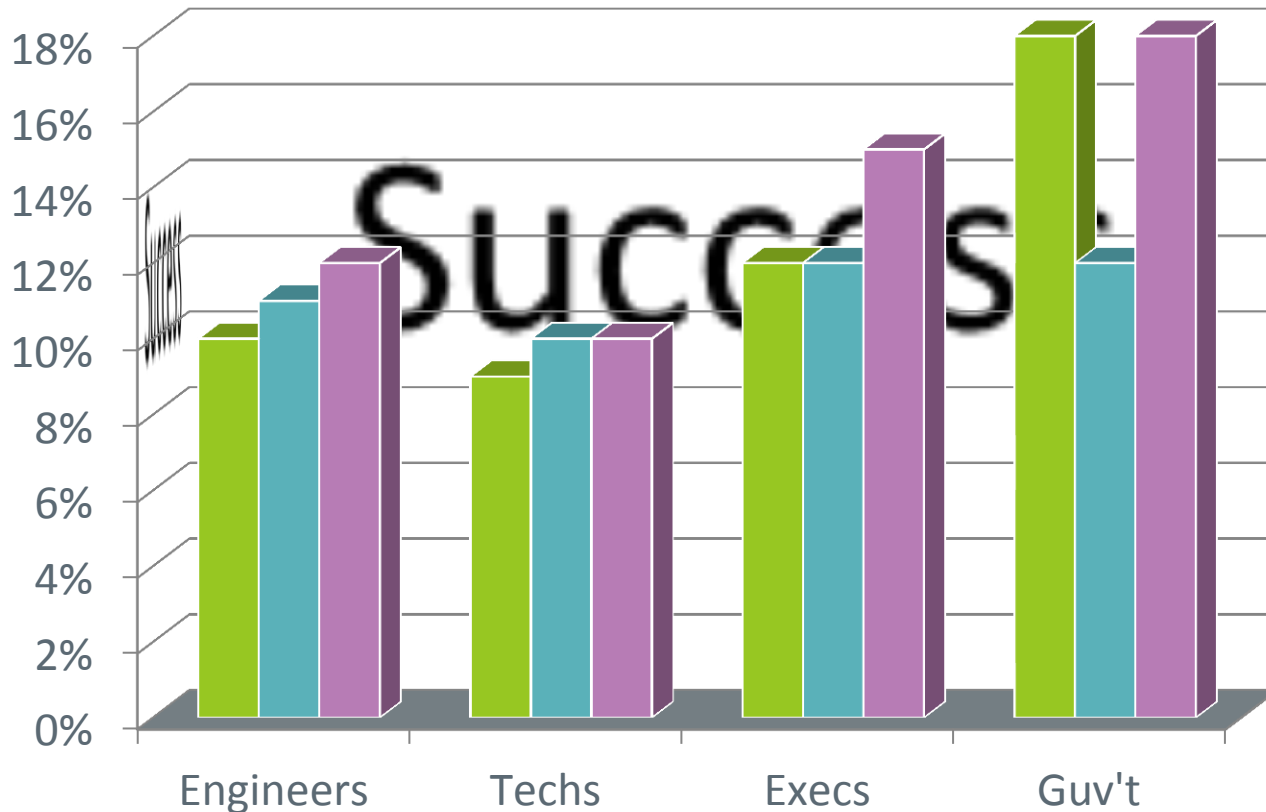
Audience	Doc.	Primary Audience	Age	Lang.	Educ.	Familiarity Level	Cultural Habits	Interest Level
Engineers								
Techs								
Execs								
Guv't								

Develop an audience analysis matrix or worksheet to better organize all contingent variables.

Who, exactly, are you writing this for?

Success

How to analyze your audience



Recorded errors
(4 user groups)
through part 1,
step 3.

- Step 1
- Step 2
- Step 3

Maintain an accurate record of success and failure rates.

Who, exactly, are you writing this for?

Assignment

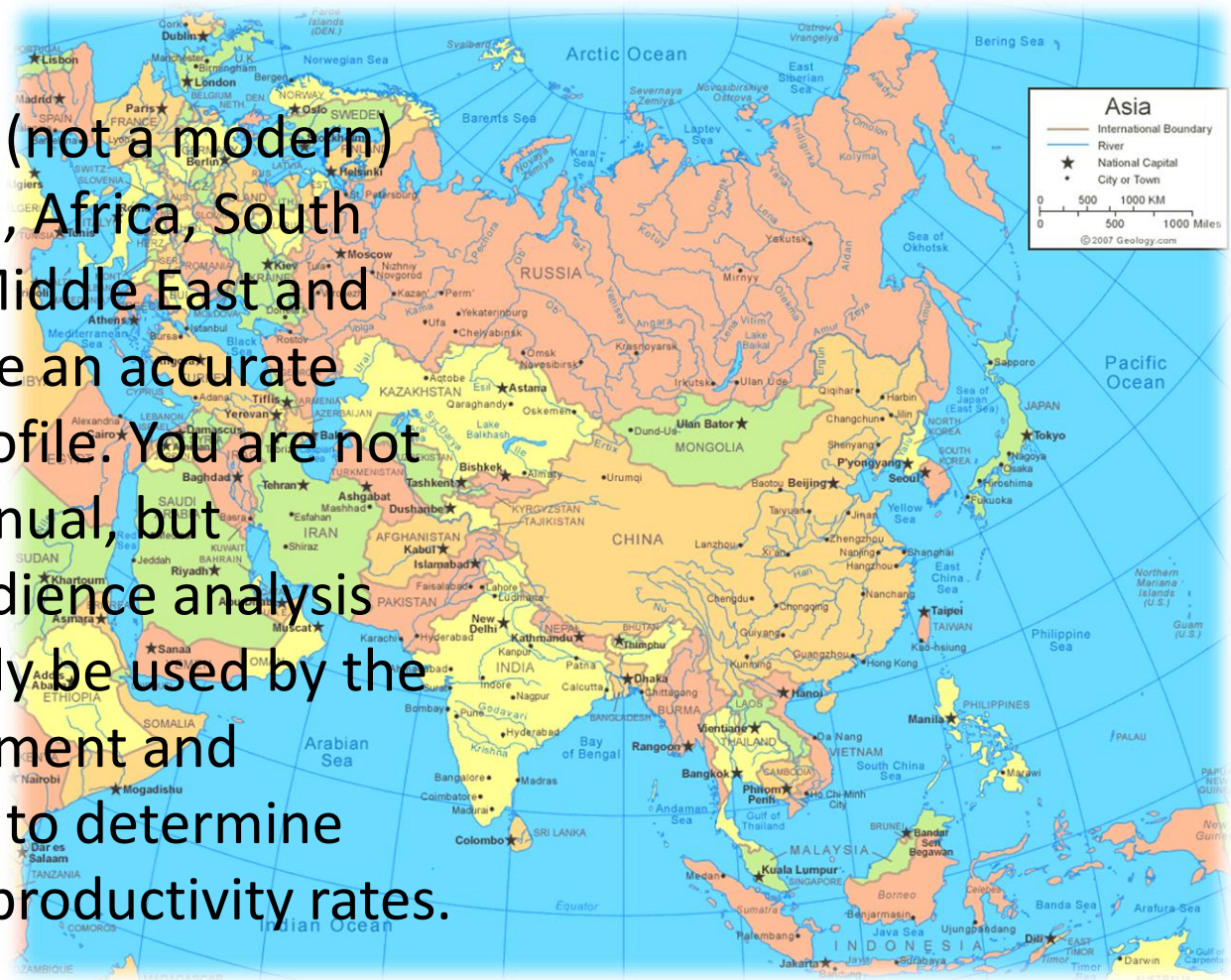
An engineering department at a company in a developing country has just hired you as a technical writer and consultant. These engineers have just designed a new prototype shovel—inexpensively mass produced, light-weight, fiberglass handled, cost-efficient, functionally sound, ergonomically-sensitive—for use in rural areas of their country. These are areas with populations that survive by understanding the rudimentary requirements of crude agricultural techniques—using cattle-drawn plows, digging irrigation ditches, etc.



Who, exactly, are you writing this for?

Assignment

Pick a developing (not a modern) country from Asia, Africa, South America, or the Middle East and research and write an accurate user/audience profile. You are not writing a user manual, but conducting an audience analysis that will eventually be used by the marketing department and company officials to determine investments and productivity rates.



Who, exactly, are you writing this for?

Assignment

First, put together a clear, **well-defined purpose**.

What is the reason (s) for the audience profile? Then create an **audience analysis matrix** that covers:

- Primary audience;
- Age;
- Gender;
- Literacy level;
- Primary language;
- Terrain;

Who, exactly, are you writing this for?

Assignment

- Motivation;
- Work ethic/habits;
- Physical capabilities;
- Social influences;
- Cultural influences; and
- Religious /spiritual influences.



Who, exactly, are you writing this for?

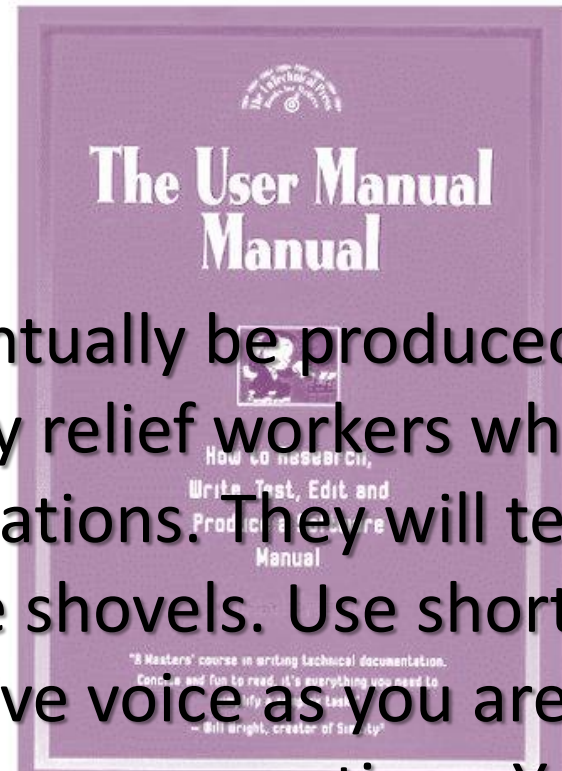
Assignment

In narrative form after you have composed the purpose and matrix, **summarize your results**. Then, **make a recommendation** based on your audience analysis whether you think this audience will be able to effectively use the shovel to improve agricultural production and enhance standards of living.

Who, exactly, are you writing this for?

Assignment

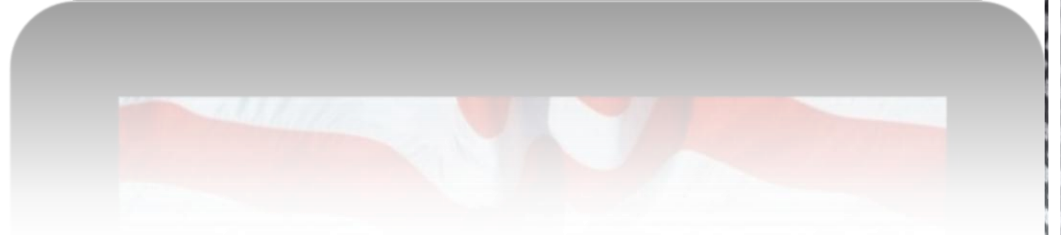
The user manual that will eventually be produced will be read and interpreted by relief workers who are assisting indigenous populations. They will teach the population how to use the shovels. Use short, declarative sentences and active voice as you are writing for engineers and company executives. Your manuscript will be translated into their language.



Who, exactly, are you writing this for?

Assignment

Avoid culture-specific references that are peculiar to your culture, such as metaphors, idioms, allusion, humor, and people. These could have unintended consequences.

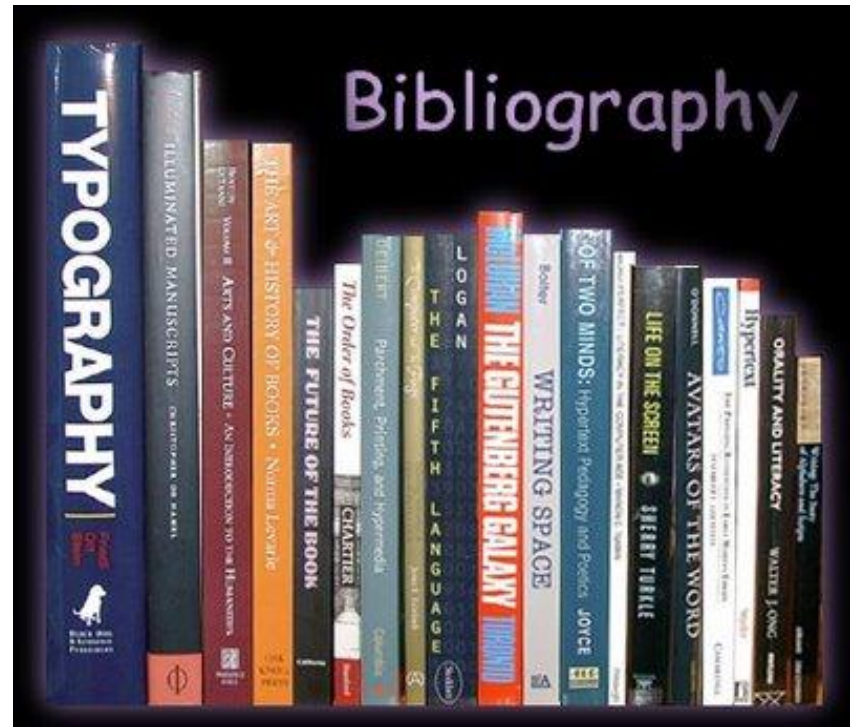


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Assignment

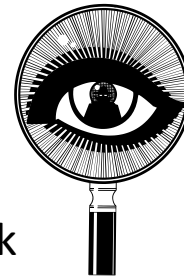
Works

Cited/Bibliography
page with at least 5
references. Use
MLA format.



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Andrew Rusnak