**A journal article: identifying procedures, process and products**

**1** What do you know about / what do guidelines tell you about:

**a** What is the minimum/maximum length of the text?

**b** When is the first deadline and subsequent deadlines?

**c** Will there be an opportunity for revision? When?

**d** What should, in general, be the content of your text?

**e** Is there a fixed structure/format for your text? If so, what is it?

**f** What writing style would be appropriate?

**g** Are you supposed to use a particular style for referencing, figures and tables?

**2** What is your ‘rhetorical situation’ in terms of the characteristics of your audience?

Thinking about your *rhetorical situation* is important because in that way you create a *frame of reference* for planning and evaluating your text. Try to be specific. Below you will find some suggestions concerning the questions to be answered.

**a** Who will your readers be?

Be specific! So choose *Scientists in molecular plant (pathogen) biology* or *Medical doctors who work with obese children in their daily practice* rather than just *Scientists* or *Researchers and policymakers*. The latter descriptions are too broad; they won’t help you in determining content, organization, and style of your text.

Readers:

**b** What is their prior knowledge concerning the topic of your text?

Readers’ knowledge:

The importance of this question lies in the selection of information and language complexity:

* you don’t need to explain what your audience already knows;
* you should try to write very simply if your audience are not experts in your field.

**c** What are their interests concerning the topic of your text?

Readers’ interests:

The relevance of this question lies in the possibilities to emphasize certain topics:

* write more extensively about what is interesting for your audience;
* write briefly about what is of minor interest for your audience.

**d** What are their opinions concerning the topic of your text or concerning you as a researcher (sender)?

Readers’ opinions:

The importance of this question lies in deciding whether or not to add supporting arguments to your statements. And, if so, what arguments might be effective (i.e. convincing).

* you don’t need to support your statements if your audience agrees upon them (common shared knowledge).
* if you need to argue, you should try to select argumentative support that your readers will believe and agree upon.

Example of opinions: your readers think sustainability is an important goal but economic growth is considered to be more important.

**e** What is your ‘rhetorical situation’ in terms of the goal of the text?

Don’t be too shy—very often the goal of a text is to convince readers that you have done a very good job and produced relevant research. This will help you focus your text towards this goal.

Once again, be specific!

Finish the following statement:

After reading my text, readers should believe / know / think / be convinced (choose one) **that** …