Video One:

How To Get To Know Your Audience
and Know What’s On Their Minds

By Gary McLaren
The Article Writer’s Toolkit
Two Critical Questions

#1.
Who is Your Target Audience?

#2.
What’s On Their Minds?
You must give your readers something in return... something that makes it “worth their while” to read your article, e.g.

- informing your readers of the latest news
- educating them on some topic
- teaching a new skill or technique
- entertaining your readers
Critical Question: Who is Your Target Audience?
Advertising Demographics

Most print magazines, and many online magazines, provide detailed reader demographics for their advertisers, e.g.

- Gender
- Age
- Income Level
- Education
- Location
At Alexa, you can access several demographics for most high-traffic websites including: top countries, gender, and education. The paid version has even more data.
For your own website, you can use **Google Analytics** to obtain comprehensive data on your visitors including:

- Gender
- Age
- Interests
- Language
- Location
- Devices and Browsers
- Visitor Behavior
- Visitor Engagement
Quantcast Measure is a free analytics product.

You place a special tag on your website, and it enables you to measure visitor data such as:

- Geographic Location
- Occupation
- Household Income
- Shopping Interests
- Political Affiliation
If you have a Facebook page, then you will be able to get incredible detail on your visitors via Facebook Insights.
Critical Question: What’s on Your Readers’ Minds?
What are the greatest desires and ambitions of your audience? What would they most like to achieve?
What prevents your audience from achieving those desires and goals?

Search at Google for [topic] or [audience] and:

- “biggest problems”
- “traps”
- “pitfalls”
- “obstacles”
What are the biggest mistakes your audience makes?

Search at Google for [topic] or [audience] and:

- “mistakes”
- “worst mistakes”
- “biggest mistakes”
Imagine you were starting out today. What would you need to know?

#9
Newbie Shoes
What are the most common, or biggest, gripes and complaints you hear from your audience?

#10 Gripes & Complaints
What does the audience most often misunderstand about:

- your topic
- your brand, or
- your product?
Identify where your audience tends to hang out online.
Check your email inbox. What questions have people been asking you?
When people subscribe to your mailing list, send them a follow up message with an invitation to email you and ask the one thing they want to know the most!
Check the comments on your blog posts.

Don’t forget comments that you didn’t publish or approve because they were off-topic and not relevant to the particular post.
Check your web stats to learn which of your blog posts have performed the best and the worst.
Consider hits, backlinks, shares, and comments.
Use Google Analytics to check the “bounce rate” on these posts.
1. Use Google Keyword Planner to identify related keyword phrases.

2. Discover which of these keyword phrases people search for the most.
Use Übersuggest to quickly find new keywords that are not available in Google Keyword Planner.
Find out what people are saying about a topic by following hashtags.

Identify tags using Ritetag, then check how they are being used with Keyhole.
#20
Conduct a Survey

Create a survey of your audience using Survey.io or even Google Forms.
You can run a poll on Twitter or on your blog using the WP-Polls plugin for Wordpress.
Run a Contest

Offer a prize to the reader who asks the best question.
At Question & Answer websites, questions are asked, answered, and sometimes even organized by a community of users.

One of the best Q&A websites is Quora.

Also see Yahoo Answers and StackExchange.
Set up dedicated streams at Hootsuite to follow:

- a list of Twitter accounts that regularly tweet good material around your topic.
- several of the most relevant hashtags for your topic.

Get creative, e.g. a stream that looks for a relevant hashtag and the phrase “how do I” or “help needed”?
Identify any recent or upcoming conferences.

Check out the conference session topics from the program schedule.

You’ll discover the hottest issues for this audience right now.
With Google Alerts, you can keep track of what people post online about your topic… or about you!
Internet forums, also known as “message boards”, are discussion websites where people hold conversations in the form of posted messages.

To find forums around your topic, search at Google for [audience] or [topic] and “forum”.
1. Write down what you think are the top blogs on your topic.

2. Check top blogs for your topic according to Google search results.

3. Check top blogs for your topic according to Bing.

4. Use Buzzsumo to discover these competitors’ most popular blog posts.

5. Read the questions and comments for those posts.
Consider what is changing in your industry right now?

What impact do these changes have on your audience?

What’s difficult about these changes?
1. Go to Amazon Bestsellers and drill down to the appropriate category to identify bestselling books in your niche.

2. Read the book reviews, keeping an eye out for comments like “I wish it covered XYZ” or “I wish there was more material on XYZ”.

#30 Amazon Book Reviews
Take a look at your competitors’ blogs and ask, “What haven’t they covered, or what haven’t they covered adequately?”
What’s Going to Happen Next?

#32

Ask, “What’s likely to happen next?” Jump the gun and post about it before your competitors.
In Summary:
You Need to Know
Your Readers
Bloggers: it may be worth creating some “Personas”.

A persona is a fictional, generalized character that encompasses some of the typical needs, goals, and behavior patterns among your audience.

I recommend learning more about personas at Hubspot.