

Module 3 Study Guide: Knowledge of the Audience

In this module, you will consider why it is vitally important to understand your audience when interpreting climate change. You will then learn/think about how to gather, assess and apply knowledge of your site's specific audiences. You will learn about formal social science research, such as the Six Americas segmentation study, as well as practical methods for your own on-going informal audience research. Lastly, you will be challenged to identify the ways that your site's resources and stories can help reveal the relevance of climate change for your site's audiences. Estimated time investment for this module is 3-4 hours.

How to Use this Study Guide

This study guide is designed for self-directed, self-paced learning and interaction. You can engage as much or as little as you prefer. The study guide is designed to help you work through a progression of learning in which you 1) *investigate*—study the recommended content, 2) *contemplate*—create your own relevance through intentional reflection, 3) *actuate*—apply the concepts to a personal work strategy and then, importantly, 4) *collaborate*—contribute to a conversation in a community of practice to broaden your understanding and encourage your colleagues. So the more you put into it, the more you will get out of it!

For **non-NPS participants** — we believe that the concepts and best practices described in this curriculum are useful to all interpreters and you are invited to fully participate. In this module, some of the content may be NPS-specific, but you are encouraged to seek out/investigate the ways in which this information may be applicable to your own work.



Module Objectives

After completing the activities in the Module 3 Study Guide, you will:

- Self-assess your current awareness of your audience knowledge related to climate change
- Identify social science resources that may already exist for understanding your site's audiences (demographics studies, visitor use studies, interpretive evaluation studies, etc.) and determine how those resources can inform your ability to interpret climate change.
- Explore methods to conduct your own informal and ongoing research to get to know more about your audience and their interests/awareness of climate change
- Identify potential points of audience-relevance related to your site's resources and climate change
- Identify two specific audiences to your site and how you can learn more about their interests and perspectives related to climate change

Investigate

Apply a spirit of inquiry and learning to the following assignments:

- Read the [Module 3 Learning Companion—Interpreting Climate Change—Knowledge of the Audience](#) (16 pages)
- Read the excerpt from the original [2009 Six Americas Report](#) that explains the audience beliefs, values and perspectives for each category (6 pages) and read the most recent survey report
- Investigate the [ClimateAccess website](#), search around on the site and find an article, blog entry or other resource that is relevant to building your audience knowledge.

Note: links may open slowly from within this document – alternatively, you can right-click copy and then paste the URLs in your browser

Contemplate

Ponder the personal relevance of what you have learned by considering the following questions... journal your thoughts in the space below (use as much space as you need).

1. As interpreters, we frequently identify our visitors as a “general audience.” In your opinion, why do you think we do this? Is this a useful categorization for interpreting climate change? Why or why not?
2. Think about your current level of audience knowledge related to climate change. Would you say you are well-informed about your site’s specific audiences or in need of learning more?
3. How will you use the Six Americas Report to inform your planning/development of interpretive products?
4. What do you think are the potential benefits and pitfalls of audience segmentation studies like the Six Americas Report? What cautions should you take when applying segmentation studies to your site’s audiences?
5. The Six Americas studies are a point in time assessment. Contemplate how you personally have evolved through the categories over time. What was your level of awareness about climate change 10 years ago? Two years ago? Now? If you have shifted, what caused the shift? How can awareness of your own shift help you understand your audience?

Actuate

Put learning and thinking into action with the following assignment:

Activity 1: Treasure Hunt Activity

Within your site and in your local communities there is a trove of information that can help you tailor your climate change interpretation for the most relevance and impact. For this activity, challenge yourself to hunt down the following treasures: 1) two social science references that already exist (on-line, in your site's library, at the county library, etc.) for understanding your site's specific audiences (demographics studies, visitor use studies, interpretive evaluation studies, tourism studies, recreation studies, etc.), 2) identify two current or potential audience groups, and 3) brainstorm and list several ways this general research can inform your ability to explore the "so what" of climate change with these audiences.

Activity 2: Informal Audience Research Activity

Select one of the informal audience research methods listed on *Page 5* of the [Module 3 Learning Companion](#). Use this method to gather and identify two new points of understanding or insight about your audiences and their perspectives on climate change. This will help you gather awareness of potential relevant meanings to interpret.

Activity 3: [Project Planning Worksheet](#) (Step 4-5)

Use this worksheet as a guide to develop an interpretive product – adding to and adjusting your ideas as you progress through this curriculum. For this Module, complete Steps 4-5 (Step 4— Potential Audiences, Step 5 — Audience Relevance). (This activity was started in Module 2 -- but you can start here if you like.)

Activity 4: In Your Own Words

Take a few minutes to jot down your response to the following question: What insights did you gather about your site's audiences in Activity 1 and 2 that you could share with your colleagues (near or far) to help broaden their audience knowledge related to climate change?

Collaborate

Share one of the following items with your colleagues by creating a post on our “Climate Coffeeshouse” [Facebook page](#) (see the [Collaborate tab](#) on the IDP website for additional instructions)

1. Your answer from Step 5 of the Project Planning Worksheet (Activity 3) OR
2. Your answer to Activity 4 above “In Your Own Words”

Read what your colleagues are saying.

Respond to one other post.

For Further Investigation -- Additional Resources and References

Hungry for more? Check out some of the following additional resources:

(links may open slowly from within this document – or you can right-click to copy URLs)

- NPS National Climate Change Interpretation and Education Strategy Communication Toolkit – who’s Your Audience: <http://www.nps.gov/subjects/climatechange/toolkit-audience.htm>
- [Audience Beliefs and Attitudes about Climate Change](#) powerpoint
- [The Psychology of Climate Change Communication](#), published by the Center for Research on Environmental Decisions at Columbia University
- [Climate Communications and Behavior Change -- A Guide for Practitioners](#)
- A 2011 study funded through the National Science Foundation, surveyed NPS and FWS staff and visitors on climate change perspectives read the [NSF summary report](#)
- An interesting look at how most people incorporate facts into their already established knowledge and beliefs, [“How Facts Backfire”](#) by Joe Keohane
- The Yale project on climate change communication website includes an archive of all the [Six Americas reports](#) as well as the most up-to-date research.
- PBS Video [Why People Don’t Believe in Climate Science](#) (7 min)
- The Ethnographer’s Toolkit. 7 vols. AltaMira Press. 1999:
<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.201.3018&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Rudiak-Gould, Peter. [Climate change and anthropology: The importance of reception studies](#). *Anthropology Today* 27:9 (2011), 9-12.
- [Changing the Conversation about Climate Change: A Theoretical Framework for Place-Based Climate Change Engagement](#). Sarah Schweizer, Shawn Davis & Jessica Leigh Thompson. Version of record first published: 05 Mar 2013.