

Welcome
to academic rehab.

Session 6: identifying readers

Understand that writing serves different functions for different (academic) audiences

Learn to identify specific reader communities and their interests

Recognize how reader identification shapes writing decisions

Practice analyzing reader communities' needs and expectations

From Campus To Cafés

Writing the Middle East For Your Daily Read

Current Assumptions: For whom do we write (in academia, while studying)?

professors

evaluators

fellow students

colleagues

broader academic community

Current Assumptions: Why do we write?

to think

to be evaluated

to communicate ideas



Most reasons focus on writer, not reader!

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Writing the Middle East For Your Daily Read

Current Assumptions: What are some rules that we have learned?

No 'I', no passive voice

Current Assumptions: What are some rules that we have learned?

No 'I', no passive voice

Short sentences, no more than six lines per paragraph

Don't use jargon

State of research

Have a

Referenc

Research question

Find a gap

...

Ok, but WHY?

Rules focus on form, not function!

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Writing the Middle East For Your Daily Read

Current Assumptions: What are some rules that we have learned?

Organized

Current Assumptions: What are some rules that we have learned?

Organized

Clear

Persuasive

New, innovative

Important

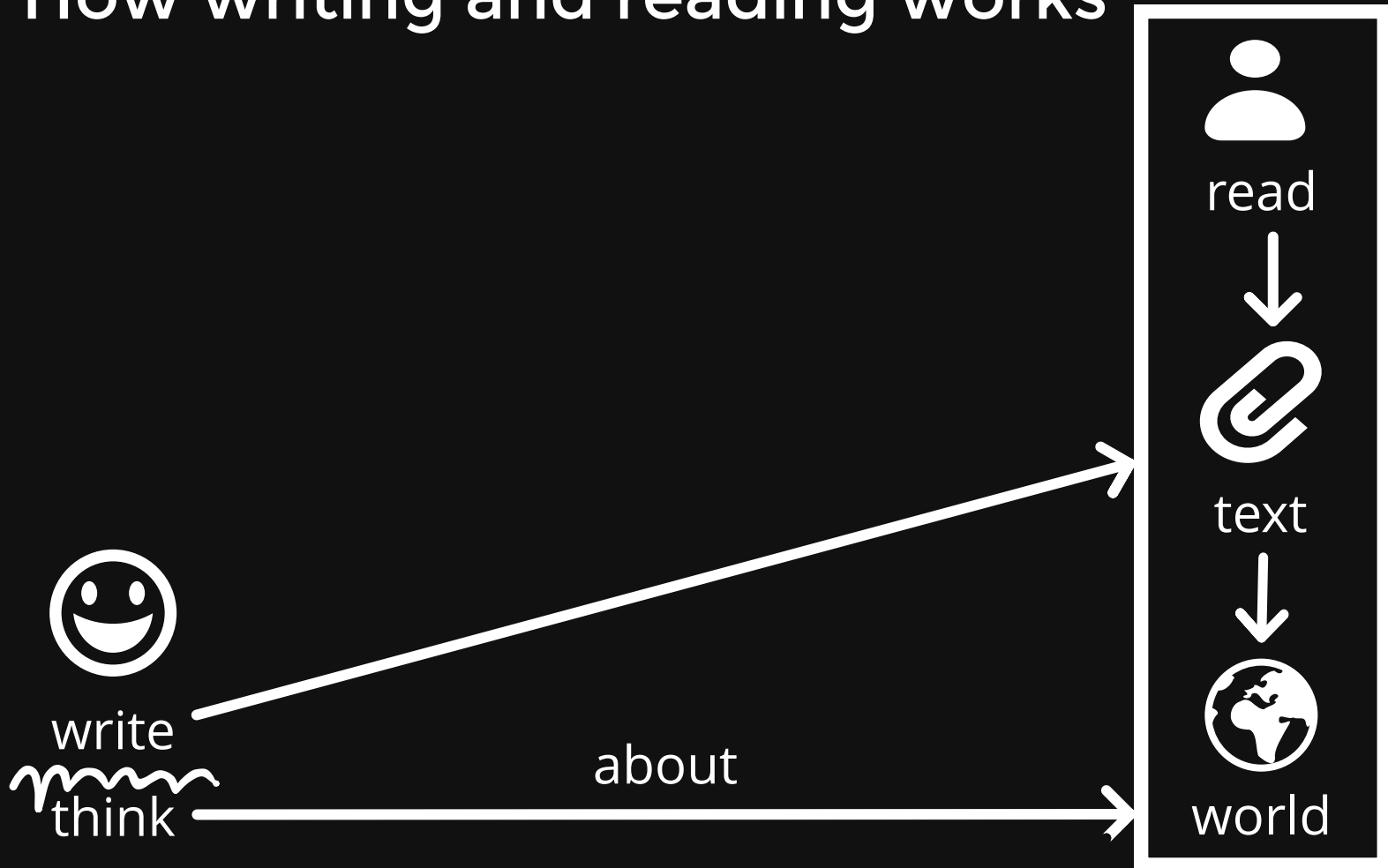
Original

...

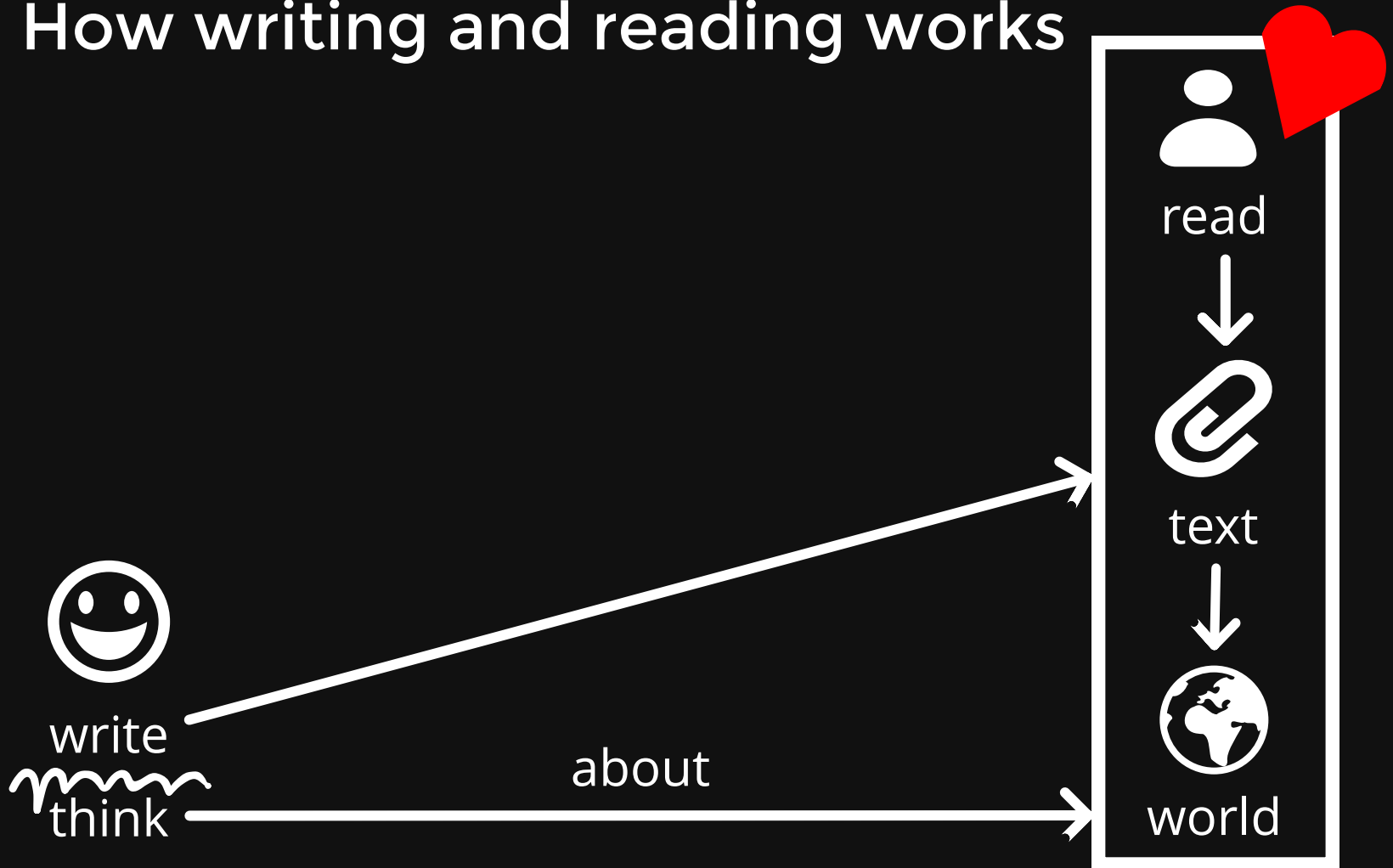


These are all about the text itself, not its effect!

How writing and reading works



How writing and reading works



From Campus To Cafés

Writing the Middle East For Your Daily Read

Over the last sixty years, Turkish immigration to Germany has been a significant phenomenon that has shaped both countries in numerous ways. This paper will examine how Turkish immigrants in Berlin are perceived through food culture, particularly döner kebab. The research question is: How do Middle Easterners in Germany shape perceptions about themselves and other Middle Easterners, and how do these self-perceptions influence the views of non-Middle Eastern Germans? To answer this question, it is first important to understand the historical background of Turkish migration to Germany.

Turkish migration to Germany began with the Labor Recruitment Agreement of 1961, which brought many guest workers to Germany. Initially intended as a temporary measure, this migration became permanent as workers settled and brought their families. Through this process, Turkish immigrants established businesses, including food establishments, which became an important part of German urban culture. The döner kebab, in particular, has become a symbol of Turkish presence in Germany.

This paper will argue that the reduction of Turkish identity to culinary contributions reveals ongoing issues with integration and recognition in German society. The methodology will involve analysis of personal experiences, historical documents, and contemporary social discourse. This research contributes to the growing body of literature on immigrant identity and cultural integration in Europe.

From Campus To Cafés

Writing the Middle East For Your Daily Read

Despite extensive scholarship on Turkish immigration in Germany, our understanding of how cultural recognition operates in everyday urban spaces remains fundamentally flawed. The widely accepted framework that equates visibility with integration has obscured a more troubling phenomenon: the way seemingly positive acknowledgments of Turkish contributions to German society actually reinforce patterns of exclusion. This oversight has significant consequences for both migration theory and integration policy. While scholars have documented the economic impact of Turkish labor migration (Author Year), they have failed to recognize how celebratory discourses about Turkish food culture—particularly in Berlin—paradoxically serve to legitimize deeper forms of structural marginalization. This analytical gap is especially concerning given mounting evidence that cultural recognition policies across Western Europe consistently mistake surface visibility for meaningful inclusion. By examining how Turkish immigrants in Berlin navigate and contest these contradictory forms of recognition, this study challenges dominant theoretical assumptions about cultural integration that continue to shape both academic discourse and policy decisions. The stakes of this theoretical intervention extend beyond migration studies, offering crucial insights for scholars grappling with questions of recognition, urban belonging, and the persistent legacies of guest worker programs in contemporary Europe.

An example

Understanding reader communities

Community codes

"migration theory"

"integration policy"

"structural marginalization"

"theoretical intervention"

"urban belonging"

"cultural recognition"

"mounting evidence"

"dominant theoretical

assumptions"

"academic discourse"

Value-signaling language

"fundamental"

"transformative phenomenon"

"far-reaching consequences"

"needed to recognize", "oversight"

"especially concerning"

"challenges", "paradoxically"

"crucial insights", "analytical gap"

"persistent legacies"

"contradictory forms"

*Different communities signal differently
"universal" academic writing doesn't exist*

From Campus To Cafés

Writing the Middle East For Your Daily Read

Media coverage of Turkish immigrant success stories in Germany continues to miss a crucial and troubling pattern: the more we celebrate döner kebab as a symbol of multicultural Berlin, the more we inadvertently reinforce harmful stereotypes about Turkish immigrants. While food journalists and cultural commentators have extensively covered Berlin's vibrant Turkish food scene, this feel-good narrative obscures a concerning reality that threatens to undermine authentic reporting on immigrant communities. The widely-circulated story of döner kebab as proof of successful integration not only misrepresents the complex experiences of Turkish-Germans but actively hampers journalists' ability to accurately portray contemporary urban dynamics. This investigation reveals how seemingly positive coverage can perpetuate outdated tropes, offering media professionals new frameworks for reporting on immigrant communities that avoid these common pitfalls. At stake is not just the accuracy of cultural journalism, but our ability to meaningfully convey how urban communities actually negotiate identity and belonging in contemporary Germany.

An example

Implications for our writing

Writing is NOT about communicating YOUR ideas, but changing readers' ideas

Knowledge exists in communities, not individual heads

Different communities have different:

- Standards of evidence
- Problems they want to understand
- Ways of assessing value
- Terminology and codes

Who are your readers? A practical guide

Step 1: Identify Potential Reader Communities

- Who already writes/talks about your topic?
- Who makes decisions about your topic?
- Who is affected by your topic?
- Who funds work in this area?
- Who might use your findings?

Step 3: Analyze What They Care About

- What keeps them up at night?
- What would make their work easier?
- What challenges do they face?
- What would help them succeed?
- What costs do they want to avoid?

Step 2: Research These Communities

- What do they read?
- What problems do they face?
- What language do they use?
- What values do they hold?
- What debates are they having?

Step 4: Find Your Value Proposition

- How does your work solve their problems?
- What new insights can you offer them?
- How will it help them do their jobs?
- What risks can you help them avoid?
- What opportunities can you help them seize?

Examples of Reader Communities

- Academic researchers of SPECIFIC fields (and/or interdisciplinary)
- Policy makers
- Journalists of SPECIFIC fields
- Nonprofit organizations
- Business leaders
- Community organizers
- Government agencies
- Cultural institutions
- Professional associations
- General public interested in your topic – challenging!

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Writing the Middle East For Your Daily Read

Remember

Different communities = Different priorities

One piece can serve multiple communities

Always write with specific readers in mind

Start with reader needs, not your interests

Frame your work as a solution to their problems

Key takeaway: Value lies in changing reader understanding!

Preview: How to construct problems readers care about

Task #2, deadline Nov 21

Identify 2-3 distinct reader communities for your work

What do they currently believe about your topic?

What do they want to understand better?

What would make them value your contribution?

Max. 5 sentence abstract highlighting value for these readers

Next session(s)

Nov 21 – deadline for task #2

7 – Tue Nov 26 1–2 PM – **constructing a problem**

Nov 27 – Dec 2: prepare task #3

8 – Tue Dec 3 12–2 PM – improving your text //
independent writing time // peer-review

9 – Tue Dec 10 1–2 PM – **the perils of gaps and the
power of errors**

**!! Dec 12 – Students confirm their selected topic.
Writing time for the final 15–18 pages paper begins !!**

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Writing the Middle East For Your Daily Read

Deadlines... oh no!

Thursday, November 21, 6pm – deadline for task #2 (identify reader communities)

Thursday, December 5, 6pm – deadline for task #4 (peer feedback on problems)

Thursday, December 12, 6pm – deadline for task #5 (confirm final paper topics)

Thursday, December 19, 6pm – deadline for task #6 (peer feedback on gaps vs errors)

Thursday, January 30, 6pm – deadline for task #7 (peer feedback on vertical writing)

Tuesday, February 11, 2pm – early bird deadline to submit final 15–18 page paper

Tuesday, February 25, 2pm – final deadline to submit final 15–18 page paper

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Writing the Middle East For Your Daily Read

Course philosophy

Reader-first, ego second

Clarity over complexity

If your grandma can't understand it, rewrite it.

Knowledge speed-dating

1. Solo brainstorm (5 mins):

Your Middle East expertise

Writing experiences

Course learning goals

*// Outcome: A
magnificent map of our
collective genius!*

2. Group share (rest of the session): name, expertise,
interests, goals, ...

Find your knowledge soulmates

Discover complementary skills

From Campus To Cafés

Writing the Middle East For Your Daily Read

Next session(s)

2 – Tue Oct 22 12–2 PM – independent writing time

3 – Tue Oct 29 12–2 PM – independent writing time

4 – Tue Nov 5 12–2 PM – independent writing time

(Deadline for the "porcupine" paper: Thu Nov 8, 2 PM!)

5 – Tue Nov 12 12–2 PM – **reviewing your texts**