

13

WRITING FOR APPLIED AUDIENCES

ISSUE BRIEFS, CHARTBOOKS, POSTERS, AND GENERAL- INTEREST ARTICLES

SUGGESTED COURSE EXTENSIONS

A. Reviewing

1. At a departmental research presentation day or professional conference in your field, find a poster related to your interests. Discuss the research project with the poster's author. After you return, evaluate the following, using the criteria under "Posters" on pp. 328–32 of *Writing about Numbers*, 2nd Edition.
 - a. Title of the poster
 - b. Ease of understanding of data and methods description for (i) researchers in your field; (ii) nonstatisticians
 - c. Accessibility of research findings to (i) researchers in your field; (ii) nonstatisticians
 - d. Relevance of conclusions for an applied audience
 - e. Clarity of the overall story line on the poster
 - f. Poster layout
 - g. Type size and other formatting
 - h. Availability and quality of handouts
 - i. Length and clarity of the presenter's oral description of the poster contents
2. Find an issue brief or policy brief related to a research topic in your field or at a website such as the Urban Institute (<http://www.urban.org>). Evaluate the following elements of the brief, using the guidelines under "Issue and Policy Briefs" on pp. 333–38.
 - a. Ease of understanding for nonstatisticians
 - b. Simplicity of tables and charts
 - c. Appropriateness of vocabulary for the intended audience
 - d. Layout
3. Find a chartbook about a research topic in your field or at a website such as the US Social Security Administration (<http://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/chartbooks/>) or Healthy People 2020 (<http://www.healthypeople.gov/>). Evaluate it using the criteria on pp. 338–39.
4. Find a descriptive report about a topic in your field or at a website such as the Office of Human Services Policy (<http://aspe.hhs.gov/topics0.cfm/>). Evaluate it using the criteria on p. 340.
5. Find a newspaper or magazine article that summarizes findings of a quantitative study. Critique the following elements of that article, using the principles in chapter 13 of *Writing about Numbers*, 2nd Edition.
 - a. Introduction
 - b. Explanation of study data and methods
 - c. Tables and charts
 - d. Sentences to introduce each table, chart, or quantitative comparison

- e. Interpretation of the numeric evidence
- f. Summary of the findings

B. Writing

1. Adapt charts or tables from your paper to be used on the poster, including specific titles and bulleted text annotations.
2. Write “Vanna White” notes for each table or chart on your poster, following the guidelines on pp. 306–10 of *Writing about Numbers*, 2nd Edition.
3. Create a 4' by 8' poster about a research project you are conducting, to be presented at a departmental or professional conference, following the guidelines on pp. 328–32 of *Writing about Numbers*, 2nd Edition.
 - a. Design poster components for each major section of the paper, including an introduction, literature review, data and methods, results (using the charts and tables you created for question B.1), and conclusions.
 - b. Draft the layout of the poster, including a title, abstract, and the components you designed in part a of this question.
4. Write a narrative to accompany your poster. Include short modules for each of the following.
 - a. An introduction to your topic and project
 - b. A description of the data used in your analysis
 - c. A summary of important theories on your topic
 - d. A summary of key previous studies on your topic
 - e. An explanation of your methods for someone familiar with inferential statistics
 - f. An explanation of your methods for nonstatisticians
 - g. The key findings of your study
 - h. The policy or program implications of your work
 - i. The research implications of your study (strengths, weaknesses, directions for future work)
5. Create handouts for the poster you created in questions B.1 and B.3 for
 - a. a statistical audience.
 - b. an applied audience.
6. Evaluate and revise the poster, narrative, and handouts you created in questions B.1 through B.5.
 - a. Ask a peer to evaluate your poster and associated narrative and handouts, given your specified audience and using the criteria under “Posters” on pp. 328–33 of *Writing about Numbers*, 2nd Edition.
 - b. Revise the poster, narrative, and handouts based on the feedback you received from your rehearsal of the poster presentation.

7. Write a two-page issue brief about a quantitative analysis, following the guidelines on pp. 333–38 of *Writing about Numbers*, 2nd Edition.
8. Write a two- or three-page general-interest article about the purpose, findings, and implications of your study, following the guidelines on p. 341 of *Writing about Numbers*, 2nd Edition.
9. Write a chartbook about your study, following the guidelines on pp. 338–40 of *Writing about Numbers*, 2nd Edition.
10. Repeat questions B.1 through B.5 from the suggested course extensions to chapter 12, writing a ten-minute oral presentation to a lay audience about the same study you used for those questions.

C. Revising

1. Repeat question A.1 for a poster you have created previously about an application of a quantitative analysis.
2. Revise the poster, narrative, and handouts to rectify any problems you identified in the previous question.
3. Evaluate a report you have written previously for a lay audience about an application of a quantitative analysis, using the criteria on pp. 317–26 of *Writing about Numbers*, 2nd Edition. Revise it to rectify any problems you identified.
4. Ask a peer who is familiar with the statistical and substantive knowledge level of your intended audience to critique the revised draft of the report you used in the preceding question, using the criteria on p. 317–26 of *Writing about Numbers*, 2nd Edition. Revise it based on the feedback you received.
5. Evaluate a speech you have written previously for an applied audience about an application of a quantitative analysis, using the criteria in chapters 12 and 13. Revise it to rectify any problems you identified.
6. Ask a peer who is familiar with the statistical and substantive knowledge level of your intended audience to listen to the revised speech you used in the preceding question. Have them critique it, using the criteria in chapters 12 and 13. Revise it based on the feedback you received.