

CSC: CoR: Chapter 2: Connecting with Your Reader

The 10 salient sentence strings presented below are lifted from the chapter as is, without modification (except, perhaps, for a bit of punctuation here or there). They are presented in order of appearance in the chapter.

Ten Salient Sentence Strings

1. In fact, every time you go to a written source for information, you join a conversation between writers and readers that began more than five thousand years ago. And when you report your research, you add your voice and can hope that other voices will respond to you, so that you can in turn respond to them.
2. Of course, judgements go both ways: just as readers judge writers, so writers also judge readers, but they do so before they write.
3. Writers can't avoid creating *some* role for themselves and their readers, planned or not. So those roles are worth thinking about from the beginning, before you write a word. If you ignore or miscast your readers, you'll leave so many traces of that mistake in your early drafts that you won't easily fix them in the final one.
4. When you do research, you learn something that others don't know. So when you report it, you must think of your readers as someone that doesn't know it but needs to and yourself as someone who will give her reason to want to know it.
5. You must present yourself as interested in, even enthusiastic about, wanting to share something new, because the interest you show in your work roughly predicts the interest you reader will take in it.
6. You must, however, cast your readers in a complimentary role by offering them a social contract: *I'll play my part if you play yours*. But that means you must understand their role. If you cast them in a role they won't accept, you're likely to lose them entirely.
7. Your teacher expects you to report not just *what* you find, what you can *do* with it.
8. To succeed in this role you must help them solve a practical problem whose solution you base not on all the data you can find, no matter how new, but on just those particular facts relevant to the problem of authenticity and whose sources you can show as reliable.
9. Your academic reader will almost always adopt this third role. They will think you've fulfilled your side of the social contract only when you treat them as who they think they are: scholars interested in greater knowledge and better understanding.
10. You are concerned with your *particular* community of readers, with *their* interests and expectations, with improving *their* understanding, based on the best evidence you can find.