# RAFTS Strategy

Strategies that make a difference

RAFTS (**R**ole, **A**udience, **F**ormat, **T**opic, **S**trong verb) is a writing strategy that helps students reflect on their role as a writer, the audience they will address, the varied formats for writing, and the topic they will be writing about. RAFTS helps students to make important decisions before writing begins and influences their planning, drafting, editing, and publishing.

Individualized

Targeted
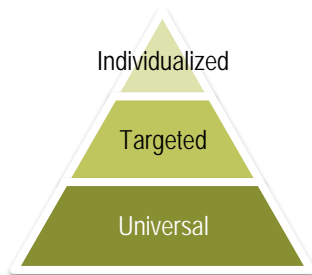
Universal

A teacher's understanding of their students' learning needs helps determine when to provide universal, targeted, or individualized instructional strategies. For some students, universal instructional strategies may be enough to meet their learning needs. For others, more targeted instructional strategies are the starting point for implementing the curriculum. The strategy described is a guideline that teachers can use depending on the learning context.

Why use this strategy in an inclusive learning environment

- Helps students understand purpose, audience, main idea, and organization in their role as a writer.
- Encourages students to compare and contrast a topic from multiple perspectives.
- Provides the opportunity for students to create a text as various characters, to different audiences, and in multiple formats.
- Activates prior knowledge and provides a structured opportunity to become a proficient writer.

How this strategy could be used in an inclusive learning environment

1. Using familiar examples of texts, discuss the various perspectives writers must consider, the different roles, audiences, and formats each author explores.

2. Create a strategy template that includes the prompts in a format that is accessible to all students. Use a think-aloud to model and discuss the important elements of RAFTS:

   Role – *provides students with the context for writing*

   Audience – *focuses students on the impact of word choice and specific details*

   Format – *can be flexible to differentiate to meet a student's interest or ability*

   Topic – *helps to structure the message*

   Strong verb – *determines the tone and purpose for writing (e.g., to persuade, inform, entertain)*

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3. Choose an example to generate a new RAFTS chart. Agree on the general content, but encourage students to choose the role, audience, format, from a current topic of study and area of interest.

4. Model and review how to fill in the RAFTS organizer with students helping to brainstorm the possibilities for each element of RAFTS. Record ideas on the RAFTS organizer.

5. Consider the impact of changing one of the elements in the RAFTS example to another (i.e., what would happen if the Strong Verb 'criticize' was changed to 'congratulate').

Role	**A**udience	**F**ormat	**T**opic	**S**trong Verb
From whose perspective are you writing?	Who are you writing to?	What kind of writing is this (e.g., letter, poem, news story)?	What are you writing about?	What tone will you use? Why are you writing this?
scientist	environment minister	letter	the effect of acid rain on lakes	'criticize,' to inform and persuade
scientist	environment minister	letter	the effect of acid rain on lakes	'congratulate,' to inform

6. Have students select a prompt individually or in small groups to create a short text. Pair students with a peer to brainstorm how to organize the information verbally before writing about it and sharing back with the larger group.

Example

Role	**A**udience	**F**ormat	**T**opic	**S**trong Verb
From whose perspective are you writing?	Who are you writing to?	What kind of writing is this (e.g., letter, poem, news story)?	What are you writing about?	What tone will you use? Why are you writing this?
you	best friend	poem	summer holidays	'amuse,' to entertain and inform
car	newspaper readers	editorial	pot holes in roads	'complain,' to inform and persuade
salmon	city planners	letter	impact of river development	'condemn,' to persuade and inform

RAFTS can also be arranged for students in the following sentence frame:

As a (**role**) create a (**format**) to (**audience**) (**strong verb**) about (**topic**).

Example: As a **salmon**, create a **letter** to **city planners** **condemning** the **impact of development on the North Saskatchewan River system**.

7. After students have practiced with the RAFTS framework, ensure that they have meaningful opportunities to write where they have a real role and purpose, and their writing can be shared outside of the classroom.

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Tips for individualized supports

- Use the RAFTS strategy as a pre-writing strategy and/or as a transition to sharing with a larger group.

- Use guided reading groups to create **R**ole, **A**udience, **F**ormat, **T**opic, and **S**trong verb cards or images prior to having students work with a partner or small group.

- Work on RAFTS with individual students or small groups, helping them to fill in each component.

- Provide students with a list of options for each component and let them choose their role, audience, format, and topic from a 'menu' of suggested words.

- Students can also draw ideas under each RAFTS element or use a digital template.

- Students can use a variety of assistive/educational technologies to:
  - organize writing using pictures and/or diagrams;
  - reduce letter-by-letter typing using predictive text software;
  - adjust text size and font colour; and
  - read student writing aloud.