BRIDGING THE GAP

Voice & Tone Guide

VOICE

Design Principles:

Positive
Bridging the Gap tells stories where people grow, even in adversity.

Personable
Bridging the Gap is generous to everyone involved in the project, including the audience. It is designed to bring people together through the kindness of listening.

Accessible
Bridging the Gap aims to inspire listeners of all ages and backgrounds. Everyone is invited to the conversation.

What is Bridging the Gap's voice?

Positive - Focuses on the silver lining in every story
- Recognize difficult moments, but do not dwell in them
- Bookend stories with lessons and/or audience benefits

Personable - Human, respectful, and friendly
- Be kind to all individuals involved in the project
- Use a variety of sentence structures and lengths

Accessible - Easily understood by a variety of people
- Write clearly and concisely
- Avoid slang and divisive language

TONE

Generally, the website should be accessible to older adults, but appealing to college educated adults ages 18-34. Social media and streaming platforms should be focused on college educated adults ages 18-34.

How do we know which tone to take?

Energizing
Using enthusiasm to persuade people with shared values to learn more about our project

Audience
College educated adults ages 18-34

Audience's Circumstance
Overall
- Limited familiarity with our project
- They have heard of this, but they might not understand what this is

Scenarios
- Visiting the website for the first time
- Scrolling through social media

Audience's Emotion
Curious
Non-committal

Our Intention
We're excited about this impactful project, and we want to tell you about it. Your time is better spent with us than with anyone else on this platform.

TONE

Our Expression
Audience-focused. Passionate and persuasive -- we know you can help us make the world a better place! All you have to do is listen.

Our Role and Persona
Encouraging, experienced professor

Tips
- Emphasize that simple actions create user benefits and positive social impact.
- Show how Bridging the Gap benefits different populations.
- Highlight positive or insightful moments in stories.
- Make it as easy as possible for the user to understand and act.
- Write clearly and concisely
- Use words with positive connotations
- Point users to the next step (social media page, website, Spotify, etc.)

Examples
- Targeted social media advertisements
- Website home page

Application
Instagram -- **usffwsoca** #WednesdayWisdom from student-led Bridging the Gap podcast project. Local older adults shared their greatest life lessons with our students. Link in bio 🔗

I LOVE ME.
I do. And, I'm gonna take care of me
as long as the Lord lets me.

- ANNE THOMAS

TONE

Application (continued)

Potential home page graphic. Clicking on this graphic would direct the user to one of Laura's podcasts.

> **"** I'm gaining so much **wisdom** from these interviews. I can apply it to my life—even now. And, hopefully take the lessons learned to **better myself.** **"**
>
> – Laura Janssen
> *Bridging the Gap* Student Interviewer
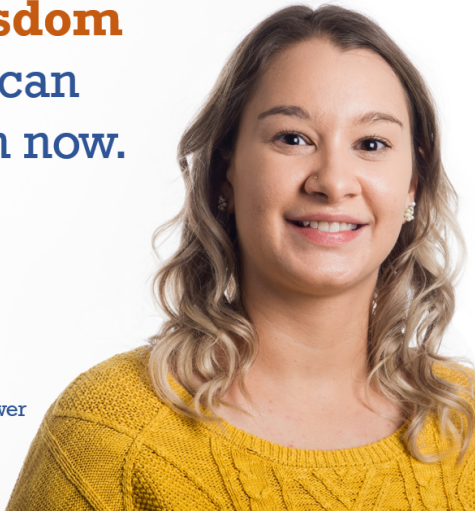
TONE

Instructional
Explaining processes and expectations in neutral, succinct language

Audience
College students of varying ages and expertise

Audience's Circumstance
- Starting a position
- Balancing multiple commitments
- Attempting new tasks

Audience's Emotion
Depends on the time of year. Can be:
- Eager
- Busy
- Overwhelmed

Our Intention
We're proud of this project, and we need you to help us execute it well. We want to clearly communicate our expectations to alleviate confusion and produce the best product possible.

Our Expression
Process-focused. Straightforward and specific -- we know that you're busy, so we will communicate our needs as quickly and clearly as possible.

Our Role and Persona
Helpful IT support specialist

TONE

Tips

- Reference important information more than once. Say the same thing in a different way.
- Avoid condescending language.
- Be audience-focused. Explain tasks in the order the reader will need to complete them.
- Know that students may feel overwhelmed. This is especially important when communicating new tasks or project challenges.
- Encourage and thank students. Be polite.
- When something is done well, recognize the student's success.

Examples

- Student Task List
- Scheduling and project update emails
- Meeting reflection forms

Application

Student Task List

- "Pick up your $18.25 food stipend, your client's gift card, and your client's info sheet from Trina Boedeker. Purchase treats to share during your meeting. Return the receipts and change to her as soon as possible."

Scheduling email

- "Hi Sage and Laura, ¶ I know this is another long email, but it also has important information. Please read it carefully. ¶ I contacted Loretta Inman and set up your first meeting for [. . .] ¶ Please respond to this email to verify that you received this information, and please let me know if you have any questions. Good luck! ¶ Thank you! ¶ Larissa"

TONE

Credible
Describing the project with authenticity and pride

Audience
College educated people ages 18-34

Audience's Circumstance
- Seeking information about the podcast
- Reading individual podcast descriptions on the website or streaming platform
- Visiting website "about" page

Audience's Emotion
- Interested
- Potentially confused

Our Intention
We're glad you're here to learn more about our project. We want to respect your attention, so we'll give you succinct, interesting, and relevant information.

Our Expression
Self-assured and authentic -- we're proud of what we accomplished and we'd like to share it with you.

Our Role and Persona
Enthused librarian

TONE

Tips

- Connect to this project's voice and use it to create authenticity and consistency.
- Highlight the most universal ideas in each story.
- Be aware of the difference between showing pride and being boastful.
- Write clearly and concisely.
- Showcase the unique benefits in each individual podcast.

Examples

- General podcast description for streaming platforms
- Individual podcast descriptions
- Website "about" page

Application

General podcast description for streaming platforms

- "Imagine how kind the world could be if each of us spent a small part of our day actively listening to someone else. We designed Bridging the Gap with this idea in mind—to bring people together through the kindness of listening. In each episode, college students share conversation with older adults and discuss life lessons."

Individual podcast description

- "In this episode, Caleb and Anne talk about the importance of being kind to everyone -- including yourself."