

Interpretation Training Materials for Summit Steward Training

“The care of rivers is not a matter of rivers, but a matter of the human heart”—Tenaka Shozo

People will only act to protect that which they care about.

Definitions of Interpretation

“Interpretation is a communication process that forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and the meanings inherent in the resource”—*National Association for Interpretation*

Principles of Interpretation¹.

1. To spark an interest, interpreters must relate the subject to the lives of the visitors.
2. The purpose of interpretation goes beyond providing information to reveal deeper meaning and truth.
3. The interpretive presentation- as a work of art- should be designed as a story that informs, entertains, and enlightens.
4. The purpose of the interpretive story is to inspire and to provoke people to broaden their horizons.
5. Interpretation should present a complete theme or thesis and address the whole person.
6. Interpretation for children, teenagers, and seniors... should follow fundamentally different approaches.

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13. Interpretation should instill in people the ability, and the desire, to sense the beauty in their surroundings—to provide spiritual uplift and to encourage resource preservation.

Interpretation is **Purposeful**

As stewards, we're not just having casual conversations with people. We want to educate them and ultimately, we want to influence their behavior. So we need to think about how to do this.

¹ Larry Beck and Ted Cable, *Interpretation for the 21st Century*. Champaign, IL: Sagamore Publishing, 1998. p 10-11

What do you want visitors to do as a result of your conversation?

Interpretation is **Enjoyable**

This is the part where your passion, your enthusiasm, and your own style make all the difference. Here are a couple of tips to help in your planning:

- ❑ Stay relaxed and remember to smile
- ❑ Involve all of the senses
- ❑ Make it relevant to the visitor's experience and use metaphors
- ❑ Use the Wow factor!

Things that you can use in your interpretation of the alpine zone:

Interpretation is **Relevant**

Relate it to a known and try to figure out what aspect of the alpine this visitor is most interested in. (Ex: Living history museum, adapted for all kinds of conditions, endangered species, found in only a few places, been here for 12,000 years, alpine plants here in the northeast are found 10,000 feet lower than their western counterpart, etc.)

Tangibles, Intangibles, and Universals

Universal concepts help visitors to connect to tangible objects by relating to their own experience. This also makes the interpretation more enjoyable.

Tangible aspects are the physical attributes of an object or place.

Intangibles are the ideas related to the tangible attributes.

Universals are the general concepts that are related to the intangible ideas.

Tangibles from alpine zone:

Intangibles from alpine zone:

Universals from alpine zone:

Knowing your Audience

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs²

All people seek to achieve personal intellectual and emotional growth and experience a sense of fulfillment. Psychologist Abraham Maslow studied human behavior and found that people could only achieve growth and fulfillment when their more basic physiological and emotional needs were met. He articulated these needs as a pyramid, starting with basic needs and moving progressively towards growth needs.

² Adapted from: Brochu, Lisa and Tim Merrimen. Certified Interpretive Guide Training Workbook. Fort Collins, CO: NAI, 2006. p 17-18 and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maslow's_hierarchy_of_needs

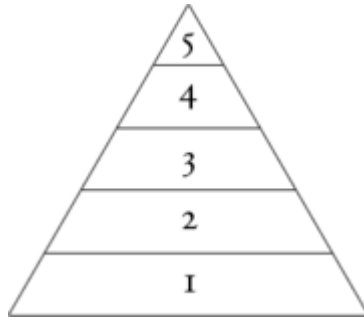


Diagram of Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

- 5. Actualization
- 4. Status (esteem)
- 3. Love/belonging
- 2. Safety
- 1. Physiological (biological needs)

What does this mean for stewarding? People **cannot** focus on the message that you're trying to convey if they are hungry, cold, out of breath, getting wet, or being attacked by black flies. Visitors **will not** focus on your message if they're busy enjoying the view.

Bottom line: **Timing is everything! If people aren't in a good place with their basic needs, try to help them get there.**

(Examples: "I'll give you a chance to enjoy the view and get some extra layers on, and then I'll come back to tell you a little more about the area and answer any questions.

"If you're looking for a spot out of the wind, I can recommend a couple of good places.")

Basic Needs	What the needs are	Actions we can take
Physiological	Food, Water, Shelter, Sanitation	Give them time to take care of these, answer questions or provide suggestions.
Safety and Security	Guarantee of individual physical and emotional security	Have first aid kit and safety plan in place, act consistently

Intermediate Needs	What the needs are	Actions we can take
Love and belonging	Social, emotionally-based need for acceptance as a member of a group. Acknowledgement.	Acknowledge the effort they took in getting here.

Esteem	Need to feel respected and appreciated as an individual	Answer questions as if you're hearing them for the first time.
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Growth Needs	What the needs are	Actions we can take
Understanding/ Aesthetic	Need for knowledge, opportunities to experience beauty	Give them the opportunity to enjoy the mountain experience they're looking for.
Self- actualization	Need to be best person one can be	

Knowing the Audience—Learning Styles³

People have different ways that they learn best. Recognizing this and appealing to a variety of learning styles insures that your message will reach your audience.

Auditory learners- Learn best by hearing information

Visual learners- Learn best by seeing information

Verbal learners- Learn best by reading the information

Kinesthetic learners- Learn best by interacting with the information in a hands-on way

A few other Recommended Resources:

Brochu, Lisa and Tim Merriman, *Personal Interpretation: Connecting Your Audience to Heritage Resources*. Fort Collins, CO: InterpPress, 2002.

Ham, Sam. *Environmental Interpretation: A Practical Guide for People with Big Ideas and Small Budgets*. Golden, CO: North American Press, 1992

National Association for Interpretation: www.interpnet.com

³ Adapted from: Brochu, Lisa and Tim Merrimen. *Certified Interpretive Guide Training Workbook*. Fort Collins, CO: NAI, 2006. p 19 and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Learning_styles