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Selecting landmarks when giving directions to different addressees on campus

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Abstract: Landmarks can be helpful guides when completing spatial tasks, such as giving directions. Past research has shown that the salience of landmarks can influence their use, with salience based on perceptual features, or on the spatial relation between the landmark and a target location. In two experiments, students were asked to give directions to locations on campus to other students, alumni, or visitors. In Experiment 1, speakers' ratings of the imaginability and frequency of use for 20 buildings along the directed paths impacted whether they were included in their directions to other students. In Experiment 2, these features did not impact speakers' directions to alumni or visitors, suggesting a different prioritization of salience. These results suggest that the experience of the speakers and the identity of the receivers play a role in which landmarks speakers choose to include in their directions.