

LECTURE 1

Definition of Technical Writing

- Technical writing deals with technical information
- Technical writing relies on visual elements
- Technical writing uses numbers
- Technical writing is well documented
- Technical writing is grammatically and stylistically correct

Usage of technical writing

- Internal documents (feasibility reports, memorandum, technical notes, emails) within a company
- External letters to other companies
- Various types of reports to the public at large, instruction manuals, technical description, process description
- University reports, papers, publications

Nature of technical writing

- Clarity
- Conciseness
- Organization
- Grammar

Attributes of good technical writers

- Know your reader
- Know your objectives
- Be simple direct and concise

Qualities of good technical writing

- Arrives by the date it is due
- Is well designed
- Has the necessary front matter
- Has a body that provides essential information
- Uses tables and graphs appropriately
- Reveals the results obtained
- Is designed to be read selectively
- Has a discernable plan
- Reads coherently from beginning to end
- Answers readers' questions
- Conveys an impression of authority, soundness and honest work
- Is free of typographical, grammatical and spelling errors

LECTURE 2

Letter structure

1. Sender
2. Date
3. Destination
4. Subject
5. Opening salutations
6. Introduction
7. Body
8. Conclusion
9. Closing remarks
10. Signature
11. Enclosure
12. Carbon copy
13. Initials

Memorandum and e-mails

1. Company (From)
2. Destination (To)
3. Date
4. Topic
5. Memo content
6. Signature

Proposals

1. Introduction
 - Purpose
 - Background (statement of the problem)
 - Scope
2. Solution criteria
 - Approach
 - Result
3. Plan of action
4. Schedule
5. Budget
6. Qualifications
7. Conclusion
 - Summary
 - Contact

LECTURE 3

Process description

1. Introduction
 - Definition and theory
 - Purpose and function of the process
 - List of major steps
2. Steps description
 - Extended definition
 - Purpose and function of each step
 - Description of what happens in this step
 - Relation to the next step
3. Conclusion
 - Summary of the function and the major steps of the process
 - Sense of finality

Form and style

- Front matter
- Abstract (Proposal)
- Title page (Mechanism Description and proposal)
- Table of contents (Proposal)
- List of figures and list of tables (Proposal)

Layout

- Heading and subheadings (Proposal and Mechanism Description)
- Graphics (figures and tables) (Proposal and Mechanism Description)
- Pagination (Proposal and Mechanism Description)
- Headers and footnotes (Proposal and Mechanism Description)
- Typeface and size (Proposal and Mechanism Description)

- Binding (Proposal)
- Spacing (Proposal and Mechanism Description)

Mechanism description

1. Introduction

- Definition
- Overall function
- Overall appearance (colour, shape, size, texture, finish, material)
- List of parts

2. Parts description (must be done for each part in the mechanism)

- Definition
- Function
- Appearance
- Link to the next part

3. Conclusion

- Summary of the mechanism function (relist the parts)
- Sense of finality

LECTURE 4

Website analysis (Points to consider other than the audience)

- Purpose
- Design
- Technical aspects
- Intended audience
- Improvements or changes

Design

- Navigation
- Colour scheme
- Links

- Textual content
- Wordiness
- Use of symbols and pictures
- Aesthetic
- Is the site cluttered?
- Harmony

Technical aspects

- Are there flash elements on the home page?
- Use of animation or audio elements and value to the page
- Does the animation make loading longer?
- Are files broken down into appropriate amounts?
- Is the animation interactive?
- Tone and language level
- Who does the website attract?
- Demographic description of the audience
- How does the website appeal to this audience?
- What design and content decision does the webmaster make to appeal to the audience?
- Are the headings clear, logical and useful?

Visual rhetoric

Focusing on your purpose

- What is the visual purpose (instruct, persuade, create interest)?
- What form of information will the visual depict?
- What kind of relationship will the visual depict?
- Do you require people to interpret your visual?
- Is the visual needed at all?

Focusing on your audience

- Is the audience accustomed to interpret visuals?
- Is the audience interested in specific numbers or overall view?
- Should the audience focus on a specific value or compare two or more?
- Should you use one complicated visual, or two or more straightforward ones?

Focusing on your presentation

- Will your visual increase the audience interest?
- Which medium will be most effective to present your visual?

LECTURE 5

Instructions

1. Definition, introduction
2. Description of what happens
3. Cautions
4. List of required equipment
5. Specific directions (number the directions in sequence)
6. Result
7. Conclusion
 - Summary of the steps
 - Additional information

Do not forget visuals

LECTURE 6

Progress report

1. Introduction
 - Purpose
 - Background
 - Scope
2. Work completed (repeat for each task)
 - Describe the task
 - What was accomplished?
 - How long did it take?
 - Were there any difficulties?
3. Work remaining (repeat for each task)
 - Describe the task
 - What remains to be accomplished?
 - If not on schedule, will it affect other part of the work?
 - Provide a schedule for completion
4. Conclusion
 - Appraisal of current status
 - Evaluation of the progress to date
 - Will you complete the project on time?
 - Contact

Collaborative writing (Team work)

- Appoint a group manager or leader
- Define clear and definite goals
- Decide on the group organization
- Divide the tasks
- Establish a timetable
- Decide on a meeting schedule and format
- Submit regular progress report

Effective roles in groups

- Task roles
- Initiators
- Information seekers
- Opinion seekers
- Summarizers
- Group maintenance roles
- Encouragers
- Feeling expressers
- Harmonizers
- Gatekeepers

LECTURE 7

Editing

- Are there spelling or grammatical errors?
- Have you included all the formal elements?
- Have you respected the form and style?
- Are your headings and titles clear?
- Is your reference system accurate?
- Did you sufficiently describe the tables and graphs in the text?
- Are all pages and sections in the correct order?
- Have you referenced your information, tables and graphs?
- Have you proofread your document?

Abstracts

- Descriptive abstracts: Describe the structure of a report (100 words or less)
- Informative abstracts: Describe the structure and the content of a report (150 to 200 words)

- Executive summaries: Document of its own. It is generally 10% the length of the report. It describes the nature of the report. It may include figures and tables. It includes a recommendation section, so an executive can make the appropriate decision.

LECTURE 8

Resume

- Personal information
- Knowledge, skills and abilities
- Experience
- Education
- Volunteer work
- References
- Leisure
- Other information

Interview

- Presentation and waiting period
- Figuring out your audience
- During the interview
- After the interview
- Follow-up

Finding a job

- Newspaper
- Internet
- Miscellaneous encounters
- Listening around you

LECTURE 9

Ethics

- Technical writers must be accurate in their work
- Technical writers must be honest in their work
- Technical writers must not substitute speculation for fact
- Technical writers must not hide truth with ambiguity
- Technical writers must not use the ideas of others without giving proper credit
- Technical writers must not violate copyright laws
- Technical writers must not lie with statistics
- Technical writers must not inject personal bias into their report
- Be good, do good, don't deceive

LECTURE 10

Persuasion guidelines

- Assess political climate
- Learn unspoken rules
- Be clear about what you want
- Never make a claim you know readers will reject
- Anticipate your audience's reaction
- Decide on a connection
- Avoid an extreme persona
- Find points of agreements
- Never distort the opponent's position
- Try to concede something
- Use only your best material
- Make no claim unless you can support it
- Use your skills responsibly
- Seek a second opinion

- Decide on the appropriate medium

Aristotle principles

- Ethos: Appeal to our good character
- Logos: Appeal to our reason
- Pathos: Appeal to our emotion

Toulmin logic

Toulmin logic provides a way of checking your own arguments for overlooked flaws. It can also help you arrange your argument.

- Claim: Major proposition or conclusion of the argument
- Grounds: Evidence upon which the claim rest
- Warrant: Justification for the grounds and what makes them relevant to the claim
- Backing: Further evidence for accepting the warrant
- Rebuttal: Counterarguments or exception to the claim, warrant or backing