TECHNICAL WRITING

JOHN M. LANNON • SIXTH EDITION

1 tech·ni·cal \ ‘teknəkəl, -nek-\ *adj* Gk *technikos* of art, ful, practical (fr. *technē* art, craft, practical skill + *-ikos* - E *-al;* akin to Gk *tektōn* carpenter, builder, Skt taksan c penter, *taksati* he forms, constructs, L *texere* to weave, struct, OHG *dehsa* hatchet, *dahs* badger. **1a:** having s usu. practical knowledge esp. of a mechanical or scien ject <the construction of the thermonuclear weapon great challenge to the ~people of this country –Edwar ler> **b:** marked by or characteristic of specialization <

1 writing *n -s* [ME, fr. gerund of *writen* to write – n WRITE] **1** : the act or process of one who writes <wi copies may be made—E.M.Robinson>: as **a** : the forming letters on stone, paper, wood, or other su medium to record the ideas which characters and press or to communicate the ideas by visible signs characters to record in visible form words or soun were not to be done on stone with a chisel but on papyrus –George Steindorff & K.C. Steele> <~on t

Technical Writing

Sixth Edition

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A Checklist for Revising the Document

Numbers in parentheses refer to the first page of discussion in this text.

Is the Content Worthwhile?

- ☐ A brief but explicit title (370)
- ☐ Subject and purpose clearly stated (231)
- ☐ Enough information for readers to understand the meaning (26)
- ☐ Material (or insight) new and significant to the audience (26)
- ☐ All material technically accurate (16)
- ☐ Technical details appropriate for the audience (27)
- ☐ All needed warnings and cautions (433)
- ☐ All data examined fully and interpreted impartially (180)
- ☐ Both sides of the issue presented (182)
- ☐ Opinions and assertions supported by evidence (47)
- ☐ Conclusions and recommendations supported by the facts presented (555)
- ☐ No recommendations where none were requested (25)
- ☐ No gaps, foggy areas, or needless details (27)
- ☐ All anticipated reader questions answered (19)
- ☐ All data sources documented (188)
- ☐ All material honest and fair to everyone involved (62)

Is the Organization Sensible?

- ☐ Structure of the document visible at a glance (224)
- ☐ An evident line of reasoning (555)
- ☐ A distinct introduction, body, and conclusion (230)
- ☐ A given section's length that is equal to its importance (231)
- ☐ Enough transitions and connectors to signal relationships (623)
- ☐ Material organized for best emphasis (246)
- ☐ A topic (orienting) sentence to begin each supporting paragraph (239)
- ☐ One main point developed in each supporting paragraph, with unity, coherence, and resonable length (238)

Is the Style Readable?

- [ ] Each sentence understandable on *first* reading (251)
- [ ] The most information expressed in the fewest words (263)
- [ ] Sentences varied in construction and length (274)
- [ ] Each word chosen for exactness (279)
- [ ] All definitions double-checked (382)
- [ ] Abstractions and generalizations replaced by concrete, specific, and exact language (286)
- [ ] No triteness, overstatements, euphemisms or inappropriate jargon (283)
- [ ] Tone unbiased and appropriate (291)

Are Form, Format, Visuals and Mechanics Appropriate?

- [ ] The best document form (letter, memo, report) for the stated purpose and audience (461)
- [ ] An inviting and accessible format: white space, typeface, etc. (346)
- [ ] Adequate, clear, and informative headings (359)
- [ ] Adequate visuals, to clarify meaning and create interest (302)
- [ ] All visuals properly introduced, integrated, and discussed (338)
- [ ] All pages numbered and in order (352)
- [ ] All needed supplements: title page, abstract, etc. (367)
- [ ] Correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar (592)

Proofreader's Marks

/ the concluding stroke after each insertion and also used to separate two or more marks*

delete; take it out

close up within line

close up between lines

delete and close up

insert here (something)

insert space

space evenly between words

let it stand

transpose

set in capitals (CAPITALS)

set in LOWERCASE (lowercase)

set in small CAPITALS (SMALL CAPITALS)

set in italic (*italic*)

set in boldface (**boldface**)

spell out abbrev.

Begin new paragraph.

Do not begin new paragraph

begin new line

period

comma

colon

semicolon

apostrophe

quotation marks

parentheses

brackets

em dash standard dash

en dash (1941–1945)

hyphen

superscript (πr^2)

subscript (H_2O)

align horizontally

align vertically

move left

move right

center horizontally

center vertically

wrong font

inverted letter

broken letter

*If you wish to make the same change more than once in a line, indicate the change and follow it by the relevant number of slashes, such as

Dr. Jones a pediatric surgeon completed her rounds at noon.

If more than three slashes are necessary, instead circle the number following the change:

Complete Exercises A, B, F, G, and H.

Preface

Technical Writing, sixth edition, is a comprehensive and flexible introduction to technical and professional communication. Designed for classes in which students from a variety of majors are enrolled, the book addresses a wide range of interests. Rhetorical principles are explained, illustrated, and applied to an array of assignments, from brief memos and summaries to formal reports and proposals. To help students develop awareness of audience and accountability, exercises embody the writing demands that are typical throughout college and on the job.

ORGANIZATION

Following a brief overview of technical writing in Chapter 1, the remaining text has five major sections:

Part I: Writing for Readers in the Workplace treats job-related writing as a problem-solving process. Students learn to think critically about the informative, persuasive, and ethical dimensions of their communications. Also, they learn about adapting to rapidly changing communication technologies, to interpersonal challenges of collaborative writing, and to the various needs and expectations of global audiences.

Part II: Information Retrieval, Analysis, and Synthesis treats research as a deliberate inquiry process. Students learn to formulate significant research questions; to explore primary and secondary sources; to record, evaluate, interpret, and document their findings; and to summarize for economy, accuracy, and emphasis.

Part III: Sequence, Shape, and Style in a Document demonstrates strategies for organizing and expressing messages that readers can follow and understand. Students learn to control their material and to develop a style that connects with readers.

Part IV: Graphic and Design Elements treats the rhetorical implications of graphics, page design, and document supplements. Students learn to enhance a document's access, appeal, visual impact, and usability.

Part V: Specific Documents and Applications applies earlier concepts and strategies to the composing of technical documents. Various letters, memos, reports, and proposals offer a balance of examples from the

workplace and from student writing. Each sample document has been chosen so that students can emulate it easily.

Finally, the **appendixes** offer a brief handbook of grammar, usage, and mechanics; interviews with four writers on the job; and a sample proposal, progress report, and final report for an actual workplace project.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF *TECHNICAL WRITING*

- More than a value-neutral exercise in "information transfer," workplace writing typically is a complex social transaction. Each rhetorical situation places specific interpersonal, ethical, legal, and cultural demands on the writer.
- Writers with no rhetorical awareness overlook the decisions that are crucial for effective writing. Only by defining their rhetorical problem and asking the important questions can writers formulate an effective response.
- As well as being *communicators*, today's workplace professionals increasingly are *consumers* of information, who need to be skilled in the methods of inquiry, retrieval, evaluation, and interpretation that comprise the research process.
- Although it follows no single, predictable sequence, the writing process is not a collection of random activities; rather, it is a set of deliberate decisions in problem solving. Beyond emulating this or that model document, students need to understand that effective writing requires critical thinking.
- A technical writing classroom typically contains an assortment of students with varied backgrounds. The textbook, then, should offer explanations that are thorough, examples and models that are broadly intelligible, and goals that are rigorous yet collectively achievable. And the book should be flexible enough to allow for various course plans.
- As an alternative to reiterating the textbook material, classroom workshops apply textbook principles by focusing on the students' writing. These workshops call for an accessible, readable, and engaging book to serve as a comprehensive reference.

NEW TO THIS EDITION

- New material (in Chapter 5) on critical thinking about ethical issues: avoiding fallacies, applying reasonable criteria for ethical judgment,

confronting ethical dilemmas, avoiding communication abuse, deciding when and how to take an ethical stand, and anticipating the consequences.

- A new chapter (6) on adapting to communication technology, collaborative relationships, and global audiences. Coverage includes telecommuting, electronic mail, global networks, hypermedia, paperless documents, online documentation, hypertext applications in writing and research; the social nature of collaboration, conflict in collaborative groups, guidelines for managing and evaluating collaborative projects; cultural influences on audience expectations and interpretations, guidelines for analyzing multicultural audiences, a checklist for intercultural documents.
- Two fully revised chapters (8 and 9) on research methods for the information age. New coverage includes thinking critically about the research process; designing a focused and balanced inquiry; evaluating and interpreting findings; exploring automated resources; designing surveys; assessing validity, reliability, and certainty; recognizing the influence of bias (in database sources, direct observation, and interpretation); avoiding causal and statistical fallacies; paraphrasing and integrating quoted material; choosing a system of parenthetical documentation (MLA, APA, or numerical); reassessing one's research process (a checklist).
- A new section (in Chapter 10) on distinctions among forms of summarized information: closing summary, informative abstract, executive summary, and descriptive abstract.
- A new section (in Chapter 13) on the rhetorical implications of sexist usage.
- A new section (in Chapter 19) on assessing a document's usability according to "human factors."
- A new section (in Chapter 23) on the role of critical thinking in the formulation, evaluation, and refinement of recommendations.
- A new analytical report (in Chapter 23) on hazards posed by electromagnetic radiation.
- New material (in Chapter 24) on peer evaluation of oral reports.
- More on rhetorical, legal, and ethical considerations in word choice, definitions, product descriptions, instructions, and other forms of communication.
- A new art program and greater emphasis on visual communication.
- More annotated writing samples, to highlight rhetorical features.
- More applications suitable for collaborative work.

- A comprehensive educational package including an instructor's manual with test bank, chapter quizzes, and master sheets for overhead or opaque projection, and a packet of acetate transparencies.

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John M. Lannon

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