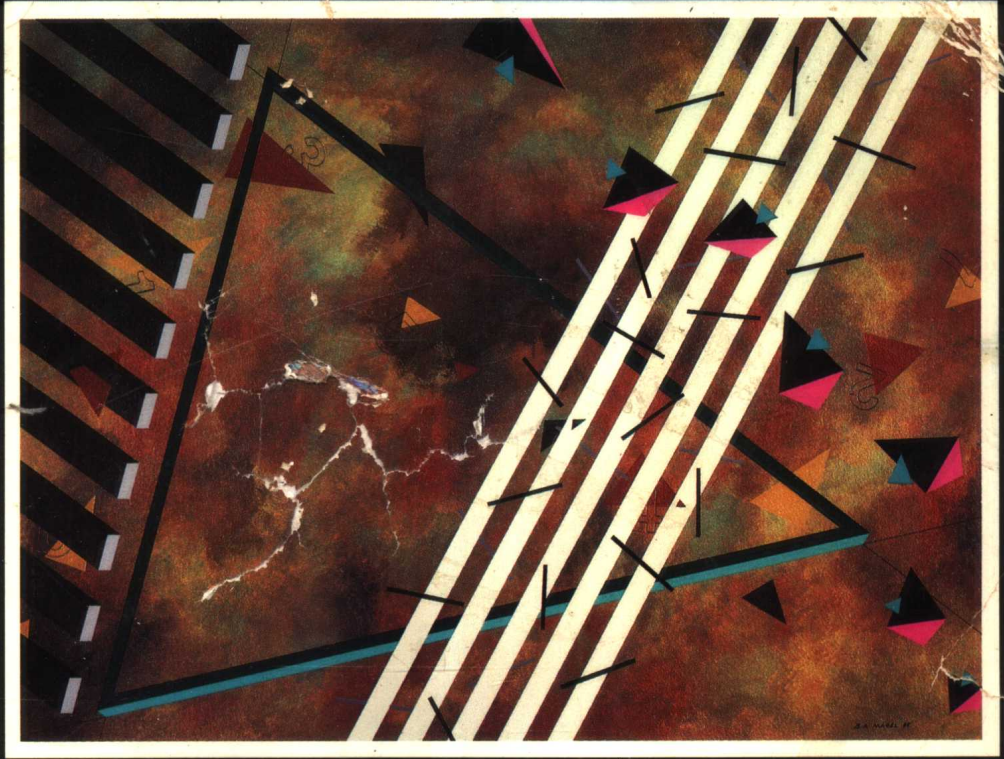


EMERSON



TECHNICAL WRITING



TECHNICAL WRITING

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TO THE STUDENT

Good technical writing skills can be a key to your success in business, research, or industry. The more clearly and articulately you communicate your ideas, the more likely they will be accepted and acted upon.

Technical Writing is designed to reflect the workplace, creating real writing situations that resemble the ones you may soon face. Throughout the book, you will be asked to use information from your major field of study as the foundation for writing assignments; in this way, you will gain practical experience in communicating the technology of most interest and concern to you. You will learn to accommodate that information to a variety of audiences and purposes, thereby learning how to meet the requirements of any writing situation. You will also learn about the various contingencies that any writer on the job must consider—deadlines, review cycles, budget constraints, and format specifications.

The broad objective of this book is the development of technical writing skills. To that end, topics are arranged incrementally so that you move gradually from basic skills to more sophisticated analyses and presentations. Part I, "The Writing Process," guides you through the initial evaluation of the writing situation to the research, planning, writing, and revising stages. Part II, "Techniques," presents particular writing strategies that will enable you to organize materials logically, explain key concepts in your field, describe processes and mechanisms, and argue your case convincingly; it also instructs you on the best use of graphic aids. Part III, "Applications," samples important writing formats such as letters and memos, proposals, reports, and manuals. It also covers the topics of product promotion, oral presentation, and job seeking. Part III will give you the opportunity to apply all of the processes and strategies you have studied. Finally, the appendix sections present a formal report example and a succinct handbook and style guide.

The many examples throughout the book are drawn from such diverse disciplines as mechanical engineering, computer science, veterinary medicine, oceanography, petroleum engineering, scuba diving, and paleontology. Both professional and student samples appear and range from very simple expositions to quite elegant arguments.

Exercises and writing assignments will help you practice what you have learned. A set of editing criteria appears at the end of each part. By consistently applying these handy check lists, you will be able to gauge your own progress as you move through the book and gain confidence in your writ-

ing ability. Your instructor may use these same editing criteria to evaluate your assignments.

Perhaps most importantly, this book demonstrates pragmatic concerns. If you are like most people working in scientific and engineering disciplines, you want to know two things about any writing situation: what needs to be done and the most efficient way to do it. Therefore, rhetorical theories appear only as they are immediately applicable to a specific writing strategy or situation.

Ultimately, I hope that *Technical Writing* will help you develop good technical writing skills through advice that is realistic, comprehensive, informative, and enjoyable.

F.B.E.

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CONTENTS

To the Student xiii
Acknowledgments xv

PART I	<i>The Writing Process</i>	1
CHAPTER 1	<i>Writing about Technical Subjects</i>	2
CHAPTER PLAN	3	
A DEFINITION OF TECHNICAL WRITING	4	
DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS OF TECHNICAL WRITING	4	
Measurability	5	
Liability	5	
Objectivity	6	
Precision	8	
Compliance	9	
THE TECHNICAL WRITING PROCESS	10	
CHAPTER SUMMARY	12	
EXERCISES	13	
WRITING ASSIGNMENT	13	
CHAPTER 2	<i>Conducting a Situational Analysis</i>	14
CHAPTER PLAN	15	
THE IMPORTANCE OF A SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS	16	
MEETING THE NEEDS OF YOUR AUDIENCE	20	
ESTABLISHING AN APPROPRIATE ROLE	26	
The Role of the Individual	27	
The Role of the Team Member	29	
IDENTIFYING PURPOSES AT WORK IN THE WRITING SITUATION	30	
EVALUATING YOUR SUBJECT MATTER	33	
RECOGNIZING CONSTRAINTS	35	
Format Specifications	35	
Schedule	37	
Other Constraints to Consider	38	

CHAPTER SUMMARY 40

EXERCISES 41

WRITING ASSIGNMENT 41

CHAPTER 3 *Gathering Information*

42

CHAPTER PLAN 43

THE ROLE OF RESEARCH IN THE TECHNICAL WRITING
PROCESS 44*Types of Research* 44 *The Research Strategy* 45

USING THE LIBRARY 48

List of Library Holdings 49 *The Reference Room* 50 *The
Stacks* 50 *Periodicals Reading Room* 50 *Government Document
Holdings* 51 *Special Collections* 51 *Support Services* 52
Computer Searches 52

SECONDARY RESEARCH MATERIALS 53

Materials Providing General Information 53 *Materials Providing Specific
Information* 56

SAMPLE RESEARCH PROBLEM 58

Stating the Research Problem 58 *Determining What You Know* 59
Determining What You Don't Know 59 *Gathering General
Information* 60 *Taking Notes* 61 *Evaluating General
Information* 61 *Gathering Specific Information, Taking Notes, and
Evaluating Specific Information* 61 *Synthesizing Your Findings* 64

CONDUCTING PRIMARY RESEARCH 65

Interviewing 65 *Surveying* 67 *Experimenting* 67

CHAPTER SUMMARY 68

EXERCISES 69

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS 69

CHAPTER 4 *Planning and Arranging*

70

CHAPTER PLAN 71

THE PURPOSE OF A PLAN 72

ESTABLISHING A THESIS 73

Listing Information 73 *Grouping Related Pieces of Information* 76

ARRANGING INFORMATION TO SUIT THE WRITING

SITUATION 78

Causal Arrangement 78 *Graded Arrangement* 82
Deductive/Inductive Arrangement 84 *Sequential/Chronological Arrangement* 85 *Physical Arrangement* 85

CREATING AN OUTLINE 86

The Roman Outline Style 86 *The Decimal Outline Style* 88

CHAPTER SUMMARY 90

EXERCISES 90

WRITING ASSIGNMENT 91

CHAPTER 5 *Writing and Revising* 92

CHAPTER PLAN 93

CREATING A ROUGH DRAFT 94

Developing Topic Sentences for Paragraphs 94 *Developing Support for Topic Sentences* 98

REVISING THE ROUGH DRAFT 100

Selecting Appropriate Sentence Structures 100 *Selecting Appropriate Language* 104 *Fine-Tuning Word Choice* 107 *Logic and Completeness* 112 *Accurate Mechanics* 115

THE REVIEW CYCLE 117

THE FINAL DRAFT 119

A WORD ABOUT WORD PROCESSING 119

CHAPTER SUMMARY 121

EXERCISES 122

Editing Criteria 126PART II *Techniques* 127CHAPTER 6 *Classification, Division, and Partition* 128

CHAPTER PLAN 129

DETERMINING THE NEED FOR GROUPING 130

When to Use Classification Techniques 131 *When to Use Division* 132 *When to Use Partition* 134

CREATING CATEGORIES	137
<i>The Founding Premise</i>	137
<i>An Example</i>	140
DISCUSSING GROUP MEMBERS	142
<i>Comparing Members of Groups</i>	143
<i>Ordering Categories and Information within Them</i>	144
CHAPTER SUMMARY	145
EXERCISES	146
WRITING ASSIGNMENTS	147
 CHAPTER 7 <i>Definition</i>	 148
CHAPTER PLAN	149
RECOGNIZING THE NEED FOR DEFINITIONS	150
DEVELOPING BRIEF DEFINITIONS	152
DEVELOPING DETAILED DEFINITIONS	154
<i>The Introductory Statement</i>	154
<i>Expanding the Introductory Statement</i>	158
PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER	163
CHAPTER SUMMARY	165
EXERCISES	165
WRITING ASSIGNMENTS	167
 CHAPTER 8 <i>Describing Processes, Procedures, and Activities</i>	 168
CHAPTER PLAN	169
DEFINING PROCESS, PROCEDURE, AND ACTIVITY	170
UNDERSTANDING THE CAUSAL RELATIONSHIPS	171
DEVELOPING THE DESCRIPTION OF A PROCESS	173
DEVELOPING THE DESCRIPTION OF A PROCEDURE	177
DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONS	183
CHAPTER SUMMARY	187
EXERCISES	188
WRITING ASSIGNMENTS	190

CHAPTER 9	<i>Describing Mechanisms</i>	192
CHAPTER PLAN 193		
DETERMINING THE NEED FOR DESCRIPTIONS OF MECHANISMS 194		
<i>Introducing a New Invention or Design</i> 194 <i>Explaining a Mechanism's Function</i> 194 <i>Describing a Mechanism's Use</i> 196 <i>Promoting a Mechanism</i> 197 <i>Describing a Mechanism's Construction</i> 197 <i>Describing the Maintenance of a Mechanism</i> 198		
COMPONENTS OF EFFECTIVE DESCRIPTIONS 200		
<i>Introduction of the Description</i> 200 <i>Body of the Description</i> 202 <i>Conclusion of the Description</i> 204		
CHAPTER SUMMARY 210		
EXERCISES 210		
WRITING ASSIGNMENTS 211		
CHAPTER 10	<i>Argumentation</i>	212
CHAPTER PLAN 213		
WHEN IS ARGUMENTATION APPROPRIATE? 214		
COMPONENTS OF AN ARGUMENT 216		
<i>Propositions</i> 216 <i>Issues</i> 217 <i>Evidence</i> 224		
EFFECTIVE REASONING: INDUCTION AND DEDUCTION 226		
STRUCTURING THE ARGUMENTATION DOCUMENT 230		
CHAPTER SUMMARY 237		
EXERCISES 238		
WRITING ASSIGNMENTS 238		
CHAPTER 11	<i>Graphic Aids</i>	240
CHAPTER PLAN 241		
DETERMINING THE NEED FOR GRAPHIC AIDS 242		
<i>The Benefits of Graphic Aids</i> 242 <i>Considerations in Selecting Graphic Aids</i> 243		

CONVEYING QUANTITATIVE INFORMATION 245

Tables 245 *Bar Graphs* 246 *Line Graphs* 248 *Pie Charts* 251

CONVEYING QUALITATIVE INFORMATION 253

Tables 254 *Flowcharts* 255 *Organization Charts* 257
Time Charts 258 *Line Art* 259 *Photographs* 261

SOME GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR CREATING AND

POSITIONING GRAPHIC AIDS 263

A WORD ABOUT COMPUTER GRAPHICS 265

CHAPTER SUMMARY 266

ADDITIONAL READING 267

EXERCISES 268

Editing Criteria 269

PART III *Applications* 273

CHAPTER 12 *Letters and Memos* 274

CHAPTER PLAN 275

CONVENTIONS OF LETTERS AND MEMOS 276

Letters 276 *Memos* 281

GETTING AND MAINTAINING READER INTEREST 282

THE "YOU" ATTITUDE 284

THE MANY PURPOSES OF CORRESPONDENCE 285

Letters and Memos of Inquiry or Response 286 *Letters and Memos of Complaint or Adjustment* 286 *Letters and Memos of Announcement* 292 *Report Letters and Memos* 297 *Proposal Letters and Memos* 297

CHAPTER SUMMARY 298

EXERCISES 298

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS 299

CHAPTER 13 *Proposals* 300

CHAPTER PLAN 301

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROPOSALS 302

THE COMPONENTS OF A PROPOSAL 302

Front Matter 303 *Statement of the Problem* 304 *Background Statement* 305 *Statement of Objectives* 307 *Possible Solutions* 308 *Plan of Action* 309 *Qualifications* 313
Facilities and Resources 315 *Schedule* 315 *Costs* 316
Conclusions and Recommendations 318 *Preliminary Bibliography* 319 *Appendix* 320

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER 320

CHAPTER SUMMARY 320

EXERCISES 329

WRITING ASSIGNMENT 329

CHAPTER 14 *Reports* 330

CHAPTER PLAN 331

THE IMPORTANCE OF TECHNICAL REPORTS 332

Informal Reports 332 *Formal Reports* 333

KINDS OF REPORTS 333

Updates 333 *Analyses* 334 *Experiment Reports* 335
Investigation Reports 335 *Literature Reviews* 335

THE REPORT WRITING PROCESS 336

Analyzing the Situation 336 *Gathering Information* 337 *Planning and Arranging* 337 *Writing and Revising* 338

REPORT COMPONENTS 338

Front Matter 339 *Introduction* 348 *Discussion* 355
Conclusions 361 *Recommendations* 362 *Bibliography* 364
Notes 367 *Appendix* 368

CHAPTER SUMMARY 369

EXERCISES 369

WRITING ASSIGNMENT 370

CHAPTER 15	<i>Manuals</i>	372
CHAPTER PLAN		373
APPLYING THE TECHNICAL WRITING PROCESS TO		
MANUALS		374
<i>The Situational Analysis</i>	374	
<i>Gathering Information</i>	376	
<i>Planning and Arranging</i>	377	
<i>Writing and Revising—Strategies for</i>		
<i>Clarity</i>	378	
<i>Writing and Revising—Meeting Specifications</i>	385	
<i>Keeping Information Current</i>	388	
THE OPERATION MANUAL		389
<i>Writing for the General Public</i>	389	
<i>Writing for the Specialist</i>	392	
THE SERVICE MANUAL		395
CHAPTER SUMMARY		397
EXERCISES		397
WRITING ASSIGNMENT		399
CHAPTER 16	<i>Promotions</i>	400
CHAPTER PLAN		401
THE ROLE OF PRODUCT PROMOTION		402
UNDERSTANDING THE BASICS OF PRODUCT PROMOTION		403
<i>Conducting a Situational Analysis</i>	403	
<i>Positioning the Product</i>	409	
<i>Planning a Campaign</i>	410	
ELEMENTS OF TRADE PRESS ADVERTISING		411
<i>Headlines</i>	411	
<i>Graphics</i>	412	
<i>Body Copy</i>	413	
<i>Layout</i>	416	
DIRECT MAIL ADVERTISING		417
<i>The Sales Letter</i>	418	
<i>Catalogues</i>	419	
<i>Other Inclusions</i>	420	
BROCHURES		422
<i>Content</i>	422	
<i>Language</i>	423	
<i>Design</i>	423	
CHAPTER SUMMARY		424
ADDITIONAL READING		424
EXERCISES		425
WRITING ASSIGNMENT		425

CHAPTER 17	<i>Oral Presentations</i>	426
CHAPTER PLAN	427	
ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF ORAL PRESENTATIONS	428	
PREPARING FOR AN ORAL PRESENTATION	429	
<i>Determining the Purpose of Your Speech</i>	429	
<i>Making the Most of Available Facilities</i>	434	
<i>Acknowledging a Special Situation</i>	435	
DEVELOPING THE PRESENTATION	436	
<i>Organizing the Speech</i>	437	
<i>Generating Interest</i>	437	
<i>Maintaining Interest</i>	439	
<i>Using Graphic Aids</i>	440	
SAMPLE ORAL PRESENTATION	441	
DELIVERING YOUR SPEECH	444	
SURVIVING THE QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD	445	
CHAPTER SUMMARY	446	
ADDITIONAL READING	446	
EXERCISES	447	
SPEAKING ASSIGNMENT	447	
CHAPTER 18	<i>Getting a Job</i>	448
CHAPTER PLAN	449	
PREPARING FOR THE HUNT	450	
<i>Knowing Yourself</i>	450	
<i>Knowing Your Career Area and the Marketplace</i>	451	
<i>Knowing the Requirements of a Specific Job</i>	452	
<i>Uncovering Job Opportunities</i>	453	
<i>Knowing the Organization to Which You Are Applying</i>	455	
MATERIALS TO HELP YOU GET A JOB	456	
<i>The Résumé</i>	456	
<i>The Application Letter</i>	459	
THE INTERVIEW	466	
FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY	469	
CHAPTER SUMMARY	472	
ADDITIONAL READING	474	

EXERCISE 474

WRITING ASSIGNMENT 474

Editing Criteria 475

Appendix I *Formal Report: "Tolerance of Plantago ovata to Three
Herbicides"* 481

Appendix II *Handbook and Style Guide* 507

PUNCTUATION 510

MECHANICS 524

COMMON SENTENCE ERRORS 532

COMMON STYLISTIC ERRORS 540

Credits 545

Index 547

P A R T

I

*The
Writing
Process*