

Introduction to Technical Writing WRIT 121

**Only the Essentials:
A Collection of Readings & Lessons
on Technical Writing**

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About this Book

This open textbook is designed to introduce readers to the basics of technical communication: audience and task analysis in workplace contexts, clear and concise communications style, effective document design, teamwork and collaboration, and fundamental research skills.

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Chapter 1: Technical Writing Fundamentals

This chapter will help you

1. Understand the concept of technical writing, its significance, and its visual appearance.
2. Adopt a problem-solving approach when handling communication tasks, beginning by thoroughly defining the problem before seeking solutions.
3. Identify the key conventions and characteristics of technical writing, and distinguish them from other forms, such as academic and journalistic writing.
4. Value the importance of defining the "rhetorical situation" within which you are conveying information.
5. Utilize your knowledge by analyzing real-life "case studies" that exemplify the consequences of ineffective communication.
6. Recognize the intricate and iterative nature of the writing process in determining the most effective approach for yourself.

"Some of the most accomplished engineers of all time have paid as much attention to their words as to their numbers, to their sentences as to their equations, and to their reports as to their designs."

Henry Petroski, "Engineers as Writers"[\[1\]](#)

When you think of "technical communication," what immediately pops into your mind? You envision scientific reports, specifications, instructions, software documentation, or technical manuals. And you are not wrong. However, technical communication extends far beyond those examples. Technical Writing is a form of non-fiction writing that encompasses not just technical materials like manuals, instructions, specifications, and software documentation, but also includes writing that occurs in everyday business operations such as correspondence, proposals, internal communications, media releases, and several types of reports. It entails conveying specialized technical information, whether it pertains to computers and scientific instruments or the intricacies of meditation. Also, since oral and visual presentations play a vital role in professional life, technical communication includes these too. Therefore, we could define technical communication as utilizing different modes (oral, written,

visual) of communication to effectively manage technical information, analyze a problem, gather, and evaluate evidence, and draw conclusions in a manner that empowers individuals to act.

Why are Technical Communication Skills Important?

In a recent presentation on the topic of Co-op Work Term Reports, [\[2\]](#) the Engineering co-op coordinator for the University of Victoria presented the following statistics regarding the importance of communication skills in the professional world of engineering:

The Reality: Technical Writing and Communication

How graduate engineers spend their time:

- 25-50% Problem solving of some kind
- 50-75% Communicating (Writing and reading reports, letters, memos, proposals, presentations, discussions w/colleagues, managers, clients)
- Performance evaluations and job advancement usually depend more on communications skills than on technical skills

He added that engineers who are more advanced in their careers spend only 5-10% of their time engaged in problem solving of some kind and 90-95% of their time engaging in related communications tasks: researching, writing and reading reports, proposals, emails, letters, memos; giving or attending presentations; discussing and meeting with colleagues, team mates, managers, clients, and so forth. In a recent survey of over 1000 professionals from various professions, over 70% of engineers and almost 50% of programmers rated the quality of their writing as either “very important” or “extremely important” to the performance of their jobs.[\[3\]](#) As Barry Hyman asserts in *Fundamentals of Engineering Design*, “the stereotype that engineering is for inarticulate nerds is way off base.” [\[4\]](#)

The art of technical communication involves a purposeful exchange between sender and receiver, providing specific information to fulfill practical needs such as informing, instructing, or persuading. This form of communication caters to the requirements of a specific audience and encompasses a wide range of documents and products. These include proposals and requests for proposals, technical or research reports, documentation records and product specifications, user guides, online help, technical support, reference information, consumer literature, marketing literature, and technical journalism. As a highly designed form of communication, it necessitates an acute awareness of conventions and rhetorical situations. This textbook aims to elevate your

awareness by introducing you to the fundamental conventions of technical communications. It also trains you to adopt a reader- and audience-centered approach, guiding you in selecting the most effective tools and methods to convey your ideas to your target audience and achieve the desired outcomes.

What Does Technical Writing Look Like?

Technical communications can take many forms, depending on the purpose and intended audience. Consider the following example of technical writing, which is an excerpt adapted from a book called *Scientific Sailboat Racing* by Ted Wells. [5] From the excerpt in the box below, what can you tell about the intended audience?

The most common question asked by skippers wanting to get to the windward mark faster than they have been doing is “How can I make my boat point higher?” Getting to the windward mark first depends primarily on the skill and experience of the skipper; however, having a well-rigged boat will make a significant difference. Look for the following, in order of importance:

Sails: Have good quality sails and use the appropriate sails for the wind conditions expected. No one can win races with poor sails, so use the best you can afford. Keep in mind that the leeches of all sails flutter a little, the jib will backwind the luff of the main on any full or medium sail, and in exceptionally light wind, even a perfectly cut sail will develop a wrinkle along the front of the battens. If the sails are obviously no good, replace them.

Mast and Centerboard: Ensure that the mast is far enough forward, and the centerboard is far enough back so that there is little or no weather helm. Make sure the stiffness of the mast suits the sails.

Jib Fairleads: Ensure jib fairleads are properly located for the type of jib being used and the strength of wind expected.

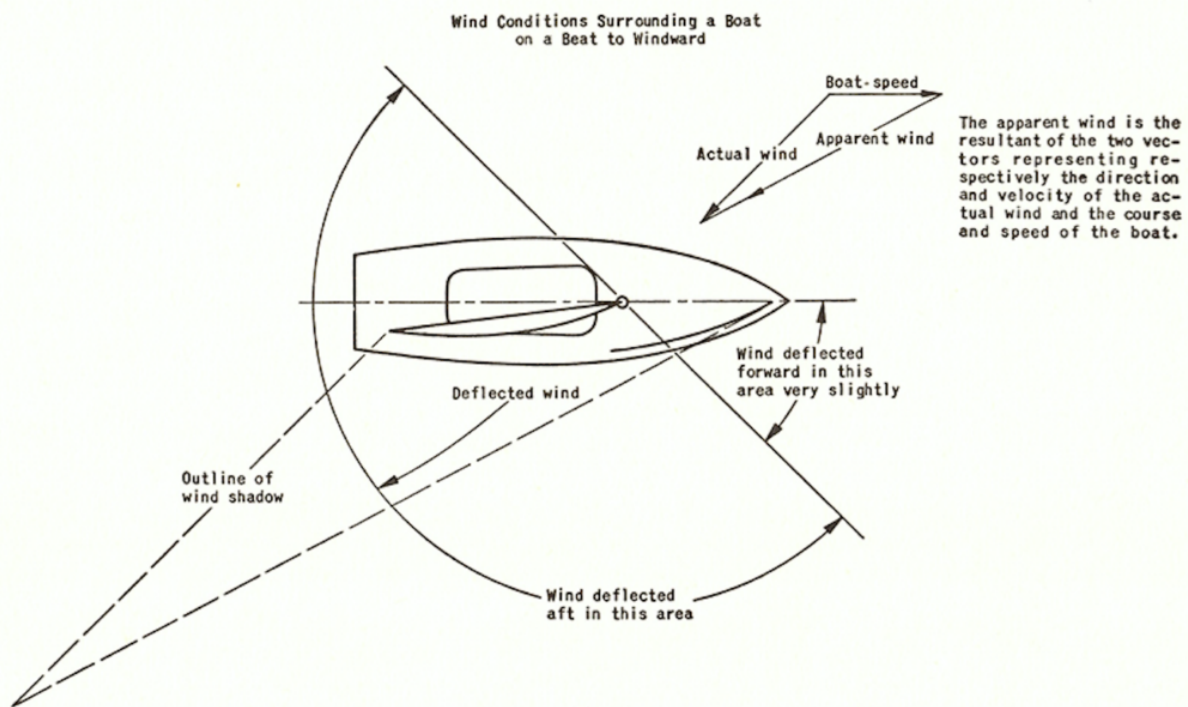
Cleats: Have cleats for both jib and mainsheet; place cleats so that crew can easily make small adjustments for varying wind velocities and hang them on to the jib sheet without having it pop out of the cleat.

Traveler: Have a mainsheet traveler that allows the main to be pulled down without pulling the boom in too far; it should allow the sail to be pulled down tightly enough so that the leech does not fall off without pulling the boom in any further than it should be.

Tiller: Have a flexible tiller extension that allows you to sit well forward but can be adjusted so that it does not get in the way when coming about.

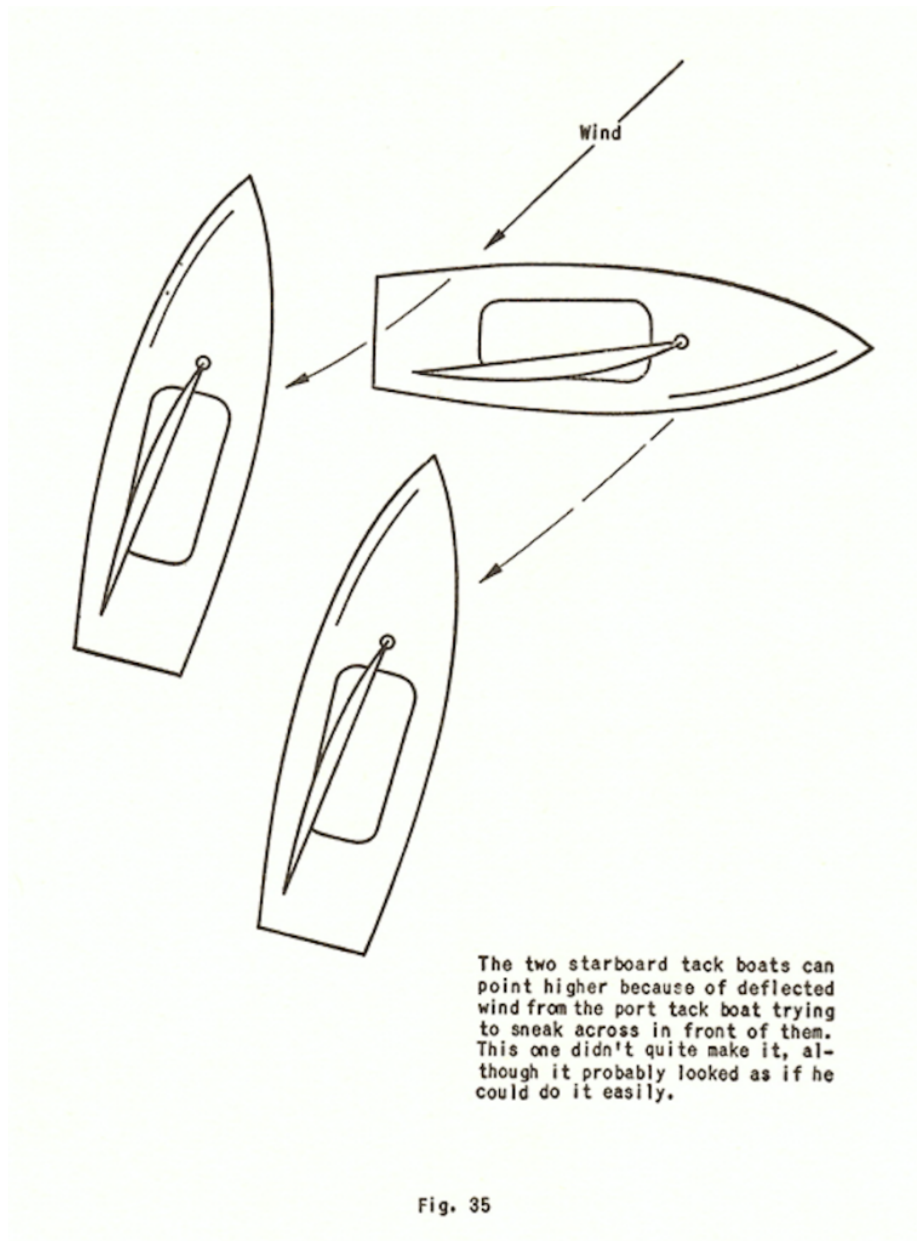
Boat Weight: Keep the boat as close to minimum weight as possible. A lighter boat is easier to handle, but this is not as critical as other factors. If choosing between a lighter crew member with less skill and experience, and a heavier crew member who has greater skill, the latter is usually preferable.

Once the boat is properly set up, a skilled and experienced skipper can point significantly higher than expected by understanding and using wind deflection from other boats. Immediately to leeward of any boat and extending for about three mast lengths, there is a wind shadow where the wind velocity is decreased. To leeward of the boat's bow, there is a small region where the wind's direction is deflected opposite to the normal deflection and where the velocity is accelerated slightly (see Figure 34). Except in the direct wind shadow, the deflection of the wind is more important than the decrease in wind velocity, as the decrease in velocity is very slight except in the immediate shadow of the sails of the windward boat.



Because of this wind deflection, a boat on the opposite track cutting behind another boat will be able to point appreciably higher than it normally would. Many skippers on port tracks who thought they could clear starboard trackers

have been fooled by not realizing this fact. The deflection of their wind in trying to cross in front of the starboard tacker will enable the starboard tacker to point higher without luffing than he normally would be able to do, and the port tacker who thought he could squeeze by suddenly finds that he cannot (See Figure 35).



1. H. Petroski, "Engineers as Writers." *American Scientist*, vol. 81, no. 5 (1993): 419–23. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/29775007>. ↵
2. S. McConkey, "Writing a work term report," *ENGR 120 Plenary Lecture*, University of Victoria, March 3, 2017. ↵
3. J. Swartz, S. Pigg, J. Larsen, J. Helo Gonzalez, R. De Haas, and E. Wagner, "Communication in the workplace: What can NC State students expect?" Professional Writing Program, North Carolina State University, 2018 [Online]. Available: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1pMpVbDRWIN6HssQQQ4MeQ6U-oB-sGUrtRswD7feuRB0/edit> ↵
4. B. Hyman, "Ch. 2: Problem formulation," in *Fundamentals of Engineering Design*, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2002, p. 42. ↵
5. T. Wells, *Scientific Sailboat Racing*, New York: Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1950, pp. 94-96. ↵

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ACTIVITY:

Reflect on the description and example of technical writing above in relation to your experience as an employee, as a student, or as a practitioner of a hobby. What kinds of documents have you written that could fall under the genre of Technical Writing?

Write a paragraph or two on a topic about which you have specialized knowledge and can use specialized terminology to explain the idea or instruct the reader. For example, you might write about effective techniques for executing certain skateboard maneuvers or how to execute a yoga position such as a "downward facing dog." Consider your audience when choosing how to write this. Will the audience have to be familiar with the terminology used, as in the above sailing example? See if you can write a paragraph that can "baffle me with your techno-jargon," and then re-write for a general audience, using plain language.

5 Steps of Technical Writing

The key to successful writing on the job is not inspiration or simply converting spoken words to print. It involves knowing how to structure information using text and design to achieve a specific purpose for a defined audience. To ensure writing success, whether it be for a proposal, résumé, web page, or any other document, follow these steps:

- Preparation
- Research
- Organization
- Writing
- Revision

The steps outlined in this process may seem overwhelming at first, especially when using new software or conducting important tasks like interviewing a job candidate or chairing a committee meeting. However, with practice, these steps will become second nature. It is important to remember that effective writing requires a systematic approach. Each step is interconnected and may influence decisions made in subsequent steps. Sometimes, you may need to revisit previous steps. For example, during the research phase, you may realize the need to revise your initial understanding of the document's purpose and audience. Similarly, while organizing your thoughts, you may find it necessary to gather more information through additional research. The time required for each step varies depending on the complexity of the writing task. For simple memos, you can simply list the points you want to cover in order. More formal reports, on the other hand, demand thorough research, careful note-taking, and detailed outlining. Routine emails to colleagues often combine the first four steps as you directly type the information. The five steps can be adjusted and repeated based on the specific writing task. Breaking down the writing process into steps is particularly beneficial when working as part of a team. It allows for effective division of work, project tracking, and the avoidance of duplicated efforts. Collaborative tools like email can facilitate text and file sharing, as well as offer opportunities for feedback and progress updates throughout the writing process.

Preparation

Writing, like any professional task, requires solid preparation. Preparation is just as important as drafting. When preparing to write, your objective is to complete four main tasks: establish your primary purpose, assess your audience and the

context, determine the scope of your coverage, and select the appropriate medium.

Establishing Your Purpose.

To determine your main objective, simply inquire what you want your readers to comprehend, believe, or achieve after reading your written piece. Be specific. Frequently, writers state their purpose in such a broad manner that it becomes almost worthless. A purpose like "to inform about potential sites for a new research facility" is too general. However, a purpose statement like "to assess and compare the advantages of Paris, Singapore, and San Francisco as potential locations for a new research facility, enabling top management to choose the most suitable one" can serve as a guiding principle throughout the writing process. Alongside your primary purpose, consider potential secondary purposes for your document. For instance, a secondary purpose of the research facility report might be to make corporate executives aware of the staffing requirements of the new facility, ensuring its seamless operation regardless of the chosen location.

Assessing Your Audience and Context.

The next task is to assess your audience. Precisely identify your reader or readers and consider their specific needs and attitudes towards the subject. Determine what your readers already know about the subject and whether you need to define basic terminology. Consider any potential challenges in communicating with international readers. To write successfully in any language, it is important to understand the cultural values underlying that language. In the United States, proficient writing is characterized by conciseness, coherence, and clarity. Make sure your writing is easy to follow and only includes necessary information to effectively communicate your message.

The readers for the research-facility report are referred to as "top management." This category includes various individuals such as the human resources manager, who would be interested in the availability of qualified professionals and facilities for potential employees. The purchasing manager would focus on finding sources for needed materials, while the marketing manager would prioritize proximity to primary markets and transportation for clients. The chief financial officer would inquire about land, building costs, and tax structures in each city. The chief executive officer would be interested in all aspects mentioned and more. Many workplace documents have multiple readers, and their needs can be addressed through different approaches. Understanding the readers' context is crucial, as it influences how they interpret the document. Asking specific questions about the situation and readers' backgrounds helps

determine the effect of context on the research-facility report. Factors such as previous facility locations, visits to the cities, previous reports, corporate culture, and key values are relevant. Additionally, recognizing the importance of competition, finance, and regulation within the organization is vital.

Determining the Scope

Determining your purpose, evaluating your readers and context, and defining the scope of your writing project are crucial for deciding what to include and exclude in your writing. Clearly defining the scope will prevent unnecessary hours spent on research and uncertainty about the required information. In the case of the report on facility locations, the scope would encompass details such as land and building costs, as well as the available workforce.

Chapter 2: Writing Process

The writing process involves several stages that authors go through to produce high-quality written content. It typically includes prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing.

During the prewriting stage, writers brainstorm ideas, conduct research, and outline their thoughts. This helps them organize their thoughts and plan the structure of their writing piece.

Next, in the drafting stage, writers put their ideas onto paper or a digital document. This stage involves writing the initial version of the content, focusing on getting their thoughts down without worrying too much about grammar or style.

After completing the draft, writers move on to the revising stage. Here, they review and refine their writing, paying attention to the overall structure, coherence, and clarity. They may add or remove sections, reorganize paragraphs, or polish sentences to improve the quality of their work.

Lastly, in the editing stage, writers focus on correcting grammar, spelling, punctuation, and other technical errors. They also ensure that their writing follows the appropriate style guide or formatting requirements.

A skillful writing process entails the following key elements:

1. **Planning and Preparation:** This involves brainstorming, gathering information, and creating an outline before starting the actual writing process. It helps in organizing thoughts and ensuring a clear structure.
2. **Flexibility:** A proficient writing process allows for flexibility, as ideas may evolve and change during the writing journey. It is important to be open to revising and adapting the content as needed.
3. **Revision and Review:** The process should include multiple rounds of revising and reviewing to improve the quality and coherence of the writing. This helps eliminate errors and refine the overall message.
4. **Attention to Detail:** A proficient writing process emphasizes paying attention to details such as grammar, punctuation, and clarity. It ensures that the final piece is polished and easy to understand.
5. **Time Management:** Allocating sufficient time for each stage of the writing process enables writers to produce their best work. This includes setting aside time for research, drafting, revising, and proofreading.

The Writing Process



1: PLANNING

You will encounter many types of writing as you continue your education and pursue your career. It is impossible to teach you all of the types of writing but you can learn to ask questions about your writing, analyze the writing situation by considering 1) purpose, 2) audience, 3) and context, and learn how to find answers to your questions. This is where preparation can keep you from having to redo an assignment or being embarrassed at work for submitting a poorly written document.



2: RESEARCHING

To get started you need to ask a research question. Research is finding out the answers to what you don't know. The answer to your research question is your thesis statement.



3: ORGANIZING

After you have finished your research and before you draft or design your project you need to organize your research and other ideas. Typically at this stage you outline your paper.



4: DRAFTING & DESIGNING

Drafting and designing a document means to create both the content and the layout that you desire for your document. Don't worry about making it perfect at this point—you will revise your document.



5: REVISING

Recognize what most people think is "bad" writing really is just "unfinished" writing. In other words it hasn't been revised (or revised enough times) to create a polished, professional document.



6: PROOFREADING

Always read through your document to look for errors. Look for typos and grammar mistakes, but also ensure your document is consistent stylistically. These little errors make your document look sloppy.

Fig. 1.1. Brian Powell, Salt Lake Community College 2020. ([CC BY-NC 4.0 Attribution NonCommercial.](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/))

By following these elements and adapting them as per individual preferences, writers can develop a robust and effective writing process.

ACTIVITY:

Objective:

To understand and practice the various stages of the writing process.

Materials:

- Pen/pencil
- Paper/notebook
- Timer (optional)

Writing Prompt: You are an expert on something that others know nothing about. Your task is to simplify the activity so that anyone can do it. This could be instructions on how to ride a skateboard, how to weld, how to knit, how to unclog a drain, a favorite dish, etc.

Procedure:

1. Pre-writing:

a. Brainstorming: Start by brainstorming ideas related to the topic you want to write about. Write down any thoughts, keywords, or phrases that come to mind. You can use mind maps, lists, or any other method that works for you.

b. Research: If your topic requires additional information or facts, conduct research to gather relevant data. Take notes on key points that you find interesting or important.

2. Drafting:

a. Introduction: Begin your writing with an engaging introduction that grabs the reader's attention. Provide some context for the topic and clearly state your main idea or thesis statement.

b. Body: Develop your ideas in the body paragraphs. Each paragraph should present a separate point or argument supported by evidence, examples, or explanations.

c. Conclusion: Wrap up your writing with a conclusion that summarizes your main points and leaves the reader with a lasting impression.

3. Revising:

- a. Read through your first draft carefully and critically. Look for areas where you can improve the clarity, coherence, and organization of your writing.
- b. Edit for grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors.
- c. Seek feedback from others, such as peers or teachers, to get different perspectives and suggestions for improvement.

4. Editing:

- a. Proofread your revised draft for any remaining errors.
- b. Check for consistency in style, tense, and tone.
- c. Make any necessary changes to enhance the overall flow and readability of your writing.

5. Publishing:

- a. Once you are satisfied with your final draft, consider sharing your writing with a wider audience. You can submit it to a school publication, post it on a blog, or share it with friends and family.

More on Planning and Preparation

Feeling stuck with the dreaded "blank screen" syndrome? Cannot seem to find the right words or get started? Do not worry, because that is where the magic of preparation comes in!

Sadly, many students tend to overlook this crucial step. They rush into researching or, if the paper does not require research, they dive straight into drafting. But here is the thing - taking just a few minutes to prepare before writing not only leads to a better paper, but it also saves time overall.

One way to kickstart your thoughts about a topic is through freewriting. Set yourself a timer, and for a few minutes, jot down everything that comes to mind about the topic without pausing. Once time is up, go back and read what you have written. Look for that one pivotal idea, the juiciest detail, or anything that captures your attention. Then, start freewriting again, but this time, focus solely on that chosen idea or detail. This technique, often referred to as looping, keeps your writing flowing from one idea to the next until you have found the perfect topic for your paper.

Another method to spark your topic brainstorming is through the creation of lists. Write down your topic, and then list around ten things related to that topic - no stopping allowed! Once your list is complete, analyze it and see if any idea stands out as a potential winner for your paper. If not, pick the most intriguing one and create a new list. Repeat this process until you have landed upon the ideal idea for your paper.

Of course, there are numerous other ways to jumpstart your writing besides the two mentioned above. Consider using the classic journalists' questions - who, what, why, where, when, how? Alternatively, take a page from Aristotle's book and define your topic, compare it to something else, explore the underlying causes, examine the circumstances, or gather testimonies from others who have touched on the subject.

As you journey through your education and future career, you will encounter a diverse range of writing styles and formats. It is impossible to teach you every type of writing, but what we can teach you is how to ask the right questions, analyze your writing situation by considering the purpose, audience, and context, and find the answers you need. That is where preparation becomes your trusty companion, preventing you from having to redo assignments or face embarrassment at work due to submitting poorly written documents. The upcoming three pages will guide you on utilizing preparation to plan your purpose, consider your audience, and navigate the overall context.

Purpose is Essential to the Planning Stage

What is the purpose of your document? Is it already defined by the assignment or by the needs of your workplace or client? Often the purpose is already known—a professor will give you the assignment and explain not only the purpose but the requirements for the assignment. Or you need to create advertising to attract clients.

If the purpose is not already defined, then you need to determine the purpose yourself. To do this, you need to understand your audience and the context for the document.

Audience is Central

Who is your audience? Answering this question determines so much of what you write, why you write, and how you write it. For example, if your audience is already a rockstar expert in the subject, you do not need to include boring background information or define special technical terms like you would with a regular audience. Make sure your audience is captivated from start to finish.

Context

The technical document should be designed with consideration for its intended use by the audience. It is important to determine whether it should be presented as a printed document or an electronic one, such as an e-document.

Additionally, it is worth exploring alternative formats, such as video or audio recordings, that may convey the information more effectively.

Another aspect to consider is the context in which the audience will engage with the document. Political, cultural, and environmental factors should be considered to ensure the content is relevant and sensitive to the audience's needs.

Conventions of Technical Writing

Criteria	Technical Writing
Purpose	To communicate technical and specialized information in a clear, accessible, usable manner to people who need to use it to make decisions, perform processes, or support company goals.
Audience	Varied, but can include fellow employees such as subordinates, colleagues, managers, and executives, as well as clients and other stakeholders, the general public, and even readers within the legal system.
Writing Style	Concise, clear, plain, and direct language; may include specialized terminology; typically uses short sentences and paragraphs; uses active voice; makes purpose immediately clear.
Tone	Business/professional in tone, which falls between formal and informal; may use first person or second person if appropriate; courteous and constructive.
Structure	Highly structured; short paragraphs; clear transitions and structural cues (headings and sub-headings) to move the reader through and direct the reader.
Format/Formatting	Can be in electronic, visual, or printed formats; may be long (reports) or short (emails, letters, memos); often uses style guides to describe required formatting features; uses headings, lists, figures, and tables.
Other Features	Typically, objective, and neutral; ideas are evidence and data-driven; descriptors are precise and quantitative whenever possible.

Chapter 3: Audience

The primary consideration in technical writing, or any form of writing, is the audience- the intended or potential readers. For technical writers, understanding and adapting to the needs, interests, and background of readers is crucial. Neglecting to analyze and adapt to the audience often leads to problems in professional documents, particularly instructions, where it becomes evident. After reading this chapter on audiences, try using the audience planner tool. Fill in the blanks with information about your audience and email the planner to yourself and your instructor if desired. Utilize the audience planner for any writing project to prompt detailed thinking about your audience.

Audience Types

One of the first steps in analyzing an audience is to identify its types (which are rarely just one type). The common division of audiences into categories is as follows:

- **Experts:** These individuals possess extensive knowledge about the business or organization, including the theory and product. They have designed, tested, and have a comprehensive understanding of it. Often found in academic settings or research and development areas of the government and technology worlds, experts typically hold advanced degrees.
- **Technicians:** These individuals are responsible for constructing, operating, maintaining, and repairing the items developed by experts. Their expertise is highly technical but more practical in nature.
- **Executives:** In charge of making business, economic, administrative, legal, governmental, and political decisions regarding the products devised by experts and technicians. Executives often have little technical knowledge about the subject, like non-specialists. This audience may be the primary one for many.
- **Non-specialists:** Readers with the lowest level of technical expertise. Their primary goal is to utilize the new product to fulfill their tasks. They may require an understanding of the new power technology to make an informed decision in an upcoming bond election or simply have a curiosity about a specific technical aspect without any specific practical reason. These readers typically form the secondary audience.

It is crucial to identify which of the four categories discussed earlier represents your potential audience(s); however, this is just the beginning. Audiences, regardless of their categories, must also be analyzed based on characteristics such as the following:

- Background—knowledge, experience, training: One of your primary concerns is determining the extent to which your readers possess knowledge, experience, or training. If you anticipate that some of your readers may lack a certain background, should you provide that information in your document? Consider this scenario: you are writing a guide on using a software product that operates on Microsoft Windows. How much familiarity can you expect your readers to have with Windows? If some readers are likely to have limited knowledge about Windows, should you include that information? If you choose not to, there is a risk of customers becoming frustrated with your product. However, if you include background information on Windows, it will require additional work and increase the document's length (thus increasing the cost). This question does not have a straightforward answer. The answer may depend on how small a portion of the audience requires that background information.

- Needs and interests: To effectively plan your document, it is essential to understand readers' expectations. Visualize how readers will want to utilize your document and what they will demand from it. For instance, if you are writing a manual for a new smartphone, what will your readers expect to find in it? Similarly, if you are commissioned to write a background report on global warming for a national real estate association, what do readers want to read about? Equally important is understanding what they do not want to read about.

- Other demographic characteristics: Additionally, there are numerous other characteristics about your readers that may influence how you design and write your document. These characteristics may include age groups, type of residence, area of residence, gender, political preferences, and more.

Audience analysis can become complicated due to at least two other factors: multiple audience types for one document, wide variability within the audience, and unknown audiences.

- More than one audience: It is likely that your report will cater to multiple audiences. For instance, technical experts and technicians may need to access this information and administrative personnel (executives). What should you do in this case? You have two options: write all sections in a manner that all audiences can understand or write each section specifically for the audience it

pertains to and use headings and section introductions to direct your audience to relevant information within the report.

Wide variability in an audience: You may realize that, although you have an audience that fits into only one category, its background varies widely. This is a tough one—if you write to the lowest common denominator of readers, you are likely to end up with a cumbersome, tedious book-like report that will turn off most readers. However, if you do not write to the lowest level, you lose that segment of your readers. What should you do? Most writers go for most readers and sacrifice that minority that needs more help. Others put the supplemental information in appendixes or insert cross-references to beginners' books.

Once you have analyzed your audience, how do you utilize this information? How do you ensure that you are not writing something that could potentially be incomprehensible or useless to your readers? Keep your audience's needs in mind while drafting your document but remember that writing can be improved through multiple drafts. With each subsequent draft, carefully consider your readers and revise and edit your document to make technical information more understandable for non-specialist audiences. The following are some ways you can adapt your writing to meet your audience's needs:

- Provide the necessary information: Add the information that readers need to understand your document. Check if any key information is missing, such as critical steps in a set of instructions or important background information for beginners.
- Remove unnecessary information: Avoid including information that your readers do not need. Unnecessary information can confuse and frustrate readers, so it is best to omit it. For example, eliminate theoretical discussions from basic instructions.
- Adjust the level of information: Ensure that the technical information you have is pitched at an appropriate level for your audience. It should neither be too high nor too low in technicality. Consider the specific audience you are targeting and tailor your content accordingly.
- Incorporate examples: Examples are powerful tools to help readers understand complex concepts, especially in instructional texts. Even in non-instructional content, such as when explaining technical concepts, examples can assist comprehension, especially analogies.

- Adapt the level of your examples: Make sure that the technical content and level of your examples align with your readers' knowledge and expertise. Avoid using homespun examples that may not be useful to experts or highly technical examples that may overwhelm non-specialist readers.

- Guide your readers through the writing: Pay attention to the organization of your information. Sometimes, even if you have all the right information, it may be arranged in a way that confuses readers. Be mindful of the amount of background information provided upfront and ensure that readers can easily follow the logical flow of your document.

Consolidate the main information, especially in instructional paragraphs where background information should be provided when immediately needed. Strengthen transitions to ensure better comprehension, particularly for non-specialist readers, by using transition words and echoing key words. Examples of transition words include 'therefore,' 'for example,' and 'however,' which help indicate the logical connections between thoughts. Echoing the same key words also improves transitions, especially in technical prose where using consistent word choice reduces confusion.

Write stronger introductions for the entire document and major sections to provide readers with a clear understanding of the topic, purpose, audience, and contents. Mini introductions within each major section can outline the topic and subtopics to be covered, providing readers with a preview of the content.

Create topic sentences for paragraphs and paragraph groups to help readers grasp the main topic and purpose of a section. An overview of the subtopics to be covered can serve as a useful roadmap for readers.

Craft effective sentences by changing sentence style and length. Instructions, for example, are more understandable when using imperative voice and 'you' phrasing instead of passive or third-personal phrasing. Personalizing the writing style and making it more relaxed and informal increases accessibility and understanding. Active verbs should be used instead of verb phrasing to create more direct and immediate writing. Furthermore, sentence length should be kept between 15 and 25 words on average, avoiding sentences over 30 words.

Edit sentences for clarity and economy, removing unnecessary wordiness and inflated phrasing. Aim to reduce the overall word count by 20 percent during the revision process to improve readability.

Make the document visually appealing by adding and varying graphics. For non-specialist audiences, simpler graphics are recommended. Technical

documents for non-specialists may also include decorative graphics that are attractive but serve no strict informative or persuasive purpose.

Break text into meaningful, usable chunks or consolidate them to enhance readability for non-specialist readers.

The usual maximum for paragraph length may need to be shorter, typically around 6 to 8 lines. It is important to note the significant difference in paragraph length between technical documents written for specialists. One way to assist non-specialist readers is by including cross-references to valuable information. If it is not possible to fully explain a topic on the spot, directing readers to a specific section or chapter where it is covered can be helpful.

Incorporating headings and lists can make the content more approachable. Large blocks of text can be intimidating, so identifying changes in topic or subtopic and using appropriate headings can break up the information. Similarly, lists can be effective in presenting information in a more digestible format. For example, listings of terms and their definitions can be transformed into two-column lists. However, it is important to exercise caution and not force special formatting, ensuring it remains balanced.

Typography and formatting also play a role in assisting non-specialist readers. Adjusting margins, line length, line spacing, and type size can enhance readability. Utilizing sans-serif fonts like Arial for online readers and serif fonts like Times New Roman for print texts can be beneficial. Making these considerations based on the intended audience can contribute to effective communication as a technical writer.

As you progress through this book, you will realize that adaptable decisions must be made as a technical writer, always keeping the readers' needs in mind. From content selection to language usage and document layout, every aspect should be tailored to cater to the target audience. Further discussion on audience and document design will be explored in this book, as these considerations are vital in creating professional and reader-friendly documents.

Text messages and emails have become an integral part of our communication landscape, and skilled business communicators view them as a valuable tool for connection. In today's digital age, written communication in the form of brief messages, such as texting, has emerged as a current way to stay connected. It is particularly useful for short exchanges, offering a convenient alternative to lengthy phone conversations. However, it is crucial to bear in mind that texting is not suitable for conveying long or complex messages, and it is essential to

consider the intended audience carefully. While texting is not an appropriate form of professional communication for this class, it is important to understand the principles that should guide your writing in this context.

When composing a text message, always consider your audience and the nature of your relationship with them. Choose your words, terms, and abbreviations carefully to ensure that your message is delivered appropriately and effectively. Here are some tips to enhance your business texting skills:

- Familiarize yourself with the recipient: The choice of language can vary depending on the recipient. While using shorthand like "? % dsct" may be acceptable when asking a close colleague about the proper discount for a particular customer, it would be more appropriate to ask your boss, "What percentage discount does Murray receive on a \$1K order?"
- Be mindful of potential misinterpretation: Texting often relies on symbols and codes to express thoughts, ideas, and emotions. Given the limitations of communication through texting, it is important to anticipate any unintentional misinterpretation and ensure clarity by using concise messages.
- Avoid excessive messaging: Frequent texting can border on harassment and become intrusive. While texting is a useful tool, it should be used appropriately and not excessively.
- Don't text and drive: Research indicates that texting while driving significantly increases the risk of accidents. Engaging in such behavior while conducting business could reflect negatively on your judgment and your employer.

By following these guidelines, you can effectively utilize texting as a tool for business communication while maintaining professionalism and an engaging approach.

Understanding the Rhetorical Situation

It is widely known in the workplace that people are not interested in reading what you write. Even if they do need to read it, chances are they will not read it all. So how can you make your reader quickly and efficiently understand what you need? One effective strategy is to conduct a thorough Task and Audience Analysis, ensuring that you grasp the "rhetorical situation." Before you start drafting a document, it is crucial to determine the requirements of your rhetorical situation.

The term "rhetorical situation" is used to describe the various components of any communication scenario, whether written or oral. To define a "rhetorical situation," ask yourself the following question: "Who is communicating to whom, about what, how, and why?" There are five key components:

Writer- The communicator

Audience- The audience

Context/Culture- The subject matter

Message- The medium of communication

Purpose- The intended purpose

The purpose of writing refers to the reason behind your writing. Determining your purpose involves engaging in Task Analysis, which means identifying what you hope to achieve through this document. Consider what actions, thoughts, decisions, or behaviors you want the reader(s) to take or exhibit after reading the text. Communication in the workplace serves three purposes: 1) creating a record, 2) providing or requesting information, and 3) persuading.

Within these broad purposes, there are numerous specific purposes. For instance, your purpose might be to propose an innovative solution to a particular problem. In such a case, your aim is to persuade the reader to further explore the idea or approve funding for additional research and development. Both objectives fall under the general purpose of persuasive writing.

When we talk about the writer, we refer to you as the creator, author, or designer of the communication. It is vital to analyze your own motivations for writing, as well as any biases, past experiences, and knowledge you bring to the writing situation. These factors will influence how you shape the message, positively or negatively. Your examination should also consider your role within the organization and your position relative to your target audience.

The audience refers to the individuals who will read, listen to, watch, or use your communication. Conducting audience analysis is the most crucial aspect of understanding the rhetorical situation. Figure 1.3.2 below provides a helpful illustration. Is your audience internal (within your company) or external (clients, suppliers, customers, other stakeholders)? Are they on the same level as you (lateral), above you in the hierarchy (management), or below you (employees, subordinates)? Who is the primary audience, and who are the secondary audiences? Answering these questions and others will enable you to gain insights into your audience, facilitating the creation of a message that is tailored to effectively communicate with them.

Remember that your diverse audience members will also have their own unique purposes for reading your document. Consider the various goals they may have and how you can effectively assist them in achieving those objectives. By considering what actions they are expected to take based on the information you provide, you can craft your message in a way that engages them and meets their needs. Additionally, remember that technical writing often has a long lifespan – the document you write today may be accessed and reviewed months or even years later. Consider the needs of that future audience too.

Audience	Purpose for Reading
Executives	Make decisions
Supervising Experts/Managers	Advise decision makers; direct subordinates
Technical Experts/Co-workers	Implement decisions; advise
Lay People/Public/Clients	Become informed; choose options; make decisions

Some companies utilize audience profiles to enhance their communication strategies. This exercise proves to be invaluable, especially when dealing with complex information. To create an effective audience profile, consider the following insightful questions:

Before you begin writing, it is important to identify the intended audience for your document. This step will help you tailor your message to your readers' needs and expectations.

Start by considering who your primary readers are. Are they above you in the organizational hierarchy, lateral, subordinate, or outside of your organization?

Next, think about who else might read the document. These are your secondary readers.

It is also helpful to consider your audience's attitude towards the topic. For example, do they support or oppose the idea?

You should also think about cultural differences and how they might affect your readers' expectations and interpretations.

What level of technical background do your readers have? Do they have a lot of experience with the topic, or are they new to it?

Finally, consider the purpose of the document. What situation gave rise to it? What information do you need to communicate?

By answering these questions, you will be able to develop an audience profile that will help you write a document that engages and informs your readers.

Here are some common technical writing audiences:

End Users or Consumers:

These are individuals who use a product or service. Technical documentation for end users includes user manuals, guides, FAQs, and troubleshooting instructions. Audience considerations: Clear language, step-by-step instructions, visual aids, and common user scenarios.

Experts or Professionals:

These are individuals with a deep understanding of a subject matter. Technical documentation for experts includes research papers, academic articles, and technical specifications.

Audience considerations: In-depth explanations, technical terminology, references to research and theory.

Executives or Decision-Makers:

These individuals make decisions based on technical reports and documentation. Technical writing for executives includes reports, summaries, and business cases.

Audience considerations: Concise information, focus on outcomes, clear benefits, and risks.

Developers or Programmers:

Technical documentation for developers includes APIs (Application Programming Interfaces) documentation, code comments, and programming guides.

Audience considerations: Code examples, clear syntax explanations, integration instructions.

Regulators or Compliance Officers:

These are individuals responsible for ensuring adherence to regulations and standards. Technical writing for regulators includes compliance reports and documentation.

Audience considerations: Detailed specifications, clear compliance information, references to standards.

Support or Help Desk Personnel:

These individuals assist end users with technical issues. Technical writing for support includes knowledge base articles, troubleshooting guides, and support scripts.

Audience considerations: Step-by-step troubleshooting, FAQs, clear problem-solving.

Training or Educational Institutions:

Technical documentation for training institutions includes textbooks, instructional materials, and online courses.

Audience considerations: Structured lessons, exercises, assessments, and learning objectives.

Manufacturers or Engineers:

These are individuals involved in the design and production of products. Technical documentation for manufacturers includes assembly instructions, blueprints, and engineering specifications.

Audience considerations: Detailed diagrams, technical specifications, manufacturing processes.

Internal Teams:

Technical documentation for internal teams includes project reports, design documents, and process manuals.

Audience considerations: Relevant details, collaboration information, internal terminology.

Public or General Audience:

Sometimes, technical information needs to be communicated to a broader audience. This could include press releases, popular science articles, or public announcements.

Audience considerations: Simplified language, relatable examples, avoidance of jargon.

When creating technical documentation, it is essential to identify the specific audience you are addressing and tailor your content to their needs and expectations. Keep in mind that the same technical content might need to be adapted differently depending on the audience it is intended for.

ACTIVITY:

You have been tasked to create a 1–2-page instructional document on how to operate a smartphone. Choose an audience from the above list and write your document. Then using the knowledge, you have gained from this chapter, write a brief reflection on what they learned about audience analysis and its role in technical writing.

Chapter 4: Memos

Memos

Memos serve as a crucial means of communication within a specific business, company, or institution. They play a vital role in ensuring smooth operations by facilitating effective communication among employees. Several types of memos exist, including inquires, recommendations, problem-solution memos, and more.

The format of a memo is designed to provide employees with clear and easy access to information. The message conveyed is direct and concise. In a memo, any references to company structure and operation, unless directly relevant to the message, are omitted. However, a memo follows a specific format to ensure easy accessibility of information. It begins with a heading block that identifies the recipient, sender, date, and subject of the message. The order and specific location of each part of the memo heading block may vary depending on the expectations set by different companies.

Moreover, the message within a memo is typically divided into three parts, each with its own designated heading. These parts include the introduction, body, and conclusion. The introduction provides background information and conveys the purpose of the message. The body contains the main message and can be presented as a single paragraph or multiple paragraphs. The conclusion outlines the expected actions or next steps for the recipient. It can be a single paragraph, multiple paragraphs, or even a simple sentence requesting the recipient to reach out if they have any questions.

Consider the following scenario: You have been hired as a consultant for a construction company. As part of your role, you are responsible for monitoring the progress of a contracted project and keeping the project manager informed. To effectively communicate the progress of the job, you may choose to send one of three types of memos: a Projection Analysis Timeline Memo, which outlines the anticipated start and end dates of the project and is sent prior to the job commencement; a Progress Memo, which is shared during the ongoing execution of the project and provides updates on the progress made; and finally, a Period Report Memo, which is sent after the job completion, detailing the dates of completion for each phase of the project.

Memos play a pivotal role as a widely accepted method of communication within businesses, companies, or institutions. They are the backbone of effective internal communication, influencing the seamless functioning of an

organization. There are several types of memos, ranging from inquiries and recommendations to problem-solving memos, each serving a unique purpose.

What sets memos apart is their well-structured format, offering employees the advantage of clear and accessible information. The power of memos lies in their direct and concise messaging. Irrelevant details pertaining to the company's structure and operations are omitted to enhance the memo's effectiveness. Yet, memos adhere to a specific format to ensure efficient information retrieval. A prominent feature is the heading block, encompassing essential details such as the recipient, sender, date, and subject. While the arrangement of this block may vary across companies, the core components remain intact.

Additionally, the heart of a memo resides in its three distinctive parts, each marked by a specific heading. The introduction sets the stage by providing background information and clearly stating the message's purpose. The body contains the actual message, be it a single paragraph or a series of paragraphs. Finally, the conclusion serves as the call-to-action, prompting the recipient to take the necessary steps. It can be a concise summary or an elaborate set of paragraphs, ensuring effective communication between the sender and the recipient.

Let us delve into a scenario to grasp the significance of memos in action: Picture yourself as a consultant for a dynamic construction company. Eager to keep the project manager informed about the progress of a contracted job, you must flawlessly execute your role. There are three types of memos at your disposal: the Projection Analysis Timeline Memo, which illuminates the project's anticipated start and end dates, setting the stage prior to the job commencement; the Progress Memo, serving as a progress report during the ongoing project execution; and the Period Report Memo, a comprehensive document highlighting the completion dates for every phase of the job, sent once the project concludes.

Memos are essential for effective communication within a business or institution. They serve as accepted methods of conveying information among employees, ensuring the smooth operation of a company. Types of memos include inquiries, recommendations, and problem-solution memos.

In memos, the format is crucial for clarity and accessibility. The message is direct, and unnecessary references to company structure and operations are avoided. The memo heading block, which typically includes recipient, sender, date, and subject, varies in order and location based on company expectations.

The message within a memo is divided into three parts: introduction, body, and conclusion. The introduction provides background information and states the purpose of the message. The body contains the main message, presented as one or multiple paragraphs. The conclusion expresses the expected action and can be a single paragraph, several paragraphs, or pages.

Sample Memo

GALLATIN COLLEGE
memo

DATE: June 30 2023
TO : Users of *Style for Students Online*
FROM : Kyndra Campbell
SUBJECT : *Writing Memos for your Classes*

This memo provides you with tips on writing memos for your classes, with special attention to a memo's audience, format, organization, content, tone, and style. Because my advice comes in the form of a memo, so you can use this document as a model for writing your own memos.

The Audience for a Memo

It is useful to begin by considering that a memo is a one-on-one communication between writer and reader. Although a memo may be written to a group of people or with various audiences in mind, usually it is a highly goal-oriented communication between two people who need to share information. When you write a memo to a professor in the classroom setting, you are much like the employee who has been assigned to investigate a problem and report it back to a supervisor. Therefore, you are expected to provide concrete information, even information that the supervisor might already know, in a form that clarifies ideas and puts them into context. Finally, a memo enjoys a broader context than an essay; hence, you might refer to other related memos as you write, or you might respond to specific requests made by the audience in your text, in effect, carrying on a professional conversation.

Typical Memo Format

The overall format of a memo can be broken down into the heading, the body, and the closing notations. What follows is a brief description of each component.

The Heading

The heading has two parts: part one includes two centered lines at the top of page 1, identifying the name of the company or institution on the first line, with

the word “memorandum” on the second line; part two includes the “DATE,” “TO,” “FROM,” and “SUBJECT” lines at the left margin, filled in appropriately.

The Body

The body of the memo follows the Introduction, and it is usually presented in single-spaced paragraphs with a line skipped between each paragraph. The first lines of new paragraphs can appear at the left margin, or they can be indented five spaces.

The Closing Notations

The closing notations, used to identify such things as attachments, appear at the left margin two lines below the text of the final paragraph. By simply typing the word “Attachment” as a closing notation, you automatically refer the reader to any attachment, such as a map, a set of calculations, spreadsheets, or a References page.

How Memos are Organized

The general organization of a memo mirrors that of an essay: an introduction, followed by body paragraphs, followed by a conclusion. However, the first paragraph of a memo is typically used as a forecasting device. Note how the opening paragraph of this memo defines the memo’s function and reflects its organization. It is sensible to open memos for your classes in the same way, first explicitly stating the memo’s purpose, then setting forth the organization and noting how the memo can be used.

Organization in the body of a memo is typically characterized using section headings and short paragraphs. Paragraphs should not be too bulky—five or six per page is usually ideal. On the sentence level, you should take full advantage of the same organizational tools that you employ when you draft an essay: meaningful topic sentences; carefully selected transition words; focused section headings; indented blocks of cited text; a bulleted series of examples; powerful punctuation marks such as the colon, semicolon, and dash.

Selection and Citation of Content

A memo’s content, of course, is guided by the assignment and the research required. It is important to remember as you present the content that selectivity and relevance matter. Your job is to select and present the most pertinent, most current information available to you. Do not hesitate, of course, to let your memo’s content be heavily informed by your research, but also provide your own interpretation and organization of this research.

As in any essay, you must document the sources of your information so that your reader can find the original source of the information if desired. If your memo uses sources, provide the bibliographic information related to your sources on a References page as an attachment at the end of the memo—just as I have in this memo.

A Memo's Tone and Style

Memos for your classes require a highly informative and straightforward tone but allow for a slightly informal style compared to essays. As in this memo, "I" and "you" are handy because they provide a straightforward way of communicating, but you must be careful not to overuse these terms. Stylish prose is key to good memo writing, and you should not hesitate to use active, interpretive adverbs and verbs and concrete, carefully chosen adjectives and nouns.

A memo need not be written in a dry, dull fashion; rather, it should emulate the same stylistic standards that good prose has always embraced. These standards are summed up neatly in the current style guide, *The Elements of Style*, as follows:

"A sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences, for the same reason that a drawing should have no unnecessary lines and a machine no unnecessary part" (Strunk and White 1979)

As this quote suggests, good prose can achieve elegance by its clarity, efficiency, and sense of purpose.

Conclusion

The conclusion of a memo should not simply provide a summary of the memo's entire contents, but it should be a true conclusion—that is, an articulated conviction arrived at based on the evidence presented. The closing paragraph is the place to spell out the bottom line to the reader. Therefore, I close with my bottom line about writing memos for your classes:

- Study and use standard memo format to present your text;
- Use internal organizational tools such as section headings, topic sentences, transition words, and powerful punctuation marks to enhance the flow of ideas;
- Write with the same clarity, grace, and efficiency expected of you in any essay.

Attachment

ATTACHMENT

ACTIVITY:

Instructions:

For this assignment, you will write a memo to all company employees announcing the implementation of new flexible work policies. The purpose of this memo is to inform employees about the changes, explain the benefits of the new policies, and address any potential concerns they might have.

Memo Content:

Header:

Include the standard memo header format, including "To," "From," "Date," and "Subject."

Introduction:

Begin with a clear and concise introduction that sets the tone for the memo. State the memo's purpose and give an overview of the new flexible work policies.

Benefits of Flexible Work:

Explain the advantages of the new policies for employees and the company. Address how flexible work arrangements can enhance work-life balance, increase productivity, and support employee well-being.

Policy Details:

Provide a clear breakdown of the new flexible work policies. Include information about remote work options, flexible hours, and any other relevant details.

Implementation Timeline:

Specify when the new policies will come into effect. Explain any transitional phases and how employees can begin to utilize the new options.

Addressing Concerns:

Anticipate potential concerns employees might have regarding the changes. Address these concerns and provide reassurance and clarification where needed.

Support and Resources:

Provide information about resources available to employees as they transition to the new policies. Include contact details for HR representatives or other relevant personnel who can answer questions.

Conclusion:

Summarize the key points of the memo.

Conclude with a positive and encouraging message about the company's commitment to employee satisfaction.

Formatting:

- Use a professional and formal tone throughout the memo.
- Utilize headings and subheadings for clear organization.
- Keep paragraphs concise and focused.

Submission:

Submit your completed memo as a typed document (PDF or Word) on the course portal by the due date.

Grading Criteria:

Your memo will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Clarity and effectiveness of communication
- Inclusion of all required sections and content
- Professional formatting and organization
- Addressing potential employee concerns
- Overall writing quality and professionalism

Chapter 5: Emails

E-mail, a commonly used form of communication for students and workers, can be utilized as text or synchronous chat, and even received on cell phones. In the business world, email has replaced print hard copy letters for external correspondence and memos for internal communication. It proves to be quite useful for messages that require slightly more content than a text message, although it is best suited for brief messages. Many businesses opt for automated e-mails to acknowledge communications from the public or to remind associates of upcoming reports or payments. Another common scenario is when you are tasked with "populating" a form e-mail, where you select sentences from a menu to tailor the wording for a specific transaction.

While e-mails may be informal in personal contexts, maintaining professionalism and attention to detail is crucial for business communication. It is important to remember that your e-mail reflects both you and your company, so it should always maintain a professional tone, allowing it to be forwarded to any third party if necessary. E-mail often serves to exchange information within organizations. Although it may have an informal feel, it should convey professionalism and respect when used for business purposes. It is essential to exercise caution and never write or send anything that you would not want to read in public or in front of your company president.

Tips for crafting effective business e-mails:

1. Begin with a proper salutation to demonstrate respect and avoid mix-ups if the message is accidentally sent to the wrong recipient. For external communication, use a salutation like "Dear Ms. X," and for internal communication, opt for a more casual approach such as "Hi Barry." Avoid using the title "Mrs." as marital status cannot be assumed. If the gender of the person is not evident, address them by their entire name, for example: "Dear Sam Jones."
2. Ensure your e-mail includes a clear, brief, and specific subject line. This helps the recipient grasp the essence of the message at a glance. For instance, utilize subject lines like "Proposal attached" or "Your question from 10/25."
3. Conclude the e-mail with a signature block that identifies yourself and provides your name and business contact information automatically.
4. Refrain from using abbreviations. Remember that an e-mail is not synonymous with a text message, and your audience may not appreciate attempts at humor such as "ROTFLOL" (roll on the floor laughing aloud).

Be concise and omit unnecessary words to make your email more effective. Use a structured format with short paragraphs that are easy to read. Aim to keep your email to three paragraphs or fewer, getting straight to the point and concluding efficiently. Take the time to proofread and revise your message before hitting send, ensuring there are no spelling or grammar errors. It is worth investing the extra effort upfront rather than dealing with the consequences of a hastily composed email. Always respond promptly, within twenty-four hours, even if it's to acknowledge that you will provide the requested information at a later time. However, be wary of replying in anger and take a moment to compose your response thoughtfully. Use the "Reply All" option sparingly, restricting it to situations where the entire group needs to see your message. To avoid appearing rude, avoid typing in all capital letters as this is considered shouty on the internet. If you include any links, double-check that they are functional before sending the email. If you plan to attach large files, such as audio or visual files, it is courteous to notify the recipient in advance to prevent any issues with mailbox limits or triggering spam filters. Lastly, if you do not receive a response within twenty-four hours, consider sending a follow-up email or calling the person to ensure they received your message, as it may have been intercepted by spam filters.

Figure 1 shows a sample email that demonstrates the principles listed above. Figure 1. Sample email from: Steve Jobs to: Human Resources Division Date: September 12, 2015, Subject: Safe Zone Training Dear Colleagues: Please consider signing up for the next available Safe Zone workshop offered by the College. As you know, our department is working toward increasing the number of Safe Zone volunteers in our area, and I hope several of you may be available for the next workshop scheduled for Friday, October 9. For more information on the Safe Zone program, please visit <http://www.cocc.edu/multicultural/safe-zone-training/> Please let me know if you will attend. Steve Jobs CEO Apple Computing sjobs@apple.com

Netiquette, also known as internet etiquette, encompasses the protocols and norms for communication on the internet. As individuals who incorporate online technologies into our professional lives, it is essential to be mindful of our conduct, as it can have lasting effects. For instance, the photo you post on your Facebook or Twitter page could be viewed by a potential employer, and any negative remarks you make in a post could come back to haunt you later.

To prevent future embarrassment, it is important to adhere to a set of guidelines for online postings. The following recommendations will help you navigate the online world smoothly:

Understand the Context:

- Take the time to introduce yourself properly.
- Avoid making assumptions about your readers, as communication styles and practices can vary based on culture.
- Familiarize yourself with your organization's policies regarding acceptable use of IT resources.

Remember the Human:

- Always remember that there is a person behind every online interaction. If something is unclear, ask for clarification before passing judgment.
- Review your tone before hitting the publish button to ensure it aligns with your intended message.
- Address individuals by their names when responding to their messages.
- Be aware that culture and gender can influence communication styles, so approach conversations with sensitivity.
- Stay true to yourself and expect authenticity from others.
- Keep in mind that not everyone will respond immediately or actively participate in discussions. Some individuals may prefer to observe silently.
- Avoid using jokes or sarcasm as they can easily be misinterpreted in the online environment.

Recognize that Text is Permanent:

- Exercise caution when expressing yourself online, as deleting, or retracting statements can be challenging.
- Consider your responsibility to the community and the work environment before posting anything.

By following these suggestions, you can navigate the online world with grace and avoid potential pitfalls.

Agree upon ground rules for text communication (formal or informal; seek clarification whenever necessary, etc.) if you are collaborating with others.

Avoid Engaging in Flame Wars: Research Before You Respond

- Embrace and forgive errors.
- Acknowledge your duty to the group and the working environment.
- Seek clarity before reacting.
- Consult your supervisor for guidance. *

Respect Privacy and Original Ideas

- Attribute the original author if you are addressing a specific point made by someone else.
- Seek permission from the email's author before forwarding their communication.

* At times, online behavior can come across as disrespectful or even hostile, requiring attention and follow-up. If this occurs, inform your supervisor immediately so that appropriate resources can be engaged to assist.

ACTIVITY:

In this activity, you will compose a formal email to a prospective employer. The email expresses your interest in a job opportunity, highlights your relevant qualifications, and requests further consideration for the position.

Email Content:

Subject Line:

Craft a clear and attention-grabbing subject line that reflects the content of the email.

Salutation:

Begin with a formal salutation, addressing the recipient appropriately (e.g., "Dear [Recipient's Name],").

Introduction:

Introduce yourself and state the reason for writing.

Mention where you learned about the job opportunity and express your enthusiasm for the position.

Qualifications:

Highlight your relevant qualifications and skills that make you a strong fit for the role.

Provide specific examples from your experiences that demonstrate your suitability for the position.

Interest Alignment:

Explain why you are interested in working for the company and how your goals align with the company's values and mission.

Resume Attachment:

Mention that your resume is attached to the email for their reference.

Briefly mention any additional documents you are attaching, if applicable (e.g., portfolio, certifications).

Request for Consideration:

Politely request further consideration for the position.

Express your interest in discussing your qualifications in more detail during an interview.

Contact Information:

Provide your contact information, including your phone number and email address.

Mention your availability for a potential interview.

Appreciation:

Thank the recipient for their time and consideration.

Express your eagerness to hear from them.

Formatting:

- Use a professional tone and language.
- Keep the email concise and focused, ideally not exceeding one screen length.
- Utilize short paragraphs for better readability.
- Clarity and effectiveness of communication
- Inclusion of all required sections and content
- Professional tone and formatting
- Alignment of qualifications with the job opportunity
- Overall writing quality and professionalism

Submission:

Submit your completed email as a typed message (plain text) to your instructor

Grading Criteria:

Your email will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

Chapter 6: Proposals

This chapter centers on the proposal—a powerful document that grants your organization a contract or other approval to embark on a project for the client. It may also serve as an internal document, proposing changes within your own organization. Proposals often need to demonstrate the existence of a problem that requires attention and typically target a specific audience (or multiple audiences) with the authority to advance your suggestions.

Depending on the specific writing situation, there may be additional specialized elements that need to be included in your proposal. Your supervisor may request that you incorporate any of the following components into your proposal:

1. **Audience:** Provide a description of the intended audience for the final report, which may differ from the audience for the proposal. This description should include details about their job titles, roles, technical expertise, and their ability to comprehend the report.
2. **Information sources:** Compile a list of the information sources you intend to use for your report. Ensure that there is ample information available on your chosen topic and provide proper citations for specific books, articles, reference works, or any other relevant sources that you believe will contribute to your report.
3. **Graphics:** Identify the types and content of the graphics that you anticipate your report will require. If you are unable to think of any graphics that would enhance your report, it may be beneficial to brainstorm with your instructor to develop a more suitable topic.
4. **Outline:** Include an outline of the main topics and subtopics that you plan to cover in your report.

The starting point of the research and writing process is often the proposal, which undergoes multiple stages before reaching completion. During this process, the proposal is only submitted once. Additionally, various related documents can be composed and submitted, such as a progress report, an outline report, an annotated bibliography, a graphics draft, a report draft, and an upgrade.

Professional writing often caters to multiple audiences, and this holds true for the several types of documents that may be produced for a given project. Let us consider the example of a proposal aimed at a supervisor in a solar power

company, suggesting the development of a policy manual for residential solar panel installers. While the primary audience for this proposal may be an executive who will make the decision to approve it, their technical knowledge may be broad. Consequently, the executive might ask the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) to review the proposed budget and the engineering department to assess the technical description, as their staff will be the ones utilizing the manual. Therefore, the proposal should encompass distinct sections tailored to these secondary audiences. It is crucial to adjust the content and language according to the various audiences and situations involved.

There are some essential components to include when writing a proposal. But do not worry, not every component needs to be included in your proposal - it depends on the type of proposal and your target audience.

Before writing your proposal, it is important to carefully review the Request for Proposal (RFP). This document often includes all the information you need to include in your proposal, and it can help you determine which components to include and exclude.

Here are some of the most common sections in a proposal:

Introduction:

- Plan this section carefully.
- Make sure it does all these things (but not necessarily in this order):
 - Identify the purpose of your proposal (e.g., to accept your proposal).
 - Specify the project.
 - Describe your proposal as a solution to the problem.
 - Develop audience interest.
 - Give a roadmap of the proposal's contents.

-The context or other background of the problem:

Include any relevant context or background information that helps the reader understand the problem your proposal is trying to solve.

Proposed Solution:

- Explain the solution you are proposing.
- Provide a clear and concise description of the solution and explain how it will address the problem or need identified in the proposal.

Implementation:

- Outline the steps needed for the proposed solution

ACTIVITY:

Choose one of these situations and write a proposal specific to your area of study.

Here are some sample proposal situations:

- A company has a problem or wants to make some sort of improvement. The company sends out a request for proposals; you receive one and respond with a proposal. You offer to come in, investigate, interview, make recommendations—and present it all in the form of a report.
- An organization wants a seminar in your expertise. You write a proposal to give the seminar—included in the package deal is a guide or handbook that the people attending the seminar will receive.
- An agency has just started using a new online data system, but the user's manual is technically complex and difficult to read. You receive a request for proposals from this agency to write a simplified guide or startup guide.
- Imagine that a nonprofit organization focused on a particular issue wants a consultant to write a handbook or guide for its membership. This document will present information on the issue in a way that the members can understand.
- A government agency plans to update its communications systems.

[adapted from *WTNG 311 Technical Writing* (2020) by Mel Topf]

Chapter 7: Presentations

Presentations

In the introduction, it is important to:

- Explain to the audience how the presentation is relevant and meaningful to them.
- Demonstrate a sense of openness and willingness to engage with the audience.
- Connect the presentation to the audience's past experiences.
- Establish your expertise on the topic/issue being discussed.

These steps are referred to as the MORE (+E) principle: Making it Meaningful to the audience, showing Openness as a speaker, relating to past experiences, Demonstrating Expertise on the subject, and Evaluating the audience's knowledge of the topic/issue.

Firstly, the presentation needs to be meaningful to the audience to capture their interest and attention. Without meaning, there is no motivation to listen. Secondly, as the speaker, it is important to be open and receptive, inviting the audience to be actively involved in the presentation and building their trust and support. Thirdly, the subject matter should be relatable to the audience's own experiences, enabling them to make connections and fostering their interest and understanding. Fourthly, the speaker should convey their expertise through firsthand experiences or well-researched information, providing the necessary credibility. It is essential to cite the sources of expert information. Lastly, the speaker should evaluate the audience's level of knowledge on the subject, which may require some adjustments in the presentation to ensure its relevance and comprehensibility.

The body of the presentation presents the information that the audience needs to know and provides the necessary instructions.

The conclusion of the presentation summarizes the key steps covered in the body.

In an instructional presentation, the focus is solely on providing clear instructions. It is important to refrain from offering individual opinions or discussing potential benefits or consequences. Simply provide precise instructions on how to accomplish a task.

ACTIVITY:

As an engaging activity, jot down a list of your recent experiences. Pick one and create a time sequence list, outlining at least five major steps involved in completing the task.

Now, among the activities you listed, consider which one your audience or class might have the least familiarity with. From that chosen activity, compile a list of three key points you would explain to them to enhance their understanding. And to effectively convey those points, think about how you can incorporate visual aids.

Elements of Presentations

Storytelling

Storytelling is an essential aspect of human communication. Throughout the day, you likely shared several brief tales with friends to describe your morning commute, your partner's behavior, what your boss said to a customer, or even what your speech teacher did in class. However, were you simply sharing information or were you also aiming to convey something specific? Initially, you may instinctively say "yes," but consider whether you had a purpose for sharing details about your friend's actions or if the words you used when discussing your boss conveyed any particular attitude.

At some point in your professional journey, you will be tasked with instructing someone on a certain topic. It could be a customer, colleague, or supervisor, and in each case, you will be delivering an informative speech. This type of speech is distinct from persuasive or sales speeches because your primary objective is to ensure that your listener comprehends the information. For example, let us imagine you are entrusted with teaching a customer how to operate a remote control to program their DVD recorder. You might think it is easy but remember that it is new to them. So, take a moment to consider their perspective. While you may suggest one unit over another to make a sale, your initial goal is to enable them to successfully perform the task they wish to learn. Be prepared to repeat instructions multiple times, as they may not grasp the concepts as quickly as you expect. However, their mastery of this skill or task will contribute to a potential sale. Once they have successfully learned it, they will have more confidence in both you and them, making them more receptive to your advice regarding competing products.

Although your ultimate objective may be a sale, the relationship you establish holds greater long-term value. That customer may recount their positive experience to a friend or show their family what they have learned. Then, before you know it, someone new will come in specifically asking for you by name. It **all** starts with treating customers with respect and focusing on their needs. The informative speech is a performance you will deliver countless times throughout your career, whether to one person, a small group, or a large audience in an auditorium. Once you master the art of delivering an informative speech, you can mix and match it with other styles and techniques to further enhance your communication abilities.

Creating an Informative Presentation

An informational presentation is a common request in business and industry. It is the verbal and visual equivalent of a written report. Information sharing is part of any business or organization. Informative presentations present specific information for specific audiences for specific goals or functions. The type of presentation is often identified by its primary purpose or function. Informative presentations are often analytical or involve the rational analysis of information. Sometimes they simply “report the facts” with no analysis at all, but still need to communicate the information in a clear and concise format. While a presentation may have conclusions, propositions, or even a call to action, the demonstration of the analysis is the primary function.

A sales report presentation, for example, is not designed to make a sale. It is, however, supposed to report sales to date and may forecast future sales based on previous trends.

An informative presentation does not have to be a formal event, though it can be. It can be generic and nonspecific to the audience or listener, but the more you know about your audience, the better. When you tailor your message to that audience, you zero in on your target and increase your effectiveness. The emphasis is on clear and concise communication, but it may address several key questions:

- Topic: Product or Service?
- Who are you?
- Who is the target market?
- What is the revenue model?
- What are the specifications?

- How was the information gathered?
- How does the unit work?
- How does current information compare to previous information?

Table 13.2 "Presentation Components and Their Functions" lists the five main parts or components of any presentation. [1]

Component	Function
Attention Statement	Raise interest and motivate the listener
Introduction	Communicate a point and common ground
Body	Address key points
Conclusion	Summarize key points
Residual Message	Communicate central theme, moral of story, or main point

You will need to address the questions to establish relevance and meet the audience's needs. The five parts of any speech will serve to help you get organized.

Table 13.2 Presentation Components and Their Functions

ACTIVITY:

Imagine that you have been assigned to give an informative presentation lasting five to seven minutes. Follow the guidelines in Table 13.3 "Sample Speech Guidelines" and apply them to your presentation.

Table 13.3 Sample Speech Guidelines

1. Topic	Choose a product or service that interests you, research it, and report your findings in your speech.
2. Purpose	Your general purpose, of course, is to inform. But you need to formulate a more specific purpose statement that expresses a point you must make about your topic—what you hope to accomplish in your speech.
3. Audience	Think about what your audience might already know about your topic and what they may not know, and any attitudes toward or concerns about it. Consider how this may affect the way that you will present your information.
4. Supporting Materials	Using the information gathered in your search for information, determine what is most worthwhile, interesting, and important to include in your speech. Time limits will require that you be selective about what you use. Use visual aids!
5. Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write a central idea statement that expresses the message, or point, that you hope to get across to your listeners in the speech. • Determine the two to three main points that will be needed to support your central idea. • Finally, prepare a complete sentence outline of the body of the speech.
6. Introduction	Develop an opening that will

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • get the attention and interest of your listeners, • express your central idea or message, • lead into the body of your speech.
7. Conclusion	The conclusion should review and/or summarize the important ideas in your speech and bring it to a smooth close.
8. Delivery	The speech should be delivered extemporaneously (not reading but speaking), using speaking notes and not reading from the manuscript. Work on maximum eye contact with your listeners. Use any visual aids or handouts that may be helpful.

Key Takeaway

Informative presentations illustrate, explain, describe, and instruct the audience on topics and processes.

Table 13.3 Sample Speech Guidelines

ACTIVITIES:

- Write a brief summary of a class or presentation you personally observed recently; include what you learned. Compare with classmates.
- Search online for an informative speech or presentation that applies to business or industry. Indicate one part or aspect of the presentation that you thought was effective and one you would improve. Provide the link to the presentation in your post or assignment.
- Pick a product or service and produce a list of five points that you could address in a two-minute informative speech. Place them in rank order and indicate why.
- With the points discussed in this chapter in mind, observe someone presenting a speech. What elements of their speech could you use in your speech? What elements would you not want to use? Why? Compare with a classmate.

[1] McLean, S. (2003). The basics of speech communication. Boston: Allyn & Bacon. From

Chapter 8: Visuals in Communication

Designing Reader-Centered Pages and Documents: Enhancing Usability and Persuasiveness

The success of your communications relies heavily on the visual elements used in their design. From the written content to the drawings, graphs, and tables, these visual elements are the first things your readers see. They have a significant impact on the usability and persuasiveness of your message.

There are several ways in which good design improves usability. First, it helps readers understand the information presented to them. Additionally, well-designed pages allow readers to locate information quickly, saving them time and effort. Lastly, good design draws attention to important content, ensuring that readers do not miss crucial information.

Furthermore, effective design influences readers' attitudes, making your communication more persuasive. By employing clever design practices, you can create a positive impression of the communication itself. Additionally, a reader-centered design approach ensures that readers feel engaged and positive about the subject matter being presented.

To achieve reader-centered design, it is essential to consider your audience, their needs, and the context in which they will be reading. Just as you focus on your readers when drafting text and graphics, the same level of attention should be given to design.

When looking at a page design, professional graphic designers consider six basic elements:

1. Text: The arrangement of paragraphs and sentences.
2. Headings and titles: Labels that segment your communication.
3. Graphics: Drawings, tables, photographs, etc., with their accompanying captions.
4. White space: Blank areas strategically placed for better visual appeal.
5. Headers and footers: Elements like page numbers located at the top or bottom of each page in a multipage document.
6. Physical features: The various forms of paper and bindings that can be utilized.

By applying engaging design principles, you can create reader-centered pages and documents that are visually appealing, enhance usability, and increase persuasiveness.

“Designing Documents” from *Mindful Technical Writing* by Stacey Corbitt

Apicius, a Roman foodie of the first century, said “We eat first with our eyes.” Information, not unlike food, must appeal visually to a reader immediately if it is to have a fighting chance of being understood and used. Readers decide whether to “consume” documents in a comparable way to how people decide whether to consume a meal. Eating documents first with the eyes means readers rely on a document’s formatting as a means of indicating readability. Therefore, it is critical that writers use the available tools discussed in this chapter to optimize readability: if the document is not appetizing at first glance, readers may ignore or avoid it altogether.

In similar ways as illustration is a powerful visual tool for technical writers, attending to the graphic or visual design of documents critically affects an audience’s ability to understand and use those documents. Remember that technical documents must be clear, complete, concise, and correct to succeed in their purpose. The audience and purpose must be a writer’s primary considerations in making design decisions.

The explanations, examples, and exercises in this chapter aim to help students learn how to use principles known to appeal to human visual perception through development of these skills:

- To make decisions about document design according to the SCRAP design principles
- To use page design features deliberately with the purpose and readers’ needs in mind
- To be mindful of reasons to use and change fonts (including sizes and styles)
- To practice using titles and headings in most academic and professional writing

What are the SCRAP design principles?

Typical lessons about document design principles include most of the same principles, presented in some variation on the SCRAP* acronym used in this chapter. For purposes of this fundamentals and introductory technical writing text, the following principles are explored:

- **Size** The size of an element on a page indicates importance of the element
- **Contrast** Use color and high variations in shade to draw the reader's attention
- **Repetition Pattern** consistency among headings/other elements shows relationships
- **Alignment** Consistently lined up items on a page connect in a reader's mind
- **Proximity** Readers see elements placed close together as being related in meaning

* The same principles may also be represented by the acronyms CARPS or CRAPS.

What page design elements matter for purpose clarity and reader success?

Clarify the purpose

The writer's purpose for creating a document is often the clearest path to take in answering the question above. Why are you creating your document? Keep in mind the answer is never one of these:

- Because I need to get a good grade on an assignment
- Because it is in the syllabus
- I do not know

While a writing assignment may be the starting point for you in creating a document, it is never the *purpose* of the document. Similarly, without knowing the goals a piece of writing must accomplish, there is no way to judge whether the document was a success or failure. Therefore, the purpose of your document must be clear to you. Why are you creating your document?

- To *persuade* my audience
- To *entertain* my audience
- To *inform* my audience
- ?

Can you think of another purpose for a document that might not fit into one of the general purposes listed above? Discuss with a classmate and, if so, write that *purpose* below:

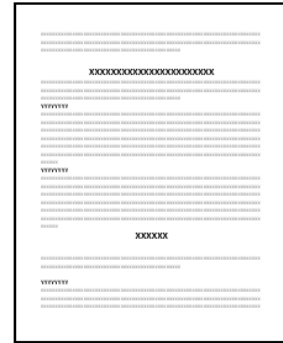
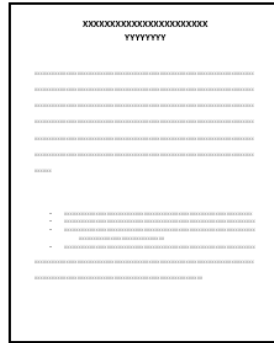
Identify the audience

Finally, the *audience* for whom a document is intended must determine the ultimate effectiveness of a piece of writing in achieving its purpose. When a writer's specific purpose for developing a document is known, it is possible the makeup of the audience may also be specific. However, the intended audience may be comprised of people representing a range of ages, interests,

The *word cloud* is a visual representation of the frequency or importance of terms contained in a digital discussion or document. In this instance, it presents an easy visual representation of how size demonstrates importance of an element in a document. What stands out in the sample illustration as being important? Discuss with your classmates what may be the subject of the discussion represented by the word cloud above.

Contrast draws attention

Documents employ white space on a page to increase the contrast between the “empty” space on a page and the text or other elements. In other words, what is “not there” can focus a reader’s attention precisely where the writer wants the attention: for example, what would you read first on the following page examples? What do the pages represent (even though you cannot “read” them) simply based upon the *contrast* your eyes can identify?



A word of caution: take care not to overuse contrast on a single page. You may find it works best when drawing attention to a single element.

Repetition of patterns creates connections throughout a document

For example, using elements like text boxes with a color to present exercises, or bulleted lists for all summaries, can be a strong signal to readers. If all examples appear in the same format with the same colors and fonts, readers can immediately recognize there is a relationship among those elements that bear the same characteristics.

Working with a peer in class, look at one of your other course textbooks and try to identify a visual pattern that is easy to spot as you compare two chapters to each other. Can you determine that the two chapters have one or more sections that bear the same heading? For example, is there a section in each chapter called “Chapter Summary” or something similar?

Discuss with your partner what features those sections or elements have in common across both chapters. The repetition of things like font style and size,

colors, graphics or shapes, and headings all work to make the document (chapter) cohesive within itself and connected to the other chapters through consistency of design.

Alignment makes the organization of a page obvious

Closely related to repetition of page design features is alignment, which reinforces the relationships among items in a text that are primary, equal, and subordinate. Alignment is most evident in professional writing through bulleted or numbered lists on a page and numbered sections in a document. If you look back at the miniature images of pages in the *Contrast* section, you can probably identify titles, main section headings, subsection headings, bulleted lists, and plain text. These elements are easier to discern and place in relationship to other elements largely because of their *alignment*, or levels of indentation from the left margin.

Proximity clarifies the big picture

Readers typically see items as closely related when they appear close to one another. At a minimum, it is important to use proximity as a design tool to prevent confusion that can occur when closely related elements are not clearly visually connected. For example, compare the two lists on the following page. Which example shows items connected in a way that is helpful to your understanding? What, if anything, on the next page may create confusion for a reader?

Library Holdings
Atonement by Ian McEwan
The Abstinence Teacher by Tom Perrotta
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain
The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream by Barack Obama
Around the World in 80 Days by Jules Verne
Ballad of the Whiskey Robber by Julian Rubinstein
The Beach House by Jane Green
The Book of Lost Things by John Connolly
The Book Thief by Markus Zusak
The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao by Junot Díaz
The Book of Illusions by Paul Auster
Bleachers by John Grisham
Call Waiting by Michelle Cunnah
Confessions of a Serial Dater by Michelle Cunnah
Choke by Chuck Palahniuk
The Cider House Rules by John Irving
A Clockwork Orange by Anthony Burgess
Chronicle of a Death Foretold by Gabriel García Márquez

Library Holdings
<u>By Title – A through C</u>
• (The) Abstinence Teacher
• (The) Adventures of Huckleberry Finn
• Around the World in 80 Days
• Atonement
• (The) Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream
• Ballad of the Whiskey Robber
• (The) Beach House
• Bleachers
• (The) Book of Illusions
• (The) Book of Lost Things
• (The) Book Thief
• (The) Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao
• Call Waiting
• (The) Cider House Rules
• (A) Clockwork Orange
• Choke
• Chronicle of a Death Foretold
• Confessions of a Serial Dater

The significance of proximity for enforcing connections while minimizing confusion is also demonstrated in the “Integrating Graphics” chapter of this textbook. Specifically, illustrations are good examples of elements that necessarily have proximity requirements. In the event as a reader, you find illustrations that confuse rather than clarify, ask the following questions about the proximity of the related elements to each other:

- Are the signal phrases obvious in the text immediately preceding the illustration? Avoid placing these two items more than a fraction of a page apart in the document.

- Are the captions attached to, and appearing on the same page as, the graphic elements?

At this point you may recognize that all the principles of SCRAP overlap with and influence each other. Do not be concerned if you have trouble discerning, for example, *repetition* from *alignment* as you employ those strategies in your own documents. These five principles work in different combinations to focus your writing to assist readers in understanding and fully responding to your work.

What are the rules and considerations for choosing font sizes and styles?

In a way that is like the “little goes a long way” advice about using contrast, deliberate yet subtle changes in the size and style of text are essential in developing superb technical documents. Consider the American Psychological Association’s (APA’s) direction in [Section 2.19 of the Style Manual – Seventh Edition \(2019\)](#) indicates APA-style student papers may be written in *sans serif* fonts (like Arial or Calibri) or *serif* fonts (like Times New Roman or Georgia) with variations only in specific instances.

ACTIVITY:

Discuss the use of different fonts with your peers in class. In the past, what kinds of choices have you made in your use of fonts in several types of writing? Why do you think APA (American Psychological Association) does not provide for more creative changes in its guide?

Keep in mind that, particularly in technical writing, you will have many opportunities to use illustrations and other interesting visual elements that are not part of typical essay-style college writing. In other words, strive for clear, easy-to-read text presented in a standard font at a readable – but not distracting – size. The words you write should always convey the meaning and the message of your document and should not distract readers or raise questions about items unrelated to that message.

Are titles and headings necessary for most documents?

Chances are you learned limited uses for and information about elements like *section headings* and *subheadings* in high school courses. Understandably, your instructors needed to focus on making sure you and your classmates had adequate practice with skills like grammar, mechanics, sentence structure, and paragraph development to get you ready for post-secondary education. Now that you are writing at a college level in preparation for a professional career, attention to the elements and aspects of technical writing style is warranted. Recall what you learned in the early chapters of this textbook about technical writing’s characteristics. Technical writing is clear and concise: it does not

employ overly complex words or excessively long sentences. Technical writing is accessible, in part because it avoids long paragraphs while striving to be complete and correct by including relevant details. To achieve its goals, technical writing relies specifically on descriptive *titles* and consistent, useful signposts within documents, typically in the form of *headings*. Correspondence, both in the common forms of 1) personal and formal letters; and 2) business emails and memos; is the main exception to the “titles” rule, but correspondence can benefit from section headings as well.

Chapter Conclusion

The only way a writer can ensure an audience will use his or her document for its intended purpose is by designing that document as an appealing and highly usable instrument. Elements of design discussed in this chapter include size, contrast, repetition, alignment, and proximity (SCRAPS). Technical writing demands attention to design, including SCRAPS.

ACTIVITIES:

Locate a poorly designed document that does not align with the SCRAP design principles.

Prepare an APA-style reference entry for the document.

Write a memo to your instructor explaining the design issues you identified in the original document: include in-text citations. Create figures if applicable.

Summarize the changes you would make to help bring the document in line with the design principles you have studied here and provide a rationale for your design choices.

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Wiley, D. 2011, October 10. “Word cloud” is licensed under [CC-BY- 2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/)

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/davidwiley/6296834006/>

Chapter 9: Information Literacy

Information literate individuals possess the knowledge and skills to effectively locate, evaluate, and utilize information. In a college setting, the ability to find, assess, and utilize information is often crucial for meeting assignment requirements. These assignments may specify the specific type of information needed and the appropriate research tools to utilize or avoid. For example, a professor might outline the necessity of three peer-reviewed resources from academic articles while discouraging the use of Wikipedia as a citation in a final paper. However, beyond the realm of academia, particularly in the professional world, such explicit guidance may not be available. It is essential to cultivate information literacy to plan and execute your research endeavors while considering the requirements and expectations of your intended audience efficiently and effectively.

A study conducted by Project Information Literacy (PIL) in 2012 involved interviews with 33 employers, and the findings indicated a certain level of dissatisfaction with the research skills exhibited by recent graduates. The employers expressed concerns regarding the graduates' excessive reliance on online search tools and their tendency to solely analyze the first page of search results. The research conducted by these recent graduates was often shallow, lacking in-depth analysis and synthesis of diverse information obtained from various sources.

Within this chapter, you will explore the following topics to foster your information literacy:

- Identification of different information formats
- Efficient research locations
- Effective search strategies
- Evaluation of the sources you encounter

Information formats have traditionally existed in various forms, primarily due to the time required for gathering and disseminating information. For instance, news reporting serves the purpose of providing the public with basic facts about events, necessitating swift dissemination through daily print publications, online platforms, broadcast television, and radio media.

In the present era, information is published not only in traditional formats but also in constantly evolving digital formats on the Internet. These modern information formats encompass electronic journals, e-books, news websites, blogs, Twitter, Facebook, and other social media platforms. However, the coexistence of all

these formats can be messy and chaotic, making it challenging to find and access relevant information easily.

To navigate this complex information universe, a thorough understanding of traditional information formats is essential. Doing so allows for the comprehension of underlying concepts within the online information formats. Although correlations can be drawn between traditional formats such as books and journal articles, newer formats like tweets have emerged recently.

In terms of information sources, primary sources enable researchers to approach original ideas, events, and empirical research as closely as possible. These sources encompass creative works, first-hand or contemporary accounts of events, and publications presenting the results of empirical observations or research.

Examples of primary sources include interviews, letters, emails, tweets, Facebook posts, photographs, speeches, newspaper, or magazine articles written at the time of an event, literary works, lab notes, field research, and published scientific research.

However, secondary sources involve the analysis, review, or summarization of information presented in primary or other secondary sources. Even sources that provide facts or descriptions about events are considered secondary unless they are based on direct participation or observation. Secondary sources primarily involve analyzing primary sources.

Examples of secondary sources include journal articles, books, literature reviews, literary criticism, meta-analyses of scientific studies, documentaries, biographies, and textbooks.

Sometimes, the line between primary and secondary sources becomes blurred. For instance, newspapers and news websites may contain both primary and secondary source material. An article published on the day of a US presidential election would be considered a primary source, while an article published two weeks later analyzing how the winning candidate raised campaign funds would be considered a secondary source.

Table 1 provides examples of primary and secondary sources within technical writing.

Moving on, it is important to understand the distinction between popular, professional, and scholarly information sources during one's college career. Professors may instruct students to find peer-reviewed resources on their research topics, which are typically found in scholarly journals. You might

wonder how a scholarly journal article is different from an article in a magazine such as National Geographic or Sports Illustrated.

Magazines like People, Sports Illustrated, and Rolling Stone are useful for articles focusing on recent events or pop-culture topics. However, magazines like Harper's, Scientific American, and The New Republic offer in-depth articles covering a wider range of subjects. These publications target readers who, though not experts, possess significant knowledge of the issues presented.

Professional journals, also known as trade journals, target professionals within specific disciplines or fields. They report news and trends within the field but do not typically feature original research. Additionally, they may provide product or service reviews, job listings, and advertisements.

Scholarly journals publish articles that are of interest to experts or researchers within a specific discipline. These journals employ an editorial board comprised of respected scholars in the field who review all submitted articles. The board evaluates whether an article contributes significantly to the field and should be published. Scholarly journals contain few to no advertisements and include references for works cited, as well as footnotes or endnotes, which are rarely found in popular or professional publications.

Peer review serves as a widely accepted indicator of quality scholarship in each discipline or field. Peer-reviewed (or refereed) journals exclusively publish articles that have passed through this review process.

Chapter 10: Case Studies

Case Study: The Cost of Poor Communication

No one knows exactly how much poor communication costs business, industry, and government each year, but estimates suggest billions. In fact, a recent estimate claims that the cost in the U.S. alone is close to \$4 billion (about \$12 per person in the US) annually!^[1] Poorly-worded or inefficient emails, careless reading or listening to instructions, documents that go unread due to poor design, hastily presenting inaccurate information, sloppy proofreading — all these examples result in inevitable costs. The problem is that these costs are not usually included on the corporate balance sheet at the end of each year; if they are not properly or clearly defined, the problems remain unsolved. You may have seen the Project Management Tree Cartoon before (**Figure 1.4.1**); it has been used and adapted widely to illustrate the perils of poor communication during a project.

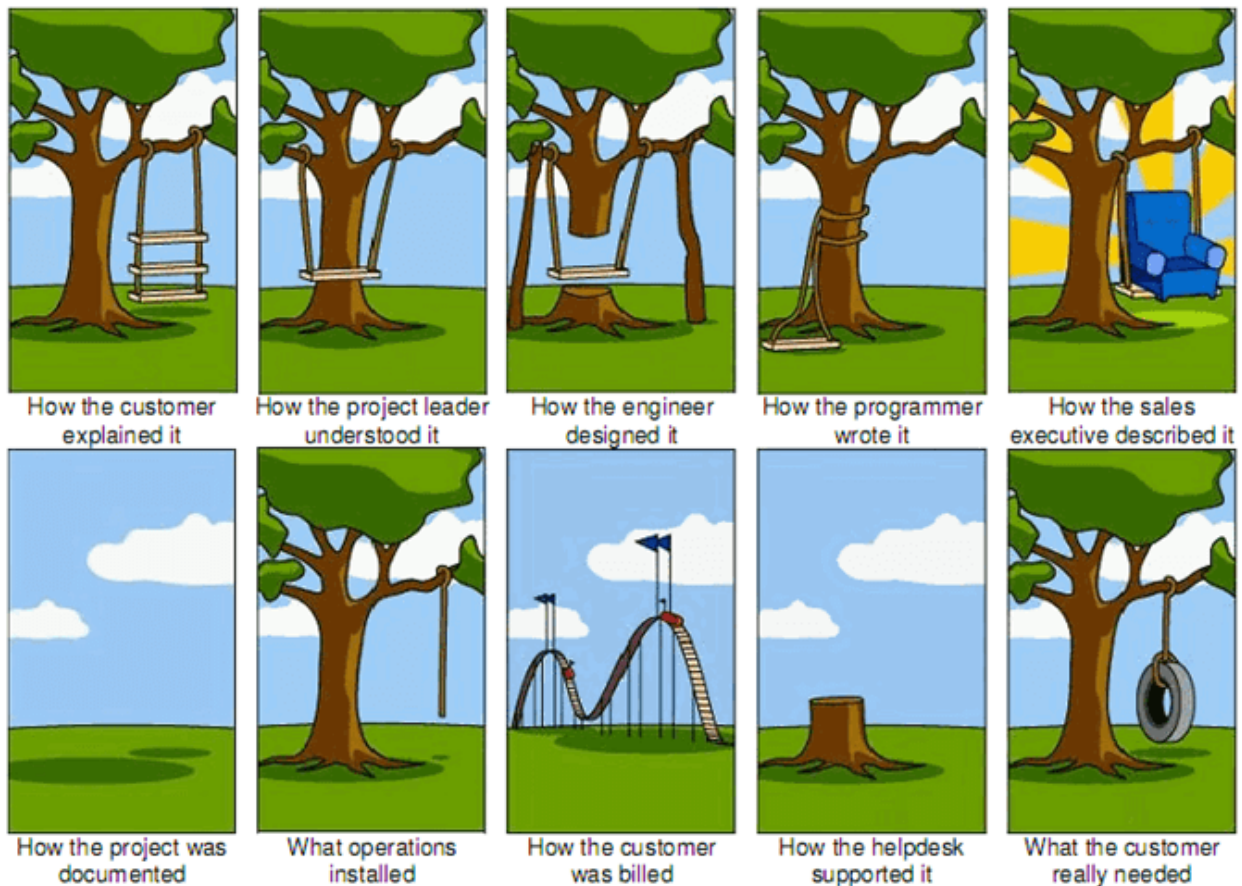


Figure 1.4.1 Project Management Tree Swing Cartoon. ^[2]

The waste caused by imprecisely worded regulations or instructions, confusing emails, long-winded memos, ambiguously written contracts, and other

examples of poor communication is not as easily identified as the losses caused by a bridge collapse or a flood. But the losses are just as real—in reduced productivity, inefficiency, and lost business. In more personal terms, the losses are measured in wasted time, work, money, and professional recognition. In extreme cases, losses can be measured in property damage, injuries, and even deaths.

The following “case studies” show how poor communications can have real world costs and consequences. For example, consider the “[Comma Quirk](#)” in the Rogers Contract that cost \$2 million.^[3] A small [error in spelling a company name](#) cost £8.8 million.^[4] Examine Edward [Tufte’s discussion](#) of the failed PowerPoint presentation that attempted to prevent the Columbia Space Shuttle disaster.^[5] The failure of project managers and engineers to communicate effectively resulted in the deadly [Hyatt Regency walkway collapse](#).^[6] The case studies below offer a few more examples that might be less extreme, but much more common.

In small groups, examine each “case” and determine the following:

Define the **rhetorical situation**: Who is communicating to whom about what, how, and why? What was the goal of the communication in each case? Identify the **communication error** (poor task or audience analysis? Use of inappropriate language or style? Poor organization or formatting of information? Other?)

Explain what **costs/losses** were incurred by this problem.

Identify **viable solutions** or strategies that would have prevented the problem, and what benefits would be derived from implementing solutions or preventing the problem.

Present your findings in a brief, informal presentation to the class.

(Exercises adapted from T.M Georges’ *Analytical Writing for Science and Technology*.^[7])

Bruce, a research chemist for a major Petro-Chemical company, drafted a dense report about some new compounds he had synthesized in the laboratory from oil-refining by-products. The bulk of the report consisted of tables listing their chemical and physical properties, diagrams of their molecular structure, chemical formulas, and data from toxicity tests. Buried at the end of the report was a casual speculation that one of the compounds might be a particularly safe and effective insecticide.

Seven years later, the same oil company launched a major research program to find more effective but environmentally safe insecticides. After six months of

research, someone uncovered Bruce's report and his toxicity tests. A few hours of further testing confirmed that one of Bruce's compounds was the safe, economical insecticide they had been looking for.

Bruce had since left the company, because he felt that the importance of his research was not being appreciated.

The Acme Electric Company worked day and night to develop a new current regulator designed to cut the electric power consumption in aluminum plants by 35%. They knew that, although the competition was fierce, their regulator could be produced more affordably, was more reliable, and worked more efficiently than the competitors' products.

The owner, eager to capture the market, personally but hastily put together a 120-page proposal to the three major aluminum manufacturers, recommending that the new Acme regulators be installed at all company plants.

She devoted the first 87 pages of the proposal to the mathematical theory and engineering design behind his new regulator, and the next 32 to descriptions of the new assembly line she planned to set up to produce regulators quickly.

Buried in an appendix were the test results that compared her regulator's performance with present models, and a poorly drawn graph showing the potential cost savings over 3 years.

The proposals did not receive any response. Acme Electric did not get the contracts, despite having the best product. Six months later, the company filed for bankruptcy.

As one of the first to enter the field of office automation, Sagantec Software, Inc. had built a reputation for designing high-quality and user-friendly databases and accounting programs for business and industry. When they decided to enter the word-processing market, their engineers designed an effective, versatile, and powerful program that Sagantec felt sure would outperform any competitor.

To be sure that their new word-processing program was accurately documented, Sagantec asked the senior program designer to supervise the writing of the instruction manual. The result was a thorough, accurate and precise description of every detail of the program's operation.

When Sagantec began marketing its new word processor, cries for help flooded in from office workers who were so confused by the massive manual that they could not even find out how to get started. Then several business journals

reviewed the program and judged it “too complicated” and “difficult to learn.” After an impressive start, sales of the new word processing program plummeted. Sagantec eventually put out a new, clearly written training guide that led new users step by step through introductory exercises and told them how to find commands quickly. But the rewrite cost Sagantec \$350,000, a year’s lead in the market, and its reputation for producing easy-to-use business software.

Joanne supervised 36 professionals in 6 city libraries. To cut the costs of unnecessary overtime, she issued this one-sentence memo to her staff:

When workloads increase to a level requiring hours in excess of an employee’s regular duty assignment, and when such work is estimated to require a full shift of eight (8) hours or more on two (2) or more consecutive days, even though unscheduled days intervene, an employee’s tour of duty shall be altered so as to include the hours when such work must be done, unless an adverse impact would result from such employee’s absence from his previously scheduled assignment.

After the 36 copies were sent out, Joanne’s office received 26 phone calls asking what the memo meant. What the 10 people who did not call about the memo thought is uncertain. It took a week to clarify the new policy.

The following excerpt is from Carl Sagan’s book, *The Demon-Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark*,^[8] itself both a plea for and an excellent example of clear scientific communication:

The Superconducting Supercollider (SSC) would have been the preeminent instrument on the planet for probing the fine structure of matter and the nature of the early Universe. Its price tag was \$10 to \$15 billion (about \$46 per person in the US). It was cancelled by Congress in 1993 after about \$2 billion (about \$6 per person in the US) (about \$6 per person in the US) had been spent — the worst of both worlds’ outcomes. But *this* debate was not, I think, mainly about declining interest in the support of science. Few in Congress understood what modern high-energy accelerators are for. They are not for weapons. They have no practical applications. They are for something that is, worryingly from the point of view of many, called “the theory of everything.” Explanations that involve entities called quarks, charm, flavor, color, etc., sound as if physicists are being cute. The whole thing has an aura, in the view of at least some Congresspeople I have talked to, of “nerds gone wild” — which I suppose is an uncharitable way of describing curiosity-based science. No one asked to pay for this had the foggiest idea of what a Higgs boson is. I have read some of the material

intended to justify the SSC. At the very end, some of it was not too bad, but there was nothing that really addressed what the project was about on a level accessible to bright but skeptical non-physicists. If physicists are asking for 10 or 15 billion dollars (about \$46 per person in the US) to build a machine that has no practical value, at the very least they should make an extremely serious effort, with dazzling graphics, metaphors, and capable use of the English language, to justify their proposal. More than financial mismanagement, budgetary constraints, and political incompetence, this is the key to the failure of the SSC.

Chris was simultaneously enrolled in a university writing course and working as a co-op student at the Widget Manufacturing plant. As part of his co-op work experience, Chris shadowed his supervisor/mentor on a safety inspection of the plant and was asked to write up the results of the inspection in a **compliance memo**. In the same week, Chris's writing instructor assigned the class to draft a narrative essay based on some personal experience. Chris, trying to be efficient, thought the plant visit experience could provide the basis for his essay assignment.

He drafted the essay first, because he was used to drafting essays and was rather good at it. He had never even seen a compliance memo, much less written one, so was not as confident about that task. He began the essay like this:

On June 1, 2018, I conducted a safety audit of the Widget Manufacturing plant in New City. The purpose of the audit was to ensure that all processes and activities in the plant adhere to safety and handling rules and policies outlined in the Workplace Safety Handbook and relevant government regulations. I was escorted on a 3-hour tour of the facility by...

Chris finished the essay and submitted it to his writing instructor. He then revised the essay slightly, keeping the introduction the same, and submitted it to his co-op supervisor. He "aced" the essay, getting an A grade, but his supervisor told him that the report was unacceptable and would have to be rewritten – especially the beginning, which should have clearly indicated whether the plant followed safety regulations. Chris was aghast! He had never heard of putting the "conclusion" at the **beginning**. He missed the company softball game that Saturday so he could rewrite the report to the satisfaction of his supervisor.

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3. G. Robertson, "Comma quirk irks Rogers," *Globe and Mail*, Aug. 6, 2006 [Online]. Available: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/comma-quirk-irks-rogers/article1101686/> ↵
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5. E. Tufte, *The Cognitive Style of PowerPoint*, 2001 [Online]. Available: https://www.inf.ed.ac.uk/teaching/courses/pi/2016_2017/phil/tufte-powerpoint.pdf ↵
6. C. McFadden, "Understanding the tragic Hyatt Regency walkway collapse," *Interesting Engineering*, July 4, 2017 [Online]: <https://interestingengineering.com/understanding-hyatt-regency-walkway-collapse> ↵
7. T.M. Goerges (1996), *Analytical Writing for Science and Technology* [Online], Available: <https://www.scribd.com/document/96822930/Analytical-Writing> ↵
8. C. Sagan, *The Demon-Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark*, New York, NY: Random House, 1995. ↵

(Adapted From <https://pressbooks.bccampus.ca/technicalwriting/>)

Chapter 11: Grammar, Punctuation, Style

Grammar, Punctuation, and Style Exercises

FOUR SENTENCE PATTERNS

The four patterns are simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex. Vary your sentences using different patterns. S means subject and V verb. Notice how the punctuation changes with each arrangement.

Simple Sentence One independent clause (SV).

- Mr. Potato Head eats fries.
- I eat Mr. Potato Head.

Compound Sentence Two or more independent clauses. They can be arranged in these ways: (SV, and SV.) or (SV; however, SV.). You may connect two independent sentences with a comma plus **FANBOYS** (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so). You may also connect two independent sentences a semicolon plus conjunctive adverb (however, moreover, nevertheless, nonetheless, therefore, etc.) and comma.

- Mr. Potato Head eats them for breakfast every day, but I do not see the attraction.

[The connection or **coordination** is made with a comma + “but.”]

- Eating them makes him happy; however, he cannot persuade me. [The connection is made with a semicolon + “however” + comma.]

Complex Sentence This pattern uses one independent clause plus one or more dependent clauses. They can be arranged in these ways: (SV

because SV.) or (Because SV, SV.) or (S, because SV, V.) **Subordinating conjunctions** (because, although, when, if, after, until, etc.) show how the dependent clause is related to the independent clause.

- He recommends them highly because they taste like chicken.
- Although chicken appeals to me, I am skeptical about snake.

Compound-Complex Sentence This pattern contains two or more independent clauses plus one or more dependent clauses. They can be arranged in several ways, including (SV, and SV because SV.) or (Because SV, SV, but SV.)

- Mr. Potato Head said that he would share the secret recipe; however, if he does, then Mrs. Potato Head will immerse him in the deep fryer, so we are all safer and happier if he and I just watch the ballgame instead.

In summary, there are four sentence patterns: simple (one independent clause), compound (two independent clauses connected), complex (one independent clause connected to one dependent clause), and compound-complex (a simple or compound sentence combined with a complex sentence).

SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS

Remember that the FANBOYS (for and nor but or yet so) **coordinating conjunctions** plus comma allow you to connect two simple sentences into a compound sentence. On the other hand, you may connect a complete idea (independent clause) with an incomplete idea (dependent clause) using **subordinating conjunctions**.

Function	Subordinating conjunction
cause/effect	because, since, so that
comparison/contrast	although, even though, though, whereas, while
place/manner	where, wherever, how, however
possibility/conditions	if, whether, unless
relation	that, which, who, whom

Function	Subordinating conjunction
time	after, as, before, since, when, whenever, while, until

Table Ch. 2.1: Functions of subordinating conjunctions

PARALLELISM

Parallelism sounds intimidating, but you will learn quickly to identify it. Parallelism repeats the same structure to show equal importance or provide balance.

Not parallel: John likes reading, his studies, and talking.

Corrected: John likes reading, studying, and talking.

Not parallel: We were asked to calculate scores, record them, and putting them on the bulletin board.

Corrected: We were asked to calculate scores, record them, and post them on the bulletin board.

Not parallel: The science class had to dissect frogs or was experimenting with gases.

Corrected: The science class had to dissect frogs or experiment with gases.

Conciseness

You can manage cluttered sentences by eliminating repetitive ideas, removing repeated words, and rewording to eliminate unneeded words.

Eliminate Repetitiveness

Unless you are providing definitions on purpose, stating one idea in two ways within a single sentence is redundant, repetitive, and unnecessary (see what I mean?). Read each example and think about how you could revise the sentence to remove repetitive phrasing that adds wordiness.

Original: Use a very heavy skillet made of cast iron to bake a savory, delicious, and mouth-watering meatloaf.

Revised: Use a cast-iron skillet to bake a delicious meatloaf.

Original: The student who won the essay contest is a very talented and ambitious student.

Revised: The student who won the essay contest is talented and ambitious.

If a sentence has words that are not necessary to carry the meaning, those words are unneeded and can be removed to reduce wordiness.

Original: Andy has the ability to make the most fabulous twice-baked potatoes.

Revised: Andy makes fabulous twice-baked potatoes.

Original: For his part in the cooking class group project, Malik was responsible for making the mustard reduction sauce.

Revised: Malik made the mustard reduction sauce for his cooking class group project.

More Tips on Conciseness

Tip 1: As often as possible, use active verbs instead of “to be.”

Wordy: The sharp rise in fuel prices *is a serious challenge to* trucking firms. It makes it hard for them to provide timely service to customers and to meet payroll expenses.

More precise: Sharply rising fuel prices *challenge* trucking firms by causing delays in customer service and payroll.

Tip 2: Use active rather than **passive voice** whenever possible (we will study these in depth in the chapter titled Grammar Theory). **Active voice is a component of syntax whereby the agent of action is at the sentence's front, before its object.**

Active: The student passed the basketball to his English professor. *Passive:* The basketball was passed by the student to his English professor.

Active: The cat broke the vase.

Passive: The vase was broken by the cat. OR The vase was broken. [Note here that the passive voice allows the agent of action to be disguised, which can be useful for avoiding responsibility!]

Replace Wordy Phrases

Wordy phrase	Replace with
the reason for, for the reason that, owing/due to the fact that, in light of the fact that, considering the fact that, on the grounds that, this is why	because, since, why
on the occasion of, in a situation in which, under circumstances in which	When
as regards, in reference to, with regard to, concerning the matter of, where is concerned	about, regarding

it is crucial that, it is necessary that, there is a need/necessity for, it is important that, it cannot be avoided that	must, should
is able to, has the opportunity to, has the capacity for, has the ability to	Can
it is possible that, there is a chance that, it could happen that, the possibility exists for	may, might, could

Table Ch. 2.2: Replace wordy phrases

Diction means word choice. Prefer clear, on-point words to vague, verbose expressions. Just as you would prepare an entrée for a Sunday dinner by using only the best ingredients, so you write a sentence by using the best words in the best order. The chart below shows forceful diction that conveys higher-order critical thinking.

Bloom's Lexicon

Remember

This becomes evident in how well you remember the subject matter, such as the major ideas, dates, places, events, etc. Questions may begin with identify, describe, examine, when, where, who.

Understand

How well do you understand the information presented? Can you describe the information in your own words? Questions may begin with interpret, contrast, predict, discuss.

Apply

Can you use the principles learned to solve other problems in different situations? Questions may begin with illustrate, examine, modify, experiment, relate.

Analyze

Can you recognize hidden meanings, see patterns, and identify the underlying parts? Questions may begin with separate, order, connect, classify, divide, explain.

Evaluate

Can you synthesize knowledge from different areas to support your conclusions? Questions may begin with appraise, argue, critique.

Create

This involves producing new or original work. Questions may begin with design, conjecture, formulate.

Transition

The best stylists become masters at placing **transition words** in pivotal positions-- places where the sentence or paragraph meaning shifts slightly. When you do use transitions, keep their broader functions (e.g., causality, emphasis, etc.) in mind.⁴

Function	Transition word
Causality	accordingly, consequently, for this reason, hence, therefore, thus
Emphasis	above all, certainly, clearly, indeed, in fact, in short
Location	beyond, here, nearby, opposite, overlying (underlying), there, to the right
Intention	for this purpose, in order to do this, to this end, with this in mind
Closure	in conclusion, in sum, on the whole, to summarize
Detail	especially, in particular, in regard to, namely, specifically, to enumerate
Amplification	again, also, apparently, besides, equally important, finally, obviously, of course, first / second / etc., further, in addition, moreover
Similarity	likewise, similarly
Concession	at any rate, at least, it is true that
Example	for example, for instance, to demonstrate, to illustrate

Comparison & contrast	however, in contrast, in relation to, nevertheless, on the other hand, still
-----------------------	--

4 Style for Students Online. Authored by Joe Schall. Provided by Pennsylvania State University. Located at <https://www.e-education.psu.edu/styleforstudents/>. Penn State's College of Earth and Mineral Sciences' OER Initiative. CC BY-NC-SA.

Function	Transition word
Interpretation	fortunately, interestingly, significantly, surprisingly
Time	afterward, at the same time, before, earlier, eventually, in the meantime, sometimes, later, next, preceding this, simultaneously, soon

Table Ch. 2.3: Transition words

Punctuation and Grammar Exercises

Choose the correct option. Answers appear at the end of the exercises.

Is the sentence a run-on (RO), fragment (F), comma splice (CS), or correct (C)?

1. Laila is helpful Martha is productive.
2. Laila is helpful and Martha is productive.
3. While Laila is helpful. Whereas Martha is productive.
4. Laila is helpful; Martha is productive.
5. Laila is helpful, and Martha is productive.
6. Laila is helpful, Martha is productive.
7. Because Laila is so helpful.
8. Laila is helpful, however, Martha is productive.
9. Laila is helpful; however, Martha is productive.
10. Martha is productive because Laila is so helpful.

Which apostrophes are placed correctly?

1. (It's / Its / Its') a lovely day, isn't it, ('mam / ma'am)?

2. (Poison's / Poisons' / Poisons) *Look What the Cat Dragged In* is my fave (80's / '80s) album.
3. Seung-min (possesses / possess's / possesses') more brain-power than (our's / ours / ours') combined.
4. (James' / James's / Jameses') Oldsmobile was left at the (Davis' / Davis's / Davises') residence.
5. (Fatens' / Faten's / Fatens) brother, Aamir, is at Dr. (Harrises' / Harris's / Harris') wedding.
6. (Childrens' / Children's / Childrens) clothing is on the second floor, and (womens' / women's / womens) attire is on the third floor.
7. That (city's / cities' / citys') lost (it's / its / its') bid to host the Olympics.
8. My (finger's/fingers'/fingers) were tired after jamming with The Rolling (Stones/Stones'/Stone's) song "Moonlight Mile."
9. I looked out (your / you're / yours) window to see the (trees' / tree's / trees) colorful leafs.
10. Kullnat (would'nt / wouldn't / wont' / won't) hesitate to say (hes' / his / he's) a genius!

Which subjects-verbs and pronouns-antecedents agree?

1. Ken as well as Janelle (is / are) going to see Fleetwood Mac. Ken and Janelle (is / are) also going to see Ry Cooder.
2. Somebody has forgotten (their / his or her) iPhone. Everyone forgets (his or her / their) belongings at some point!
3. None of the players (has / have) practiced (his / their) free-throws so far.
4. Either my aunts or my sister (is / are) meeting us for coffee, but neither of the two coffee shops (is / are) open. Afterward, either my sister or my aunts (is / are) driving back to Tennessee.
5. Each person (is / are) expected to do (their / his or her) best.

Dangling, misplaced modifier (MM) or correct (C)?

1. Drinking lustily from his flagon of mead, glances were cast at the king.
2. Drinking lustily from his flagon of mead, the king's court glanced at him.
3. Drinking lustily from his flagon of mead, the king endured glances from his court.
4. According to my palm reader, I've only been born twice before.
5. According to my palm reader, I've been born only twice before.

ANSWERS

- | | | |
|-------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. RO | 1. It's, ma'am | 1. is, are |
| 2. RO | 2. Poison's, '80s | 2. his or her, his or |
| 3. F | 3. possesses, ours | her |
| 4. C | 4. James's, Davises' | 3. has + his OR have |
| 5. C | 5. Faten's, Harris's | + their |
| 6. CS | 6. Children's, | 4. is, is, are |
| 7. F | women's | 5. is, his or her |
| 8. CS | 7. city's, its | |
| 9. C | 8. fingers, Stones' | 1. MM |
| 10. C | 9. your, trees' OR | 2. MM |
| | tree's | 3. C |
| | 10. wouldn't OR | 4. MM |
| | won't, he's | 5. C |

Style Exercises

ACTIVITY: Writing a counterargument

Look at the counterargument paragraph from a student's writing below and do the following.

Identify where the author turns against and turns back to their argument?

How do you know?

What might the student's thesis be?

How could you improve this paragraph?

Admittedly, the vegetarian diet can be beneficial for some individuals. It is true that for people who have health problems, such as high blood pressure, a diet full of vegetables alleviates some of their health issues. However, meat provides people with various nutrients which vegetables and fruits cannot give, allowing the general population to lead a much healthier lifestyle if they do consume meat. More importantly, people's dietary habits vary across regions: for instance, people living near the Arctic tend to regard meat as their main dish, as vegetables are difficult to grow in that area.

ACTIVITY: Levels of thinking

Look at the two assignment prompts below and answer the questions.

What are the key verbs in each prompt?

How do these words help you know how to approach the prompt?

According to Bloom's Taxonomy, what level of thinking does the prompt require?

Describe the complete industry value chain for the cereal manufacturing business. What role does each sector (primary, secondary, tertiary) play in getting cereal from farmland to table?

Identify one of Company X's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, or threats. Then, make a persuasive argument for how that factor will have the biggest impact on the firm's success.

ACTIVITY: Transition words

Look at the paragraphs below, which are in response to the prompt: Describe the complete industry value chain for the cereal manufacturing business. What role does each sector (primary, secondary, tertiary) play in getting cereal from farmland to table?

Both paragraphs contain the same content, but they have different transition words. Look at the words in red in each paragraph. Which paragraph has a better flow?

The primary sector business provides the raw materials for the manufacturers. First, farmers and growers must purchase seeds of wheat, oats, corn, and rice from seed suppliers then plant and harvest their crop. Second, they supply wheat, oats, corn, and rice to cereal manufacturers. Third, the cereal manufacturer needs to get sugar, cocoa, and edible colorings from other suppliers. Also, paper mills provide manufacturers with cardboard and envelopes. After the grains, sugars and paper products are gathered and transported to the factory, the products are produced and assembled, as the first stage in the secondary sector.

The primary sector business provides the raw materials for the manufacturers. In order to do this, farmers and growers must purchase seeds of wheat, oats, corn, and rice from seed suppliers then plant and harvest their crop. After harvest, they supply these grains to cereal manufacturers. Meanwhile, the manufacturer

needs to get sugar, cocoa, and edible colorings from other suppliers. As for the packaging, paper mills provide manufacturers with cardboard and envelopes. Once the products are gathered and transported to the factory, they are produced and assembled, as the first stage in the secondary sector.

ACTIVITY:

Rewrite the sentences below to make them clear, concise, and grammatically correct.

Katarina should talk to managers to shape their ideas to understand if these changes have to happen and what is probably going to happen after these changes and what is missing from the plan.

By analyzing the case we can see that workforce planning possibly can have the biggest impact on Company X's success.

The flat organizational structure in Company X enables employees to communicate with management directly, helping the task distribution and feedback become more precise and efficient.

The old operating system is not able to supply data that is well-organized to employees, so they cannot accurately foresee and make precise preparations for the problems.

From the SWOT analysis, it can clearly be seen that Company X's strengths are the way its supply chain is efficient and how loyal it's suppliers are.

Chapter 12: Quotes on Good Writing

Here is a diverse collection of musings and advice on what makes good writing from many of the best writers.

“The road to hell is paved with adverbs.”

— **Stephen King**

“Write quickly and you will never write well; write well, and you will soon write quickly.”

— **Marcus Fabius Quintilianus**

“Don’t tell me the moon is shining; show me the glint of light on broken glass.”

— **Anton Chekhov**

“Sooner or later every writer evolves his own definition of a story. Mine is: A reflection of life plus beginning and end (life seems not to have either) and a meaning.”

— **Mary O’Hara**

“Comparisons deplete the actuality of the things compared...”

— **William S. Wilson**

“A good story is a dream shared by the author and the reader. Anything that wakes the reader from the dream is a mortal sin.”

— **Victor J. Banis**

“Substitute ‘damn’ every time you’re inclined to write ‘very;’ your editor will delete it and the writing will be just as it should be.”

— **Mark Twain**

“Read, read, read. Read everything — trash, classics, good and bad, and see how they do it. Just like a carpenter who works as an apprentice and studies the master. Read! You’ll absorb it. Then write. If it’s good, you’ll find out. If it’s not, throw it out of the window.”

— **William Faulkner**

“In writing. Don’t use adjectives which merely tell us how you want us to feel about the thing you are describing. I mean, instead of telling us a thing was “terrible,” describe it so that we’ll be terrified. Don’t say it was “delightful”; make us say “delightful” when we’ve read the description. You see, all those words (horrifying, wonderful, hideous, exquisite) are only like saying to your readers, “Please will you do my job for me.”

— **C.S. Lewis**

“Good writing is supposed to evoke sensation in the reader – not the fact that it is raining, but the feeling of being rained upon.”

— **E. L. Doctorow**

“Story is metaphor for life and life is lived in time.”

— **Robert McKee**

“Good writing is like a windowpane.”

— **George Orwell**

“In good writing, words become one with things.”

— **Ralph Waldo Emerson**

“All good writing leaves something unexpressed.”

— **Christian Nestell Bovee**

“I believe that writing is derivative. I think good writing comes from good reading.”

— **Charles Kuralt**

“It may be observed of good writing, as of good blood, that it is much easier to say what it is composed of than to compose it.”

— **Charles Caleb Colton**

“The problems of the human heart in conflict with itself... alone can make good writing because only that is worth writing about, worth the agony and the sweat.”

— **William Faulkner**

“Good writing can be defined as having something to say and saying it well. When one has nothing to say, one should remain silent. Silence is always beautiful at such times.”

— **Edward Abbey**

“You do an awful lot of bad writing in order to do any good writing. Incredibly bad. I think it would be very interesting to make a collection of some of the worst writing by good writers.”

— **William S. Burroughs**

“By the time I am nearing the end of a story, the first part will have been reread and altered and corrected at least one hundred and fifty times. I am suspicious of both facility and speed. Good writing is essentially rewriting. I am positive of this.”

— **Roald Dahl**

“You don’t write about the horrors of war. No. You write about a kid’s burnt socks lying in the road.”

— **Richard Price**

“A good novel tells us the truth about its hero; but a bad novel tells us the truth about its author.”

— **G.K. Chesterton**

“The most valuable of all talents is that of never using two words when one will do.”

— **Thomas Jefferson**

“Your intuition knows what to write, so get out of the way.”

— **Ray Bradbury**

“Easy reading is damn hard writing.”

— **Voltaire**

“It’s not wise to violate the rules until you know how to observe them.”

— **T.S. Eliot**

“If you don’t have time to read, you don’t have the time (or the tools) to write. Simple as that.”

— **Grace Paley**

“What is the essence of the art of writing? Part One: Have something to say. Part Two: Say it well.”

— **Edward Abbey**

(from: <https://jerichowriters.com/99-quotes-about-writing-by-the-worlds-greatest-writers/>)