

## TECHNICAL WRITING REVIEWER

### THE WRITING PROCESS AND ITS RUDIMENTS

What is Writing?

- Writing is a powerful communication that presents someone's ideas

(Kinneavy & Warner, 1993).

- Writing is another physical and mental activities engaged in various

purposes (Mazon).

- The act or art of forming visible letters or characters specifically

(Merriam-Webster's Dictionary).

### BASIC THINGS TO CONSIDER

Topic

Audience

Purpose

Know Your Target Audience

- Why I am writing for this audience? Do I want to inform or persuade them? Do I need to stir their emotions?
- What will this particular audience be looking for or find interesting?
- Do I have to use a simple or more complex vocabulary?

### STAGES OF WRITING

1. Prewriting
2. Actual Writing
3. Post writing

**Prewriting**

- Free writing – You just let your mind go and write. Write any ideas, images, or details that come to your mind without stopping to think about your grammar, spelling or punctuation.
- Brainstorming – It is about generating ideas by free association. You can brainstorm alone, with a partner, or in a group. You can write any subject or word and jot down every idea that comes to your mind.
- Clustering – It is similar to brainstorming, but it is more visual and shows connections between ideas. It is also called “webbing”. It generally breaks a subject into smaller parts, so it's good both for finding topics and gathering information.
- Asking Questions – Using the 5w How questions would enable you to generate more ideas.
- Using Your Five Senses – Observing details of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch can improve your writing with vivid or clear sensory details.

### Actual Writing

- Writing the first draft and second draft
- Understanding unity and coherence
- Developing methods of discussion
- Organizing ideas

### Post Writing

- Proofreading
- Editing
- Revising

### POINTS TO CONSIDER DURING THE REVISION

1. Structure
2. Content
3. Mechanics
4. Revision
5. Process

When proofreading:

- Focus on one line at a time.
- Try peer proofreading.
- Use a dictionary for the correct spelling of your words.
- Use revising and proofreading symbols to mark changes.

Be reminded of the following principles:

1. Use concrete and specific words.
2. Prefer active over passive voice.
3. Avoid word redundancy.
4. Use correct punctuation marks.
5. Follow the grammar rules.
6. Observe the rules on capitalization.

### **PARTS OF SPEECH**

- Nouns
- Pronouns
- Verbs
- Adjectives
- Adverbs
- Prepositions
- Conjunctions
- Interjections

“A professional writer is an amateur who didn’t quit.”

~ Richard Bach

### **THE BASICS OF TECHNICAL WRITING**

Technical Writing

What is Technical Writing?

- It is a written communication that transmits complex information to the readers in a clear and concise manner.
- It is a formal form of writing that requires the writer’s special knowledge and skills.
- It is readercentered, which is aimed at providing a reader with clear,

accurate, and accessible information.

- It is used in the technical fields like business, engineering, government, technology, and medicine.

### **Functions/ Purposes**

- To inform
- To persuade
- To analyze and interpret
- To define
- To explain
- To propose
- To instruct

### **Basic Principles**

- Understand the reader.
- Know the purpose.
- Know the subject matter.
- Organize the material.
- Write objectively.
- Use a correct format.
- Adopt the ethical standards.

### **Attributes of Technical Writing**

- Clear – must be understandable, free from any ambiguity
- Complete – contains all necessary information the reader will need to know in order to understand the situation
- Concise – needs to be brief as possible while remaining clear and complete
- Correct should be free of grammatical and mechanical errors
- Accessible should be organized and formatted so that readers can find the specific information they require without having to read the entire document
- Accurate must not contain any factual errors

### **Other Characteristics**

- Purposive
- Objective

- Complex
- Readerfocused
- Unemotional

### **Roles of the Technical Writer**

- Must have the insights and perceptiveness.
- Must understand the nature of his work.
- Must be equipped with the technical writing ability and technical expertise.
- Must have the capability to grasp, analyze, and interpret unexpected events.
- Must have the ability to state facts clearly and objectively.

### **Hallmarks of an Effective Technical Writer**

(Mosura and Tenorio, 1999)

- Resourceful
- Energetic
- Patient
- Observant
- Responsible
- Trustworthy
- Evaluative
- Responsive

### **Technical Writing vs. Journalism**

#### **Journalism**

Purpose: to instruct, inform, and propose

Target Readers: public

Message Approach: intentional and purposive  
informative, technical, journalistic

### **TECHNICAL WRITING VS. CREATIVE WRITING**

#### **Technical Writing**

- memos, business letters, reports, etc.
- objective and factual
- unemotional
- must be concrete and specific
- impersonal

#### **Creative Writing**

- poems, stories, plays
- subjective and fictional
- emotional
- ambiguous, vague
- personal

#### **Important Things to Consider:**

- Avoid wordy expressions.

Examples:

1) comply with - follow

2) due to the fact - because

3) as well as - and/also

4) at all times - always

5) in connection with- about

- Watch out for redundancies.

1) terrible tragedy

6) true facts

2) very unique

7) past history

3) final outcome

8) personal opinion

4) small in size  
varieties

9) different

5) advanced planning

10) basic essentials

- Use simple language.

1) advocate – support

6) bona fide - real

2) accomplish- do  
right

7) prerogative -

3) alternative – choice  
spread

8) proliferation -

4) amendment – change  
recover

9) recuperate -

5) attempt - try  
strict

10) stringent -

- Use the Active Voice.

1) The instrument was carefully calibrated by the technologist.

The technologist carefully calibrated the instrument.

2) The applicant was interviewed by the manager.

The manager interviewed the applicant.

3) The project proposal has been approved by the board.

The board has approved the project proposal.

### **EXAMPLES OF TECHNICAL**

#### Writing Outputs

- business letter – It is a formal written communication used to transact business that cannot be conveniently conducted orally.
- brochure – It is a pamphlet or an informative printed material given to a customer to convince him/her to take action on the company's services, ideas, or products being offered.
- proposal – It is written to give suggestions for actions or new projects/programs involving change or offering solutions to problems.
- progress report – It contains an account of what has been accomplished on a project over a specific period/ time, or what may be expected in the next period.
- instruction/user manual – It contains important directions/instructions on the

proper usage of a particular technical equipment, appliance, or gadget.

- contract – It is a formal agreement between two or more persons, organizations, or parties to do something on mutually agreed terms.

- abstract – It is a summarized form of a long piece of writing that provides a brief overview of its contents.

- feasibility report – It presents facts and information intended to let the target reader realize that the proposed project or plan is financially, economically, and technically significant, and also beneficial and feasible.

- memorandum – It is a type of written communication circulated within the company or organization and its branches. It is also used to disseminate an important message or information on a particular subject.

- research report – It is a detailed report, discussion, and interpretation of the findings of an investigation/ problem.

- technical paper – It is a research paper written for a professional journal or magazine. Technical papers usually describe a theory or new development.

- laboratory report – It is a record of procedures and results of laboratory tests. It describes the equipment utilized, the procedures used, the results of tests, the conclusion, and the recommendation.

- travel report – It is an account of a business or professional trip. It records specific and significant places, events, conversations, and people met. It attempts to answer the questions where, when, what, why, and how.

- survey report – It is a thorough study of a particular subject. Some topics are potential markets for products, labor policies, public opinions, and community resources.

- graphic aids – It refers to all pictures, graphs, diagrams, and other materials used in illustrating important details in a report.

- specifications – It contains detailed information about performance courses, materials for construction, theory of

operations, sample calculations, tables, and operating data and information.

- monograph –It is a thorough textbook treatment that requires full illustration and documentation.
- policy – It is a plan or course of action adopted or created by an individual, government, organization, business, or industry for making good decisions.

### Basic Techniques

#### PARAGRAPH DEVELOPMENT TECHNIQUES

- Definition (formal and informal)
- Description (mechanism and process)
- Classification
- Comparison and Contrast
- Cause and effect
- Analogy
- Interpretation

#### Definition

- The need for defining occurs when the report uses technical terms which are not familiar to the reader or when common terms are used in a special way.
- It clarifies a specific term that may be unfamiliar to the audience.
- Definition is essential to clarity and accuracy.

**Formal Definition** - It is an equation-like statement which is composed of three principal parts: the species, the genus, and the differentia.

- SPECIES is the subject of the definition/the term being defined.
- GENUS is the family or class to which the species belongs.
- DIFFERENTIA is the part of the statement in which the particular species' distinguishing traits, qualities, are pointed out so that it is set apart from other species which comprise the genus.

**Species:** Brazing

**Genus;** a welding process

**Differentia;** that joins two or more nonferrous metals by heating them to a temperature above 450°C.

#### More Examples

1) A somniloquist is a person who talks while asleep.

2) A barometer is an instrument that measures atmospheric pressure.

3) A thermometer is an instrument that measures temperature.

4) A drift meter is an instrument used to measure the alignment or

position of an object over time.

5) Skimming is a reading technique that allows the person to quickly

glance at a text or key words to gain an overview of the topic.

#### Guidelines in Using the Formal Definition:

- Give only one meaning to the term.
- Put the term in a genus or class that is familiar to your audience or readers.
- Prevent the reader from thinking of many comparable and contrasting features of the term in relation to others by using a specific class rather than a general class.
- Use positive words in stating the differentia.
- Avoid giving a bias or subjective definition.

#### Erroneous Ways of Defining a Term through

the Formal Method

- Tautology or “circular definition” A good formal definition does not make a term appear twice in the sentence.

Examples: A teacher is one who teaches.

Personality is a word that refers to one's personal traits.

- Analogy or Figurative Definition Instead of giving additional information about the word, you just compare it to other terms.

Examples: The mouse of a computer looks like a rat.

A camera is similar to your eyes when it operates.

- Negative or "nonot definition" –It simply presents the term as the opposite of another term.

Examples: A servant is not a boss of a group.

A bolo is not a knife.

- It is "when" or "where definition"–The use of "where" and "when" after the linking verb "is" does not complement the term.

Examples: A university is where one earns a degree to mark an academic achievement.

Enrollment is when a person goes to school and lets a school official list down his or her name in the registration form.

- Informal Definition This is an amplified or extended definition. This is an adequate explanation of the "unfamiliar" in technical writing.
- There are occasions when more than a word, phrase, clause or a sentence is needed in order to ensure a reader's understanding of a thing.
- Expanded or amplified definition makes your writing more comprehensive and meaningful.
- It explores a number of qualities of the item being defined.

Most Common Methods

- Explanation of use or function

- Description of parts
- Comparison and contrast
- Origin of the word
- Examples
- Negation
- Basic operating principles

## DESCRIPTION

- Description is a way of writing about the way things appear, the way they are constructed, and the way they act/function.
- It provides your readers a detailed account of an object, process, or a system.
- "The key to effective description is the accurate presentation of details, whether for simple or complex descriptions".
- Description of mechanism –deals with the physical nature of whatever is being discussed, the purpose of the device, and how its parts work either separately or with one another. It uses spatial or logical order.
- "A mechanism is a system of interconnected parts that operate and function properly."
- When describing a complex mechanism, it is necessary to divide it into parts.

## How to develop your discussion?

### 1) Introduction

name of the device or tool

purpose, function, or usage

### 2) Body/ Description of parts

shape, size, materials, relationship to other parts, methods of attachment

### 3) Conclusion

Example

Example

- Description of a process—deals with processes and procedures and its characteristics by the detailing of a series of steps. It always uses chronological (time) order. The use of visual aids particularly flowsheets can effectively show the steps in an extensive process.
- Description of a process is classified into two—directional or instructional and informational

1) **Directional**— comes in the form of directions or instructions

(imperative sentences)

2) **Informational**—provides pieces of information (declarative sentences)

### **CLASSIFICATION**

- It is a useful technique that helps break or narrow down complex information into understandable categories.
- Its function is to discuss and clarify relationships and distinctions among concepts or ideas that are important for the readers to understand.
- It is an orderly and systematic arrangement of the related things that follow a governing principle or basis.
- It explains and categorizes ideas clearly and logically.

### **Functions**

- Simplifies complex information or ideas
- Enhances the organization of ideas
- Helps the reader understand the topic
- Provides logical explanations
- Demonstrates and emphasizes important relationships between and among items

### **Points to Consider**

- Clarify what is being classified.
- Use a simple principle of classification.
- Complete the details for your classification.

- Present and organize your information clearly and logically.
- Use clear definitions for categories/types.

### **Examples of Topics**

- Social Issues
- Political Issues
- Categories of Journalism
- Social Media Platforms
- Types of Academic Writing
- Pollution

### **COMPARISON AND CONTRAST**

It is a process of comparing concepts, things and places with each other and pointing out their differences.

- It is one of the most useful and common methods in organizing information or ideas.
- Comparison is used for things that have similar traits but belong to different classes.
- Contrast is used in identifying the differences between two things, situations, places, or persons.
- Comparisons can be done figuratively or literally.
- It involves a discussion of the subject in relation to some other subjects, showing both similarities and differences as the article goes along. It may include a value judgment based on the comparison.
- Comparison and contrast is not just a neutral account of contrasting features or to bring out distinctions or differences. But it is used to save a persuasive objective.

Example: You want to let the readers know that taking a plane is much more comfortable and convenient than traveling by ship.

### **CAUSE AND EFFECT**

It aims to explain why something occurs or happens.

- It seeks to determine reasons and predict results.

- This is further developed using the method of analysis.
- Cause/effect paragraphs generally follow basic paragraph format. They begin with a topic sentence and this sentence is followed by specific supporting details..

Here are some common conjunctions that can be used to express cause and effect:

- since
- as a result
- because of + noun phrase
- because
- therefore
- due to + noun phrase
- consequently
- for this reason
- so

### **ANALOGY**

- It is a particular kind of comparison by which one subject is discussed according to terms which apply to the other.
- An analogy is seen to be essentially an expression of relationship between two different things, but between two things which have more than one likeness.
- reasoning or explaining from parallel cases

### **INTERPRETATION**

- It is commonly used in formal reports such as theses and dissertations.
- It is the use or application of your creative and logical thinking.
- It is one of the most important elements in technical writing.
- It is creative, requiring both knowledge and imagination.
- It is simply the study of logic and the art of communication.

Steps:

- Present the basic problem in concise form
- Define unfamiliar terms

- Distinguish between the primary problem and subordinate problems
- Distinguish between what is known and what remains to be found
- Provide background information

Questions that arise in the interpretation:

1. What is to be found?
2. How is the evidence obtained?
3. How will the interpretation be organized?

### **WHAT IS A BUSINESS LETTER?**

A business letter is a formal letter used for business-to-business, business-to-client, or client-to-business correspondence.

- A business letter is more formal than a personal letter. It should have a margin of at least one inch on all four edges. It is always written on 8½"x11" (or metric equivalent) unlined stationery.

### **Purposes/Functions of Business Letters**

- Business transactions
- Inquiry
- Order
- Job Application
- Resignation
- Complaint

Characteristics of Business Letters

(7 Cs of Business Letters)

- Concise
- Correct
- Complete
- Clear
- Concrete
- Considerate
- Courteous

Seven (7) Basic Parts

- Heading
- Date/Date Line
- Inside Address

- Salutation
- Body of the Letter
- Complimentary Close
- Signature

#### Examples of Business Letters

- Inquiry
- Order
- Sales
- Complaint
- Adjustment
- Resignation
- Application

#### Different Formats

- Full Block – All information are flushed against the left margin and all paragraphs are not indented. It is the most common format used in business letters.
- ModifiedBlock –The body of the letter and the sender's and recipient's addresses are left justified and single-spaced, but the date, complimentary close, and the signature are typed/written at the center or right.
- SemiBlock This is the least used style. It is much like the modified block style except that each paragraph is indented instead of left -justified.