



# TECHNICAL WRITING

## CHAPTER 1: TECHNICAL WRITING

**Instructors:**

**Dr. Yazan Al-Zain**

**Eng. Lamees Al-Durgham**

**Eng. Raghad Hemeimat**

**Eng. Rawan Tarawneh**

# INTRODUCTION

- Technical writing is about the kind of writing that “aims to get work done, to change people by changing the way they do things”.
- Writing is a key part of all professional occupations.
- “The most critical skill required in today’s business world is the ability to communicate, both verbally and in writing. Effective communication has a direct impact on one’s potential within an organization” (Collins).



# TECHNICAL WRITING ENABLES READERS TO ACT

- Technical writing is the practical writing that people do as a part of their job.
  - It is writing that authors use to empower readers by preparing them for and moving them toward effective action.
  - Effective action: readers act in a way that satisfies their needs.
  - Example 1: you need an instruction manual to assemble a table delivered in pieces.
  - Example 2: “site reports” helps a manager to decide whether or not to continue manufacturing a certain product.



# TECHNICAL WRITING OCCURS WITHIN A COMMUNITY

- Action occurs with a community, a loosely or closely connected group of people with a common interest.
- Belonging to a community affects the way members expect one another to act.
  - Example 1: when I buy the table I temporarily join a team, expecting clear support from others to achieve a useful, assembled table.
    - I expect that those others will give me a set of instructions presented in a way that will help me assemble the table.
    - The instructions are the “GLUE” that joins us together.



# TECHNICAL WRITING OCCURS WITHIN A COMMUNITY

- Example 2: if you and I are employees of a company, we belong to the “community” of the company.
  - We depend on each other to get our work done.
  - As a part of my responsibilities, I may job sites to investigate items our company has installed.
  - As a part of your responsibilities, you may oversee installations, interact with clients and make decisions about the effectiveness of “our” product lines.



# TECHNICAL WRITING OCCURS WITHIN A COMMUNITY

- Example 2: cont.
  - When I visit a particular site, I perform research to carry out some of my responsibilities.
  - I examine all the appropriate items, speak to the appropriate people, and take appropriate notes.
  - However, my responsibilities also include enabling you to carry out your responsibilities.
  - So, when I return from the site visit, I will write a memo that will enable you to act after you read it.



# TECHNICAL WRITING OCCURS WITHIN A COMMUNITY

We write in order  
to help someone  
else act

- Example 2: cont.
  - As I write the memo, “community” values about writing affect the way I write.
  - I know that you expect memos to appear in a certain format because the company has a policy about format.
  - I know, too, that you need the information I have found.
  - Therefore, I will write the memo in the tradition that a person in this company expects, briefly but succinctly explaining what I found.
  - You will read the memo, grasp what I have done, and use it in doing your job.
  - You in turn may have to rewrite the material into a report to give to your supervisor, enabling him/her to interact, and so on.



# TECHNICAL WRITING HAS A DEFINITE PURPOSE

- Technical writers enable their readers to act in 3 ways: by **informing**, by instructing, and by persuading.
- To carry out job responsibilities, people must supply or receive information constantly.
  - They need to or explain the scheduled time for meeting, the physical description of a new machine, the steps in a process, etc.





# TECHNICAL WRITING HAS A DEFINITE PURPOSE

- Technical writers enable their readers to act in 3 ways: by informing, by **instructing**, and by persuading.
- Writers instruct when they give readers directions for using equipment and for performing duties.
  - Writing enables consumers to use their new purchase.
  - Writing tells medical personnel exactly what to do when a patient has a heart attack.



# TECHNICAL WRITING HAS A DEFINITE PURPOSE

- Technical writers enable their readers to act in 3 ways: by informing, by instructing, and by **persuading**.
- Writers persuade readers with cogent reasons to follow a particular course of action.
  - One writer, for example, persuades readers to accept site A, not site B for a factory.
  - Another writer describes a bottleneck problem in a production process in order to persuade readers to implement a particular solution.



# TECHNICAL WRITING USES SPECIFIC TECHNIQUES

- To create a message that allows you to act, I must help you grasp what I am giving you.
- Time-honored practice has identified 4 actions you can take to make a clear communication exchange.
  - Engage an audience's needs.
  - Use plain and objective language.
  - Present the page in a dramatic way.
  - Use visual aids.



# TECHNICAL WRITING USES SPECIFIC TECHNIQUES — *ENGAGE AN AUDIENCE'S NEEDS*

- Technical writers engage a specific audience that has specific needs.
  - The manager who needs to hear the results of the site visit receives the memo that explains them
  - The customer who must operate a machine will receive the manual that explains how to do it.
- A reader receives a document because he/she plays a role in a certain situation.
- The writer's goal is to satisfy the audience's needs.



## TECHNICAL WRITING USES SPECIFIC TECHNIQUES — *USE PLAIN AND OBJECTIVE LANGUAGE*

- Technical writers use plain, objective language and terminology that the audience understand.
- Technical writers use words and sentence structures that focus the reader's attention on the relevant facts
  - Because their purpose is to inform, instruct, or persuade a reader about a specific matter.
- The words should not prompt readers to make emotional, unusual, or unreasonable interpretations about the subject.



# TECHNICAL WRITING USES SPECIFIC TECHNIQUES — *PRESENT THE PAGE IN A DRAMATIC WAY*

- Technical writers make their documents presentational.
  - So that, readers can assimilate information at a glance.
- Structure of document must be made obvious and the format easy to read.
  - “Tell them what you are going to say, then say it”.
    - At the beginning of the document, name the topic and list its subdivisions.
  - Arrange the page in chunks, and employ emphasizing devices like boldfacing.



# TECHNICAL WRITING USES SPECIFIC TECHNIQUES — *USE VISUAL AIDS*

- Technical writing communicates visually with graphs, tables, and drawings.
- Documents that explain experiments or projects almost always includes tables or graphs.
- Manuals and sets of instructions rely heavily on drawings and photographs.
- Feasibility reports often include maps of sites.



# TECHNICAL WRITING USES SPECIFIC TECHNIQUES

Read the example of page 9





# TECHNICAL WRITING IS ETHICAL

- Technical writing is an **ethical endeavor**.
  - Writers must follow accepted principles of moral conduct “take responsibility for your own writing”.
- You take responsibility because your readers trust you.
- In the text of your document, you must tell the truth, and make sure your audience understands your message.
  - Use language and visuals with precision; use format honestly; use simple, direct expression of ideas; and credit the ideas or work of others.



# TECHNICAL WRITING IS ETHICAL

- Read paragraphs of page 12 through page 14.

