Key Characteristics of Technical Writing

Technical writing, just as any other form of writing, has certain characteristics which distinguish it from other types of writing. It is very different from writing opinion pieces, essays, prose, non-fiction, or fiction. Technical documents are written in a [business writing](https://grammar.yourdictionary.com/style-and-usage/types-of-business-communication-writing.html) style rather than one that is academic or creative in nature.

* **clear -** Technical writing presents information clearly, leaving little to no room for misunderstanding. It requires the use of [clear, concise sentences](https://grammar.yourdictionary.com/grammar/writing/10-tips-for-writing-clear-concise-sentences.html).
* **straightforward**- This type of writing is straightforward; it requires relaying information in a way that is direct and straight to the point, without the use of [literary devices](https://examples.yourdictionary.com/basic-types-of-literary-devices.html).
* **precise -**The language used in technical writing should be very precise, describing objects and procedures in an exact manner.
* **easily understood -** Effective technical writers avoid words that people may not understand and will avoid an eloquent writing style.
* **denotative meanings**- This type of writing relies on the [denotative meanings](https://examples.yourdictionary.com/examples-of-denotation.html) of words to ensure that misunderstandings don’t occur due to differing [interpretations based on connotation](https://examples.yourdictionary.com/connotation-examples.html).
* **detailed** - Technical writing is very detailed and informative, leaving nothing to the imagination. The perfect example of technical writing is a textbook. Most textbooks describe the subject matter as fully as possible.
* **very structured** - Technical writing is very structured. This type of writing needs to have an obvious composition that makes it easy for readers to follow along. The audience needs to be able to rely on technical writing for step-by-step instructions.
* **skimmable** - Technical documentation should be designed with skimmability in mind, so it’s easy for readers to scan through the full document and easily find information they need. Technical writers should incorporate meaningful, descriptive headings and include a thorough table of contents and/or index.
* **problem-solving focus** - Technical documents should be created with problem solving in mind. Readers use these documents to learn how to perform certain tasks or gain technical information, so they should be easy to follow and organized in a way that’s easy to refer back to as questions come up.

Documents that Use Technical Writing

Many types of documents are written in a technical writing style. Technical writing is found everywhere.

* **user manuals** - Documents that provide instructions, such as [user manuals](https://grammar.yourdictionary.com/grammar-rules-and-tips/tips-on-writing-user-manuals.html), are a perfect example of technical writing. When readers open a user manual, their goal is to be informed about the product so they can use it correctly and as efficiently as possible.
* **lab reports** - Lab reports are another example of technical writing. The main purpose of a lab report is to explain the occurrences in a lab so that others will be able to gain information.
* **driving directions -**Even driving directions can be considered a type of technical writing. Their goal is to clearly and efficiently provide instructions on how to go from point A to point B.

Explore more [examples of technical writing](https://examples.yourdictionary.com/technical-writing-examples.html) to discover other types of documents that use this type of writing.

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