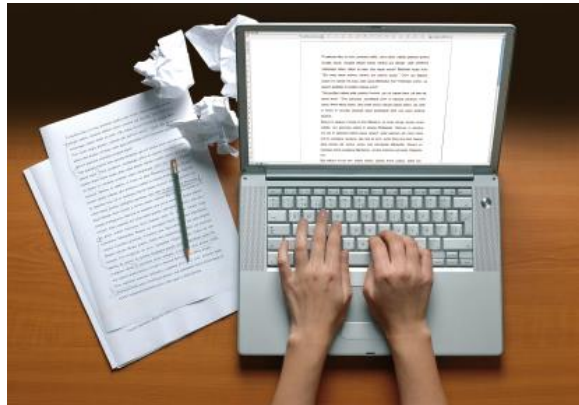# Definition of Technical Writing

Technical writing is a type of writing where the author is writing about a particular subject that requires direction, instruction, or explanation. This style of writing has a very different purpose and different characteristics than other writing styles such as creative writing, academic writing or business writing.

Uses for Technical Writing

Technical writing is straightforward, easy to understand explanations and/or instructions dealing with a particular subject. It is an efficient and clear way of explaining something and how it works.

The subject of technical writing can either be:

- **Tangible** - Something that can be seen or touched, such as a computer or software program, or information on how to assemble a piece of furniture.
- **Abstract -** Something that involved a series of steps that aren't related to a tangible object. One example of this might be steps required to complete an office process.

Some examples of technical writing include:

- Instruction manuals
- Policy manuals
- Process manuals
- User manuals
- Reports of analysis
- Instructions for assembling a product
- A summarization of a long report that highlights and shortens the most important elements

Tips for Good Technical Writing

Regardless of the type of document which is written, technical writing requires the writer to follow the properties of knowing their audience, writing in a clear, non-personal style and doing extensive research on the topic. By including these properties, the writer can create clear instructions and explanations for the reader.

- **Know your audience.** An expert in the field will understand certain abbreviations, acronyms, and lingo that directly applies to such a field. The novice will not understand in the same manner and, therefore, every detail must be explained and spelled out for them.

- **Use an impersonal style**. Write from a third person perspective, like a teacher instructing a student. Any opinions should be omitted.

- **The writing should be straightforward,** to the point, and as simple as possible to make sure the reader understands the process or instruction. This at times may appear as simply a list of steps to take to achieve the desired goal or may be a short or lengthy explanation of a concept or abstract idea.

- **Know how to research**. Gather information from a number of sources, understand the information gathered so that it can be analyzed thoroughly, and then put the information into an easy to understand format to instruct those who read it. The more inexperienced your audience, the more information you will need to gather and explain.

- **Be thorough** in description and provide enough detail to make your points; but, you also have to consider that you need to use an economy of words so that you do not bore your reader with gratuitous details.

A good technical writer can make a difficult task easy and can quickly explain a complex piece of information.