

# Summary and review of the "technical communication" by mike markel and stuart a. ...

[Sociology](#), [Communication](#)



## Introduction to Technical Communication

A technical communicator is a technical writer that uses their existing skills and knowledge to compose documents that fulfill a certain purpose, such as to inform or persuade. Authors Markel and Selber define a technical communicator as “ a person whose main job is to produce documents such as manuals, reports, and websites”. This definition clarifies that a technical communicator is an individual with the purpose of creating documents that revolves around a specific purpose to enhance professional communication. Technical communicators communicate technical information through various sources and documents and must communicate their given information based on a specific purpose and audience.

There are a total of nine measures of excellence in technical communication, three of which are clarity, conciseness, and correctness. Clarity is a significant aspect of technical documents because lack of clarity in a document can cause impactful harm. For instance, a technical communicator that creates an instruction manual for assembling a blender with unclear directions could cause negative effects on consumers. Conciseness is an important aspect of technical documents because it allows the audience to efficiently absorb a significant amount of content. Correctness is a characteristic of technical documents that is significant because it indicates competence of the document's author, content, and the entire document itself. The clarity, conciseness, and correctness are all characteristics that identify accomplished technical documents because they establish the professionalism of the document.

In chapter one, correctness is identified as one of nine measures of excellence in technical documents. The correctness of a technical document is characterized by how the content “ adheres to the conventions of grammar, punctuation, spelling, mechanics, and usage”. Correctness refers to the accuracy of the content of a document in compliance with the established standards of English. The precision of the language in a document’s content allows the audience to determine if the text is respectable and acceptable.

Among the provided statements about technical communication, choice B is incorrect. While email does allow for convenient communication, the use of email does not lessen the significance and need for documentation in writing. Professional technical communication should not be conducted entirely through electronic mail, because physical documentation in writing allows for many important benefits. Written documentation is simple to revise and alter for optimal communication, so the statement, “ Because of email, organizations do not need to document as much in writing,” has proven to be incorrect in technical communication.

Among the following suggestions, the alteration that will help the writer improve the excerpt the most would be choice B. By replacing vague phrases, like “ a number of” and “ most of these interviewees” with specific, detailed information, the audience will be able to identify the purpose of the content. Markel and Selber state that the objective of an author “ is to produce a document that conveys a single meaning the reader can understand easily”. By specifying the details of the content of the excerpt, it

will clarify the author's purpose and the audience will be able to identify and accept the conclusion of the document. The suggestion to " Improve the clarity of sentence 2 by replacing phrases such as " a number of" and " most of these interviewees" with more specific information," will be the most impactful and beneficial improvement.

### Understanding Ethical and Legal Considerations

One of the four other guidelines governing the fair use exemption is " the purpose and character of the use, especially whether the use is for profit". This is a guideline that should be taken into consideration when there is a conflict over fair use as it concerns the purpose of the use of copyrighted work, whether it is for commercial use or for non-profit purposes. Another guideline that is legally considered in disputes concerning fair use is " the amount and substantiality of the portion of the work used".

It is significant to consider the exact fraction of a copyrighted work being used because the importance or amount of copyrighted content being borrowed must be considered when determining if it is fair use for a vast amount of a work or the most important part of the copyrighted work. The symbol depicted in the question stands for registered trademark. As identified by authors Martel and Selber, " A registered trademark is a word, phrase, name, or symbol that the company has registered with the US patent and trademark office". A company must register a trademark in a long, grueling process that will ensure legal protection, which does not make the use of the trademark symbol necessary. However, the use of the symbol

allows the said company to take immediate legal action, as the registered trademark only gives that specific company the ability to use it.

In chapter 2, it is stated that ethicist Manuel Velazquez insisted that whistleblowing is justified on three conditions, one of which is if solid evidence exists of the organization doing something that is hurting or will hurt other parties. In addition to that condition, the two other conditions to justify whistleblowing is if you have already attempted to resolve the issue through internal channels and if it is logically definite that the whistleblowing will prevent or halt any wrongdoing. Whistleblowing is reasonable if previous attempts to settle the issue had already been made and failed through internal channels. It is also justifiable to whistle blow if it will definitely hinder existing or future wrongdoing.

In response to the statement, it can be concluded that choice C identifies the moral standard being violated. Using the process of elimination, it is clear that justice is the moral standard being violated in the provided scenario. Due to the low state revenues, the legislature funds proportionately to education by 40%, yet decreases the subsidies of farmers by merely 20%, it is a demonstration of the lack of representation for education. It is a clear injustice when economic factors are valued over educational factors.

Upon examination of the provided options, the best choice would be option A. You should rewrite the introductory materials yourself because you are unable to identify the author of the existing portion of introductory materials. Due to your inability to identify the writer, you are unable to officially give

credit to the actual author, therefore the other options are ethically wrong. By rewriting the introductory materials yourself, you are able to ensure that all parties involved do not violate ethical or legal standards.

### Writing Technical Documents

In chapter 3, Markel and Selber mention three questions to consider in your analysis of the audience, during the planning process. One of the three questions to consider is: What are your reader's expectations? Another question to consider, during the planning process when analyzing your audience, is: What are your reader's attitudes and expectations? It is significant to consider what the audience will expect from the content of a document, as well as how they will react to the content.

When revising technical documents for technical communication, it is recommended to seek assistance from others. While it is already clarified that subject matter experts are the first people to turn to for assistance on revision, there are actually two types of people to turn to for help. The other type of reviewer actually includes 2 types of audience members. This type of reviewer consists of actual users of your existing document and prospective users of the future, revised version of the document.

When you are drafting a document, there will be various occasions where you come to an item that you do not comprehend. There are various techniques to follow when you are approached by an issue in the middle of drafting a document. You should acknowledge the criticism of experts that

review your draft. You should consider conducting additional research to compile an accurate and acceptable information.

Upon consideration of the provided scenario and the given options, choice A is suggested. If a team of writers was to regularly collaborate to produce technical reports that have identical design specifications, it is best to use the word processing tool of styles feature. Style features, much like templates, save time because various specifications have already been incorporated into the design. This word processing tool “ helps to ensure consistency, especially in collaborative documents, and makes it easy to automatically change every instance of a style in your document when you revise”. Upon consideration of the given scenario, the correct answer would be false. If you do not know whether to write too, two, or to, it would wrong to use the spell checker tool, as it is not a trustworthy tool. Technical writers should not rely on the spell checker tool, as it can often be wrong. To ensure that that the ensure that the content of your draft is correct and clear, it is vital to effectively proofread, rather than accepting the spell checker recommendations.

### Writing Collaboratively

In chapter 4, several disadvantages of collaboration are listed to inform readers of the possible downsides of collaborating with others. One of the disadvantages of collaboration mentioned in chapter 4 is: collaboration can lead to interpersonal conflict. This disadvantage refers to the common conflict that comes with working with multiple people. When several people

collaborate to compose a single document, the differences in thoughts from various people often lead to tension and disagreements among group members.

Markel and Selber introduce three extremely helpful features offered by word processors that are often useful when collaborating with others. One of these helpful features is the comment feature, which allows the readers of a work to comment on the file. The readers can add comments and critiques to specific portions of files for the author to read. This is a communication tool that improves the efficiency of editing on collaboration projects.

According to the content concerning culture and collaboration in chapter 4, the ways in which the behavior of collaborating team members is affected by cultural differences are identified. Reluctance to admit to confusion or the need for clarification is one of the behaviors that can result from cultural differences among team members. The barrier between diverse cultures may cause students to exhibit hesitant behavior where they are unable to express their confusion concerning the subject. This type of behavior hinders the communication among the group members and negatively affects the outcome of the final product.

In the scenario where a project manager reviews and electronic file is written by a group member and is unable to comprehend the meaning of a specific term, the correct plan of action would be choice A. It is the best course of action to use the comment feature of the word processor and ask the other group member, " Will the reader understand this term?" By utilizing this



word processing feature, the changes can immediately be made by the author in response to the comment. This tool is the most convenient form of communication that allows for quick critiquing and revision.

In this scenario where a writing team has a long history of successfully collaborating on documents and understanding one another, the correct choice would be choice B. In this scenario, the writing team can most likely stop meeting face-to-face each week and still continue to compose effective technical documents. Various electronic tools allow the group members to communicate and effectively revise their documents. Social media and various electronic tools, such as word processing tools and video conferencing, allow the group to remain productive in their work without in-person interaction.

### Analyzing Your Audience and Purpose

It is false to focus primarily on the type of academic degree that a person has earned when considering your audience's education. While it the type of academic degree that an audience member has earned is a factor to consider, that should not be the primary focus when considering the education of your audience. There are various aspects to consider when thinking of your audience, rather than just the type of the degree they earned. Along with the reader's education, their professional experience, job responsibility, reading skill, cultural characteristics, personal characteristics, and personal preferences should also be considered.

According to the content of chapter 5, once you have completed the analysis of your audience and your purpose, you should consider gaining the approval of management. Therefore, the correct answer is choice C, which is to receive management's approval. As stated by Markel and Selber, "If you have misunderstood what your supervisor wants, it is far easier to fix the problem at this early stage". In order to proceed further into a specific project, you must earn the go-ahead from a higher-up to ensure that you are maintaining the correct focus on the objective of your assignment. 9. In addition to considering the reader's education, chapter 5 suggests that it is important to consider the other identified factors of readers. One of the individual characteristics of the audience members to consider, as mentioned in chapter 5, is the reader's professional experience. The professional career experiences of the audience members clarify their areas of expertise, which the author can appeal to. With the knowledge of the reader's area of expertise, the author will be able to determine the reader's expectations and attitudes.

There may be various purposes that management has in mind when examining your documents, however among the following statements, choice D accurately describes the purposes he or she might have in mind. Choice A suggests that the purpose a supervisor may consider when reading your technical documents is to determine whether you should be assigned to this kind of project in the future, which fits the purpose of someone who holds a management position. In order to assess if you are able to continue to the next step of your project, it is logical that your supervisor would try to

determine the current status of your project, as well as how to evaluate your performance. All of the provided options correctly demonstrate the purposes a supervisor might have when looking over work.

In consideration of the provided scenario where a company has completed a user analysis for the manual that describes a new accounting system, and the audience consists of inexperienced and experienced users, the correct choice would be C. Choice C states that the manual should be written to the highest level of audience, which refers to the experienced users. Writing for the highest level of audience is how you would best accommodate your entire audience because it would appeal to impress all readers, whether they were experienced or not. A manual that was written in response to the experiences of well-educated, seasoned users would appeal to them, as well as the inexperienced users who would be left impressed by the details of the content.

### Researching Your Subject

The distinct difference between secondary research and primary research is the fact that primary research refers to research conducted by yourself and secondary research refers to research that has already been conducted by another. Markel and Selber define the two forms of research by stating, “Primary research involves discovering or creating technical information yourself. Secondary research involves finding information that other people have already discovered or created”. Secondary research is information that already exists because someone has already made the discovery and

conducted the research themselves. Primary research is the information that you must uncover or create yourself, which often follows compiling relevant information from secondary research.

There are a total of 4 phases when conducting an experiment, and the first stage is to establish a hypothesis. The second stage that follows is the phase to test the hypothesis. Testing the hypothesis requires an experimental group and a control group, as well as the alteration of variables to test your hypothesis. In order to determine if your established hypothesis is correct or not, you must maintain controlled variables where only one independent variable is being changed to test your hypothesis. Once the hypothesis is tested by conducting the experiment, you will receive results to record.

It is true that government publications are not usually listed in the indexes and abstract journals. Government documents are cataloged and organized separately from other sources, such as journals and magazines. Therefore, these government publications would not be accessible in periodical indexes or abstract journal services. Government publications are accessible through government sites and databases, as it was published by the government.