

# Technical Writing: An Introduction and Refresher

## Course details and booking form

### Duration

Two consecutive days

### Topics covered

- 1. Introduction**  
What is technical writing?; priority of skills: *technical* or *writing*?
- 2. Fundamental characteristics of good technical writing**  
The principle of communicative efficacy; the five characteristics of sound factual writing; audience-centric writing and how to write for mixed audiences; techniques for controlling vocabulary; what is *correct* writing?  
Exercise 1: correcting flaws in sample texts
- 3. Planning a technical writing project**  
Typical documentation development cycle; estimating; planning; reviewing (and tips on securing reviews); pagination tricks; dealing with printers
- 4. Writing technical reports**  
Types; section-by-section description; overcoming writers block; common problems (of logic, topic hierarchy, citations, etc.)
- 5. Writing operating and maintenance procedures**  
Techniques; tips and tricks; branching, looping, minimising steps  
Exercise 2: correcting flaws in sample procedures
- 6. The language of language**  
Parts of speech; the building blocks of language; writing effective paragraphs; things your teachers got wrong
- 7. Document design and usability**  
Templates; font choice and its effect on comprehension; the three pillars of usability
- 8. Aspects of grammar**  
Old rules best forgotten; subject-verb agreement; the *that* or *which* dilemma; comparatives and superlatives  
Exercise 3: correcting grammatical faults in sample texts
- 9. Troublesome words**  
Words easily confused; transition words; homonyms

- 10. Obstacles to readability**  
Sentence complexity; conceptual density; misplaced jargon; nominalisation; noun clustering; poor use of voice; impersonal tone; are readability formulas useful?  
Exercise 4: improving the readability of texts
- 11. Punctuation refresher**  
Senseless fads; hyphens and dashes; commas; parenthetical markers; brackets; colons; semicolons; apostrophes; etc.  
Exercise 5: correcting punctuation flaws in sample texts
- 12. New technologies**  
Single-sourcing; structured authoring; XML; Acrobat 3D; wikis
- 13. Breaking into the profession of technical writing**

### Presenters

The course was designed by Dr Geoffrey Marnell and is presented by Dr Marnell, Dr Bill Parker or Vian Lawson. Dr Marnell lectures in *Technical Writing and Editing* in the English Department at the University of Melbourne. Dr Parker has many years experience as a technical and scientific writer. Vian Lawson teaches *Instructional Writing, Corporate Writing* and *Writing for the Web* in the Department of Professional Writing and Editing at Holmesglen Institute. [Click here](#) for further details.

### Location

All classes are held in or close to the CBD.

### Cost (in AU dollars, including GST)

**Full: \$875; Early Bird: \$695; Special: \$495**

The cost includes a 300-page [comprehensive reference book](#), lunch and refreshments, a certificate, and 30-days free email support (for clarification of, or elaboration on, the topics discussed).

### Queries

Telephone 1800 601 116 (a free call) or send an email to [courses@abelard.com.au](mailto:courses@abelard.com.au)

### Make a booking

Attendee's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation\*: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal address: \_\_\_\_\_

City and postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact phone no.: \_\_\_\_\_

Payment method:  Pay on receipt of a tax invoice<sup>†</sup>, or  
 Pay now by credit card

Card type:  Visa  MasterCard  AMEX  
(A 2% processing fee applies to all credit card payments)

Card number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of card: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Select the course below. (All dates are in 2012).  
[Red dates indicate that the early bird discount period ends soon.]

- Perth:**  April 17–18  June 7–8  
**Canberra:**  February 16–17\*  April 16–17  
**Melbourne:**  March 1–2  May 7–8  
**Sydney:**  February 13–14\*  April 19–20  
**Brisbane:**  April 2–3  June 4–5  
**Adelaide:**  February 23–24\*  May 3–4

**In-house course:** We'll contact you to discuss dates and charges.

\* The early-bird discount period ends very soon.

**More courses later in 2012. Call 1800 601 116 for details.**

Fee:  Full  Early-Bird<sup>‡</sup>  Special<sup>‡</sup> Promotion Code: .....

Comments or questions: \_\_\_\_\_

\* Specify the organisation only if it will be paying for your attendance at the course.

<sup>†</sup> To secure your place in the course, your tax invoice must be paid no later than 7 calendar days before the course start date. The tax invoice will be made out in your name, or in the name of the organisation paying the invoice, and sent to the postal address specified above. Payments can be made by EFT, credit card or cheque.

<sup>‡</sup> The **Special** rate is offered to concession-card holders and full-time students. The **Early-Bird** rate is for bookings received at least 1 week before the course date, unless specified otherwise.

**CANCELLATIONS:** Full refund if cancelled with at least 10 days notice; no refund if cancelled with less than 5 days notice; otherwise 50% refund.

### Send this form by...

... fax to (03) 9596 3625 or by email to [bookings@abelard.com.au](mailto:bookings@abelard.com.au). You can also book over the telephone by calling 1800 601 116 (a free call).