

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*?; ethics and the law
2. Fundamental characteristics of good factual writing
The principle of communicative efficacy; the five characteristics of effective 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 procedures
Techniques; tips and tricks; branching, looping and minimising steps
Exercise 2: correcting flaws in sample procedures
5. Language refresher
Parts of speech; the structural components of language; writing effective paragraphs
6. Writing technical reports
Types; section-by-section description; overcoming writers block
7. Content design and usability
Document design; page design; content design; structural cues (spatial, typographical, graphical; colour and numerical); font choice and its effect on comprehension; the three pillars of usability
8. Aspects of grammar
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; abstraction and nominalisation; compressed noun phrases; over-use of passive voice; impersonal tone; readability formulas
Exercise 4: improving the readability of texts
11. Punctuation refresher
Senseless fads; hyphens and dashes; commas; parenthetical markers; brackets; colons; semicolons; etc.
Exercise 5: marking up punctuation flaws in sample texts
12. New technologies
Single-sourcing; structured authoring; XML; Acrobat 3D; wikis
13. Breaking into technical writing
Course wrap-up and Q & A

Presenters

The course was designed by Dr Geoffrey Marnell and is presented by Dr Marnell, Dr Annabel O'Connor or by Vian Lawson. Dr Marnell lectures in *Technical Writing and Editing* in the English Department at the University of Melbourne. Dr O'Connor 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 will be held in or close to the CBD. The cost includes a [comprehensive reference book](#) of approximately 315 pages, lunch and refreshments.

Cost (in AU dollars, including GST)

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

Queries

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

Make a booking

Your name: _____

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[†] 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.

[‡] The **Special** rate is offered to concession-card holders and full-time students. The **Early-Bird** rate is for bookings received at least 2 weeks 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.

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... fax to (03) 9596 3625, post to Abelard Consulting, PO Box 7188, Gardenvale, Vic., 3186, or email to courses@abelard.com.au.