

0How to use *Technical Communication*

Technical communicators know how to find and filter key information quickly. Here's an overview of some of the major components of this book to give you an edge as you navigate the exciting world of *Technical Communication*.

feature function

Technical Communication in the News These short news items highlight recent examples of the impact and importance of technical communication. Learn about the human side of tech comm and see why it matters.

On the Job On the Job boxes comprise honest, authentic comments from a wide range of communicators about the role that writing plays—sometimes unexpectedly—in the jobs they do.

Consider This Consider This boxes summarize current research and offer concise insight into the topics discussed in each chapter. Today's scholarship at a glance.

Guidelines Guidelines boxes give you direct, practical advice and accessible strategies you can use. Grasp the practical side of each chapter in an authoritative and handy format.

Checklists Use Checklists to review and revise your documents. Key questions help focus on user needs and improve the effective-ness and usability of your documents.

Technical Communication

TENTH EDITION

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Preface

Whether handwritten, electronically mediated, or face-to-face, workplace communication is more than a value-neutral exercise in "information transfer"; it is a complex social transaction. Each rhetorical situation has its own specific interpersonal, ethical, legal, and cultural demands. Moreover, today's professional is not only a fluent communicator, but also a discriminating consumer of information, skilled in the methods of inquiry, retrieval, evaluation, and interpretation essential to informed decision making.

Designed in response to these issues, *Technical Communication*, Tenth Edition, addresses a wide range of interests for classes in which students from a variety of majors are enrolled. The text explains, illustrates, and applies rhetorical principles to an array of assignments, from brief memos and summaries to formal reports and proposals. To help students develop awareness of audience and accountability, exercises incorporate the problem-solving demands typical in college and on the job. Self-contained chapters allow for various course plans and customized assignments.

HALLMARKS OF THE TENTH EDITION

The hallmarks of the Tenth Edition of *Technical Communication* include:

- **A focus on applications beyond the classroom.** Clear ties to the workplace include more examples from everyday business situations and more sample documents, including on-the-job and internship documents written by students, new sections on career paths in Ch.1, and a new section on design skills for today's workplace in Ch. 15. Discussion about actual jobs held by technical communicators and about communication in various fields is supplemented by day-in-the-life observations in the new "On the Job" feature.
- **Updated technology coverage.** Chapters on Web design, document design, and usability, in particular, reflect changes in the technology and an increasing use of Web-based documents and platforms. Updated information on communicating electronically includes more on hypertext and mark-up language, expanded guidelines for creating a Web site, and new information on instant messaging, and electronic mail. Fully integrated computing advice is supplemented by "Consider This" discussions of technology and interpersonal issues that are shaping workplace communication.

- **Added coverage of international and global workplace issues.** This Tenth Edition includes additional samples, cases, and exercises premised on a multinational intercultural workplace, foregrounding issues of cultural and social style differences. Many end of chapter exercises call for research into cultural differences in communication practices. Marginal globe icons identify this material.
 - **A service-learning component.** End of chapter exercises include projects specifically intended for use in service-learning courses. A focus on nonprofit organizations has been added to supplement the corporate culture examples.
 - **Expanded chapter on collaboration.** With new coverage of cross-cultural collaboration and an emphasis on computer-mediated and Internet collaboration, collaborative projects are featured throughout the text as well as in Ch. 6, Working in Teams.
 - **Strong coverage of information literacy.** Information literate people are those who “know how knowledge is organized, how to find information, and how to use information in such a way that others can learn from them.”* Critical thinking—the basis of information literacy—is covered intensively in Part II and integrated throughout the text.
 - **Increased coverage of usability testing.** Usability receives consistent and explicit emphasis throughout, with an expanded chapter on usability (Chapter 17) and usability checklists at the end of relevant chapters in Parts IV and V.
- **Expanded treatment of ethical and legal issues.** Woven into the fabric of the communication process are legal and ethical considerations in word choice, product descriptions, instructions, and other forms of hard copy and electronic communication. Ch. 5, Weighing the Ethical Issues, also includes new information on recognizing unethical communication and day-to-day ethical dilemmas, as well as a new exercise on avoiding plagiarism. Chapters on collaboration and design also include extended discussion of ethical communication in the workplace.

ADDITIONAL FEATURES OF THE TENTH EDITION

Technical Communication, Tenth Edition, also includes the following:

- **“On the Job”** boxes demonstrate how the skills and strategies learned from this book are needed in real-world careers of all kinds.
- **“Tech Comm in the News”** underscores the book’s current and real-world focus. Each part opener includes a 200-word boxed and illustrated summary of a current

news story related to issues in technical communication (examples: the role of miscommunication in the *Columbia* shuttle crash; common flaws in Web site design; risks posed by the lack of health literacy among Americans).

- **“Consider This” boxes** provide interesting and topical applications of the important issues discussed in various chapters, such as collaborating, technology, and ethics.
- **Expanded Guidelines** help students apply and synthesize the information in the chapter and offer practical suggestions for real workplace situations.
- The **Companion Website** is fully integrated with the printed text. Marginal icons highlight sections where the Web site offers additional cases, sample documents, templates, and examples.
- **Exercises/Collaborative activities** at the end of each chapter help students apply what they’ve learned. More collaborative activities have been added to reflect the role of collaboration in all aspects of technical communication.
- **Usability Checklists** help students polish their writing by giving them points to consider and page cross-references so that they can refer to specific passages in the text to find more information on each point. All checklists have been expanded and redesigned for easier access.
- **Marginal annotations** highlight important concepts in the text. The “Note” annotation adds clarification or points out up-to-the-minute business and technological advances.

ORGANIZATION OF *TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION*, TENTH EDITION

The text begins with a brief overview of workplace communication in Chapter 1, followed by six major sections:

Part I: Communicating in the Workplace treats job-related communication as a problem-solving process. Students learn to think critically about the informative, persuasive, and ethical dimensions of their communications. They also learn how to adapt to the interpersonal challenges of collaborative work and to the various needs and expectations of global audiences.

Part II: The Research Process treats research as a deliberate inquiry process. Students learn to formulate significant research questions; to explore primary and secondary sources in hard copy and electronic form; to evaluate and interpret their findings; and to summarize for economy, accuracy, and emphasis.

Part III: Structural and Style Elements offers strategies for organizing and conveying messages that users can follow and understand. Students learn to control their material and to develop a readable style.

Part IV: Visual, Design, and Usability Elements treats the rhetorical implications of graphics and page design. Students learn to enhance a document's access, appeal, and visual impact for audiences who need to locate, understand, and use the information successfully.

Part V: Specific Documents and Applications applies earlier concepts and strategies to the preparation of print and electronic documents and oral presentations. Various letters, memos, reports, and proposals offer a balance of examples from the workplace and from student writing. Each sample document has been chosen so that students can emulate it easily.

Part VI: A Brief Handbook with Additional Sample Documents contains instructions for recording research findings and for documenting them in MLA or APA style, demonstrations of the writing process in three workplace settings, and a brief handbook of grammar, usage, and mechanics.

INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPLEMENTS

Accompanying *Technical Communication*, Tenth Edition is a wide array of supplements for both instructors and students. Specific to this text are:

- **Companion Website.** Find a wealth of resources at <www.ablongman.com/lannonweb>. The numbered icons printed in the text margins indicate topics and concepts that are illustrated in depth on the Companion Website. This Web site includes project-based individual and collaborative exercises, additional forms and document templates, and many sample Web and print documents for student response and class discussion. A comprehensive Instructor Resource section includes detailed strategies for incorporating Web resources and technology with the book; an extensive set of annotated links to resources in grammar and writing, technical communication organizations, and online journals and publications; chapter overviews and teaching notes; sample syllabi and downloadable *PowerPoint* slides for classroom use.
- **The Instructor's Resource Manual** for *Technical Communication*, Tenth Edition, supports both traditional

and Web-based instruction. A guide to using the Companion Website with the book and an annotated index of the book's Web icons offer specific support for building connections between the textbook and its Companion Website, and helps teachers to effectively integrate the Web resources and projects into their teaching strategies. The manual also includes general suggestions and ideas for teaching technical communication from a composition standpoint; sample syllabi; transparency masters; and an annotated bibliography of resources for teaching technical communication. Resources for use in any technical communications include:

- ***MyTechCommLab*** is a comprehensive resource for students in technical communication. It offers the best multimedia resources for technical writing in one, easy-to-use place. Students will find guidelines, tutorials, and exercises for grammar, writing, and research, as well as a gallery of model documents, an online reference library, and Pearson's unique Research Navigator and Avoiding Plagiarism programs. Visit <www.mytechcommmlab.com> for information about how to access this remarkable site.
- ***Resources for Technical Communication***. This print supplement includes over forty sample documents in a variety of categories, as well as more than half a dozen case studies with exercises.
- ***Visual Communication: A Writer's Guide***, examines the rhetoric and principles of visual design, with an emphasis throughout on audience and genre. Practical guidelines for incorporating graphics and visuals are featured along with sample planning worksheets and design samples and exercises. (Also available as part of MyTechCommLab.)

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*American Library Association Presidential Committee on Information Literacy: Final Report.
Chicago: ALA, 1989.