

Technical Writing - Winter 2024

Text: No textbook

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Visit me!

Official office hours are listed on my [calendar](#) (depending on my availability). Sign up for an appointment to talk to me one-on-one. All office hours are held on Zoom. If my hours don't work for you, just let me know what times do, and we will arrange something.

Basic Information About the Class

Prerequisites:

WR 121 with a C or higher.

Welcome to Writing 227: Technical Writing

WR227 introduces you to the types of writing you encounter in business, industry, the academic world, and government. It examines the rhetorical nature of writing and asks you to think critically about content, audience, argument and structure.

Course objectives and outcomes in plain language:

After taking Writing 227, successful students will have learned to

- Create documents designed to help readers make decisions and solve practical, real-world problems.
- Evaluate and adapt to different technical and workplace writing situations by analyzing audience, context, stakes, and the writer's role.
- Demonstrate mastery of technical and workplace writing conventions including clean and clear design, style, and layout of print and web communications.
- Find and integrate research in written documents clearly, concisely, and logically;

credit the source as appropriate.

Official course outcomes from catalog:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Analyze the rhetorical needs (the needs of their audience in relationship to the assignment) for college-level evidence-based technical writing assignments.
- Apply appropriate levels of critical thinking strategies (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation) in their written assignments, with an emphasis on technical, evidence-based analysis, reporting, application, and evaluation.
- Implement appropriate rhetorical elements and organization (executive summary, introduction, thesis, development and research-based support, visual evidence, conclusion, etc.) in their written assignments, with an emphasis on technical evidence-based analysis, reporting, and evaluation assignments.
- Locate, evaluate, and integrate high-quality information and opinion appropriate for technical evidence-based assignments.
- Craft sentences and paragraphs that communicate their ideas clearly and effectively using words, sentence patterns, and writing conventions at a high college level to make their writing clear, credible, and precise.

Course Work:

- Big Assignments (85%)
- Little Assignments (15%)
- Extra credit available

Assignment descriptions are listed at the end of the syllabus and on Moodle.

Required texts and materials:

Enrollment in this course requires successful (i.e. "C" level) completion of WR121.

- Access to a college library
- Access to a word processing program such as MS Word or Google docs
- Bandwidth to watch videos
- Computer literacy

Free Version of MS Word

While Google docs is a very robust tool, it can be hard to format documents in Google docs. Word is easier and it is available free to students and teachers. [Click here for details.](#)

Class Policies, Expectations, and Resources

My Expectations for You

- Check Moodle *at least* three times a week.
- Read all Moodle announcements carefully.
- Complete all reading and assignments.
- Contact me if you are having difficulties in the class or if a personal crisis or emergency impacts your ability to succeed in the class and you would like extra help or accommodation.
- Be courteous when communicating online.
- Don't cheat or plagiarize. Violations of academic honesty will result in failure of an assignment or failure of the course.

Late Policy:

- Most homework can be completed up to one week late. Late work cannot be revised. The recommendations assignment cannot be late.

Revision Policy

- On-time homework assignments may be revised for a higher grade. Please go to the Assignments tab and click on Revision 1 for complete instructions on revisions. I prefer that you chat with me before turning in a revision, but that is not required. Talk to me if you'd like to do more than one revision.

My Promise to You

I am tough but fair, and I'm here to help you in any way I can. That includes writing stuff and life stuff. If I can't help, I'll find someone who can. I check email once a day, Monday through Friday and try to empty my inbox every time. I answer student emails first, so **put WR 227 in the subject line.**

Grading Procedure

My goal is to return every assignment to you within one week of the due date. I am always happy to grade your assignment first. Just email me and let me know that you'd like priority grading.

LBCC Writing Center

Here is information on how you can access the Writing Center on Zoom using drop-in hours or scheduled appointments:

<https://www.linnbenton.edu/student-services/library-tutoring-testing/learning-center/writing-support/index.php>

Here's a way to send your work to the Writing Center and get a response via email:

<https://www.linnbenton.edu/student-services/library-tutoring-testing/learning-center/writing-support/online-writing-lab.php>

School Policies

Incompletes

If you have completed 80 percent of the course work by the end of the term but are unable, for reasons that are generally not your fault, to complete the rest, I will grant you an incomplete.

Center for Accessibility Accommodations

LBCC is committed to inclusiveness and equal access to higher education. If you have approved accommodations through the Center for Accessibility Resources (CFAR) and would like to use your accommodations in this class, please contact your instructor as soon as possible to discuss your needs. If you think you may be eligible for accommodations but are not yet registered with CFAR, please visit the **CFAR Website** for steps on how to apply for services. Online course accommodations may be different than those for on-campus courses, so it is important that you make contact with CFAR as soon as possible.

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism is a type of academic dishonesty that involves the theft of another person's idea, words, images, music/sounds, or creative works and/or deceit in the representation of who created the work by not properly crediting sources. Plagiarism, one form of cheating or dishonesty, is not just the failure to give credit for an exact quotation. Plagiarism includes both intentional and unintentional acts, such as:

- Obtaining a paper on the Internet and turning it in as the student's own work; this is obviously intentional
- Copying sections of another's original document, photographs, artwork, songs/sounds, film, video images, lab project, or electronic files and putting the source material or text into one's own work without documentation, as if it were one's own original work;
- Copying a sentence, or an important exact phrase of two words or more, or a coined word (which may or may not have copyright protection) without the use of quotation marks and credit;
- Copying the structure of another's argument or premise, thesis, theory, design, or composition and merely translating key parts;
- Using another's results in one's own words without giving him or her credit, failing to document any borrowing when quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing, or importing and placing a graphic, sound bite or other medium.

LBCC Non-Discrimination Policy

Everyone is welcome at LBCC, regardless of whether they are black, white, Latino, native, gay, straight, Christian, Muslim, Jewish, male, female, transgendered, married, disabled, a veteran, a non-English speaker, an immigrant, or any number of other categories not listed here. What is more, LBCC sees our differences as a source of strength and an important part of education.

Mask Policy

This class does not contain an on-campus component, but if you are on campus, please note the mask policy:

Wear a mask or face covering indoors at all times. Your mask or face covering must be properly worn (fully covering nose and mouth and tight-fitting). Mesh masks, face shields, or face covering that incorporates a valve designed to facilitate easy exhalation are not acceptable. If you have a medical condition or a disability that prevents you from wearing a mask or cloth face covering, you must obtain an accommodation from CFAR (Center for Accessibility Resources) to be exempt from

this requirement. State guidelines do not limit class size. Physical distancing accommodations can be made upon request and cleaning supplies are also available for personal use.

Assignments

These assignment descriptions are included so that students have a record of their course work. This can be helpful when transferring credits to another institution. These assignments are also listed in Moodle. You do not need to use the syllabus to get assignment descriptions.

Major Assignments

Smaller assignments are not listed here.

Email Assignment

This assignment is based on the content of [this article](#).

Goal of this assignment: Email communication is one of the primary modes of workplace communication. Good email habits will make you look professional. Good emails will get read. Poorly written emails often get ignored. Emailing effectively (including your professors) will help what you want in your work life. This assignment will help you learn this vital skill.

What is the assignment: Introduce yourself to me via email. Your goal is to show me that you are an interesting person (you are!) and a good student (you are!) Write your email using the principles of good email listed above. Emails due by Sunday. This assignment should be emailed to stetzwk@linnbenton.edu Remember to use the principles of good emailing every time you email me or any of your other professors.

How will I grade: When I grade, I'll be looking for the following:

- Salutation (Dear Professor Stetz-Waters)
- Friendly, professional content
- Paragraph breaks at least every 8 lines. (This goes for ALL assignments in this class.)
- Perfect spelling, grammar, and punctuation
- Writing that doesn't use any more words than necessary
- Pleasant close (like sincerely or respectfully)

Three Library Sources

Goals of the Assignment:

- Show you how to use library research tools (or refresh your memory).
- Give you a chance to explore potential topic ideas, find out what will be easy/hard to research, and decide if you like your initial topic selection.
- Possibly find research to use in your final report.
- Make sure you remember how to do APA, MLA, or CMS citation.

What is the assignment?

When you turn in your assignment, it will look like an APA, MLA, or CMS style works cited page with 3+ sources.

How will I do this assignment?

For this assignment, you will watch the videos on library sources (in the Moodle shell) and find three library sources related to your potential report topic. Sources must meet these criteria:

- Sources go beyond common knowledge
- Sources are in depth
- Lateral reading suggests that these sources are credible
- Sources discuss your topic or things related to your topic. It's okay to explore right now. It's fine if you don't use these sources for your final report.

Once you've found your sources, you will create a bibliography with the bibliographic information for these sources properly cited in MLA, APA, or CMS format. Every library resource has a "cite this" tool that will create the citation for you.

As you work remember:

- Alphabetize your bibliography
- You haven't committed to your topic yet, so you can still change your mind after this assignment.
- If you're having trouble [sign up for one-on-one research help](#)

If you are working in a pair or team, you only have to turn in one assignment. Be sure to put your names on it, so I give everyone credit.

Analyzing Technical Writing Assignment Instructions

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Goals of this assignment:

Before you start writing, I want you to analyze someone else's document. Sometimes it's easier to see flaws in someone else's work. Once you see them, you can avoid them in your own.

What is the assignment?

Here are step by step instructions for completing this assignment.

1. Watch [this lecture](#).
2. Find a document created for the SAME audience for which you wrote your report.

Examples:

- A textbook
 - Pamphlet
 - TV advertisement (documents can be visual/audio for this assignment)
 - Papers that come along with a prescription
 - Mailing from a politician
 - Website
3. Using what you learned about your audience and what you learned writing the report, assess how well this writer/document creator tailored their document to the needs of your audience.

What to write in your analysis

Pick three measures of excellence. Write an analysis of how well/poorly the document met these measures. Use the following format:

For each measure, include four to ten well-crafted sentence.

- First sentence identifies what the measure is and what it means.
- Second sentence states where the document met or did not meet this measure of excellence.
- One or more sentences identify the strengths in this area.

- One or more sentences identify the weaknesses in this area.

NOTE: You must include some weaknesses. Almost no technical document is perfect in all areas. Make sure you identify flaws as well as strengths.

Please use headings and organize the sections of your document in this order:

4. Turn in your analysis and a picture/link to the document. (If your document is long, just take a picture of the cover, first page, etc.)

The measures of excellence are:

5. **Professional** appearance: Does this look like a document produced by a trained technical writer or graphic designer? If not, is there some reason why a less professional look is appropriate for the target audience.
6. **Honesty (ethicaless)**: Are there places where this document deliberately tries to deceive or mislead the reader? Being dishonest is different from being inaccurate. Someone can have very good intentions and still be inaccurate.
7. **Accuracy**: Is the information in this document correct?
8. **Accessibility**: How easy is it to find individual pieces of information without reading the whole document top to bottom?
9. **Comprehensiveness**: Did the document include everything the audience needed to know?
10. **Conciseness**: Did the document contain anything it didn't need (either individual words and phrases or sections of content)?
11. **Correctness**: Were the grammar/spelling errors?

Formating

The following formatting rules should be used for all technical writing.

Block Format

Almost all technical writing and business writing documents are written in block paragraph format. This means the following paragraphs are single spaced. There is no indent at the beginning of a new paragraph. Paragraphs are separated by one line of blank space.

Headings

Good technical writers make it very easy for readers to find specific pieces of information (without reading the whole document). Use headings to separate information into small, easy-to-identify sections.

Short Paragraphs

Never include more than eight lines of text without a break.

Student Sample: Pamphlet warning teenagers about the dangers of drugs.

Accuracy refers to whether or not the document contains information that is factual and verifiable. On one level the pamphlet was true. Drug use hurts people.

However, there were several things about the pamphlet that felt dishonest. The pamphlet made it sound like saying no to drugs was easy, and that teenagers who didn't say no were stupid. It didn't take into account all the reasons why teenagers use drugs, including the fact that they may have been introduced to drugs by their parents. It made a complex societal problem sound like a stupid decision teenagers should easily be able to avoid.

The pamphlet also described the worst case scenarios for each drug. According to the pamphlet, marijuana was "...a gateway drug that led to meth and heroin." It also said, "if you don't want to be an addict, don't smoke that first joint." But with legalized marijuana all sorts of people are using marijuana and not escalating to meth or heroin. The statement that marijuana use will always lead to harder drugs isn't just inaccurate, but it could be dangerous. It's clearly inaccurate, and because of this, readers might discount all the true information in the pamphlet.

I've changed this assignment since I last gave it, but if you'd like to see samples from a previous version of this assignment, here they are. These students had to analyze all the measures (not just three) and they had to analyze an instruction set.

[Pack 'n' Play Care Set](#)

How will I grade the assignment?

1. First, I'll look for block paragraph format, headings, and short paragraphs.
2. Next, I'll look for how clearly and concisely you write. Never use more words than you need. What to learn more?
3. Then I will look to see if your analysis shows a true understanding of the measures of excellence.
4. I will look at the quality of your analysis. A good analysis says what you think and provides support for your ideas. **Be sure to reference specific words, phrases, and design elements in the original document.**
5. Finally, I will check for mechanics (grammar, spelling etc.).
6. This assignment is eligible for revision (for a higher grade) if it arrives on time.

Report Assignment

TEAMWORK: This assignment can be completed as a team. Teams must fill out the [team contract](#) before they begin work.

Overview

This is part three of a large assignment that spans the entire term. It includes the analyzing technical writing assignment, report, and tip sheet. Most of the discussion forums are designed to help you refine your topic for the report.

Technical reports help specific people solve specific problems, make decisions, or take action.

Technical reports are always audience-focused. Your goal is to provide a specific audience the exact information they need at that moment without them having to read a word more than they need.

[The report is explained in depth in this lecture.](#)

Goals of the Report Assignment

This assignment is designed to teach and test the following:

- Provide a specific audience with information they need to solve a problem or make a decision.
- Understand the difference between a report that helps a reader solve a problem and a report that educates the reader about a topic without a problem solving component.
- Avoid including information the reader does not need.
- Write on a narrowly focused report.
- Present research that goes beyond common knowledge.
- Design a professional document using graphic elements such as headings, text boxes, images etc.

Topic

For this assignment, you may choose your own topic or use one of the [topics I have provided](#). Choosing a topic that relates to your life, interests, or major can be very rewarding. However choosing a topic that works for the assignment can also be challenging. If you want to choose your own topic, set up a meeting with me so I can help make this project a success.

If you'd like to modify one of the topics I've suggested, set up a meeting with me.

If you'd like guidance on your project, regardless of what topic you choose, I would LOVE to help. Email me to set up an appointment or sign up for office hours.

Groups may choose their own topic, modify a topic, or use a topic I've provided.

[Instructor Provided Topics](#)

Audience

Your report will be narrowly focused and written with a specific audience in mind. Audiences include groups such as the following:

Oregon college students who want to affect change at a state level
First time gardeners in Western Oregon
White American parents who have adopted a child from China
Grass seed farmers in the Willamette Valley
American women doing business in the United Arab Emirates
African-American college students in Oregon.
Homeless LGBTQ youth in Portland

The content you choose for your report should clearly reflect the needs of your audience. The report should not be directed at broad audiences like "anyone who cares about the environment" or "parents."

Report Format

Follow these formatting guidelines:

- Include a title page
- Include a table of contents
- Include an abstract
- Use block paragraphs
- Use first and second level headings

- Use descriptive headings that clearly identify content
- Use numbers for lists that occur in a particular order (such as instruction steps) and bullets for items that have no particular order (such as materials and supplies or helpful tips)
- An A-level report will include images or graphics that communicate useful information.
- Number pages (it's okay if the numbering starts on the title page)
- Works cited page
- Appendix (optional)
- Works consulted page (optional)

Citation

Uses standard APA, MLA, or CMS citation style including both [in-text citation](#) and a works cited page.

Note: The rules that govern the use of sources differ between cultures. It is important that international students learn American conventions so that they can succeed in American colleges and universities. However, it is also important to remember that American rules are not universal.

See the Writing Center or reference librarians for help with citation.

A few other things to remember

- Technical reports generally do not use “I”
- Technical reports do not include the author’s opinions or judgments, only researchable facts
- Technical reports do not use emotional language
- Technical reports are not persuasive or argumentative in the general sense of those words. Technical reports will lead readers to a particular course of action.

How will I grade?

1. First I will look at your bibliography. A good report usually uses about eight substantive sources. I'll check to make sure all the sources in the bibliography are used in the report.
2. Next, I'll scan the headings to make sure the document is easy to navigate.
3. Then I'll read the report looking for specific, in-depth content. Reports that do not go beyond [common knowledge](#) rarely score well.

4. As I read, I'll also assess how well you tailored your report to your audience. If I see a substantial amount of information your audience would not use or need, that will count against you. If I see specific information that is particularly useful to your audience, that will count in your favor.
5. I will check for correct, [concise writing](#).
6. Finally, I will check for correctly formatted in-text citations and works cited page.

Length

A+ reports tend to be between 1500 and 3000 words. Quality of content is more important than length. The larger your topic, the more you will need to write.

Support

Writing Center - I recommend sending your work to the Online Writing Lab for critique. They can help you do your very best work on this important assignment. You can do this live on Zoom or via email. More here: www.linnbenton.edu/writing-center.

Reference Librarians - Reference librarians at the LBCC library would be happy to meet with you and discuss your research process and problems. They can help with brainstorming ideas, finding sources, and citation.

Chat with a librarian - The LBCC library website has a feature called "chat with a librarian" that allows you to chat with a live librarian 24/7. The chat line is staffed by librarians around Oregon.

Links in instructions - Click every link in this instruction set and study the explanatory material provided.

Citation Generators - Citations generators like [Zoterobib](#) can help format citations for sources you do not get from the LBCC library database or e-book provider. Those resources have their own citation generators.

[Sample Student Report: Dining in America](#)

More report samples coming soon!

Revisions

Reports that come in on time can be revised for a higher grade. See Week 10 for revision instructions.

Tip Sheet Assignment Description

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Note About Teamwork

The tip sheet can be completed as a team. If you work in a team, you must complete this [team contract](#).

Goals of this assignment

This assignment invites you to practice these important skills:

- Write concisely
- Focus on information that is useful to your audience
- Adjust your tone and word choice to meet the needs of your audience
- Design attractive documents
- Recognize that document design is more important in technical writing than in academic writing
- Evaluate research
- Incorporate credible research into your work
- Create a bibliography and sample in-text citations

If you can demonstrate these skills in the workplace people will read and respect your writing.

What is the assignment?

For this assignment, you will create a "helpful tips" sheet based off your report. Imagine someone came to you and said, "This report is nice, but I need to get this information to people faster. I need something they can read standing up in line or waiting in a doctor's office."

To do this, you will take the information in your report and distill it down to the most important information. Then you will design a beautiful poster or pamphlet to convey this information.

Format & Design

Your tip sheet should be visually appealing to your specific audience.

- Tip sheet should employ the measures of excellence you analyzed in the Analyzing Technical Writing assignment. That is to say, you should create a document that is professional, honest, accurate, concise, comprehensive, accessible, correct, and clear. (Of course, no document is perfect, but you should strive to excel in these areas.)

- Tip sheet should use colors and graphics appropriate to the audience and topic
- Tip sheet should employ the design principles explained in the course.

Design Program Requirement

To get an A+, tip sheets should be designed in a program like [Canva](#) or [Venngage](#). Tip sheets prepared in Word or Google Docs will not receive higher than a B.

These programs have both free and paid services. You do NOT have to pay. The free options provide enough tools and templates to make effective Tip Sheets.

Why do I have to learn to use a program like [Canva](#) or [Venngage](#)?

This skill is more useful than you expect. Here are a few places where you might use this skill:

- Science majors/scientists have to do poster presentations at conferences
- Well designed handouts will make you look more professional when you give presentations
- Use Canva or Venngage to make signage at work.
- Create attractive infographics for your social media, especially if you are using social media to advertise a product or service.
- Design a business card
- Design advertisements for your business
- Make cute party invitations or your own greeting cards
- Make bulletins for your church services
- Create portfolios of your work

Language

Your tip sheet should be written according to the following guidelines:

- Always write as concisely as possible!
- Use language the audience would understand.
- Adjust your tone (funny, serious, scientific etc.) to fit the topic.
- Proofread carefully.

Citation Requirements

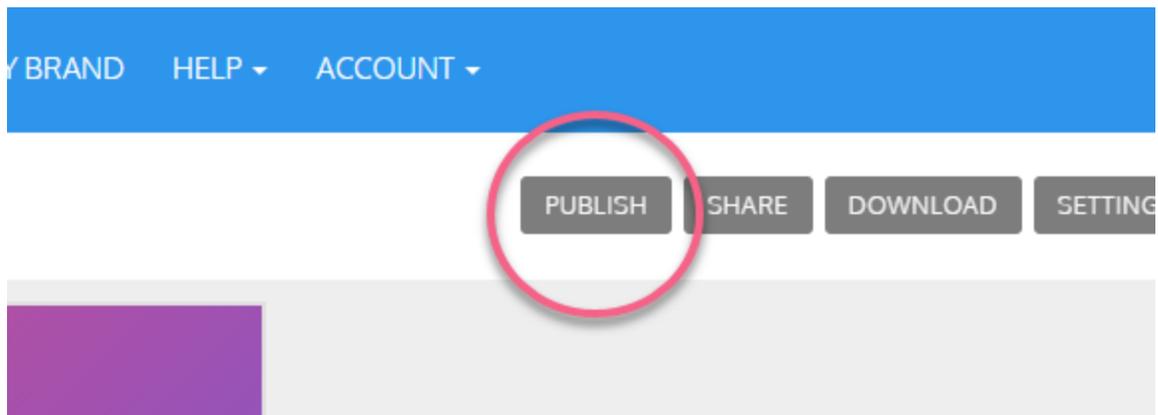
This kind of document generally doesn't use formal academic citation. However, it's still important that your audience knows where you got your information.

Figure out the most appropriate way to convey this information to your audience.

Sharing Your Tip Sheet

Downloading from Canva: Canva will let you download your Tip Sheet.

Sharing from Venngage: If you are using Venngage you will not be able to download your submission unless you pay to upgrade your account. You do NOT have to pay. To share your work, publish it (see below) to Venngage's community and include the link along with your bibliography and in-text citations.



If you do not want to publish your work, you can take a screenshot of your work and send me that.

Special Writing Center Instructions

Projects done in Canva (or other template based document creation sites) are best saved as JPEG, PDF, or PNG files. However, the Online Writing Lab website can only accept .doc and .docx files.

You can still get help from the Writing Center! Just set up a Zoom session with the Writing Center instead. Set up a Zoom appointment or use the Zoom Drop-in Room at www.linnbenton.edu/writing-center.

If you aren't able to Zoom, you can email the Writing Center directly at writingcenter@linnbenton.edu, and they will figure out a different option to provide feedback.

Policies

Group Work

The tip sheet can be completed as a team. If you work in a team, you must complete this [team contract](#).

Late Policy

This assignment can come in up to one-week late. Work that arrives within the one-week grace period receives full credit but cannot be revised.

Contact me if you have a situation that is interfering with your ability to turn this work in on time.

Example Tip Sheets

Here are a few examples of professionally produced Tip Sheets. You can create something just as good!

- [How To Get a Job with No Experience](#) (scroll to bottom of page for the tip sheet)
- [Covid 19: What You Need to Know](#)
- [Electrical Safety Tips for Hunters](#)
- [Exercising During Ramadan in the COVID 19 Pandemic](#)

