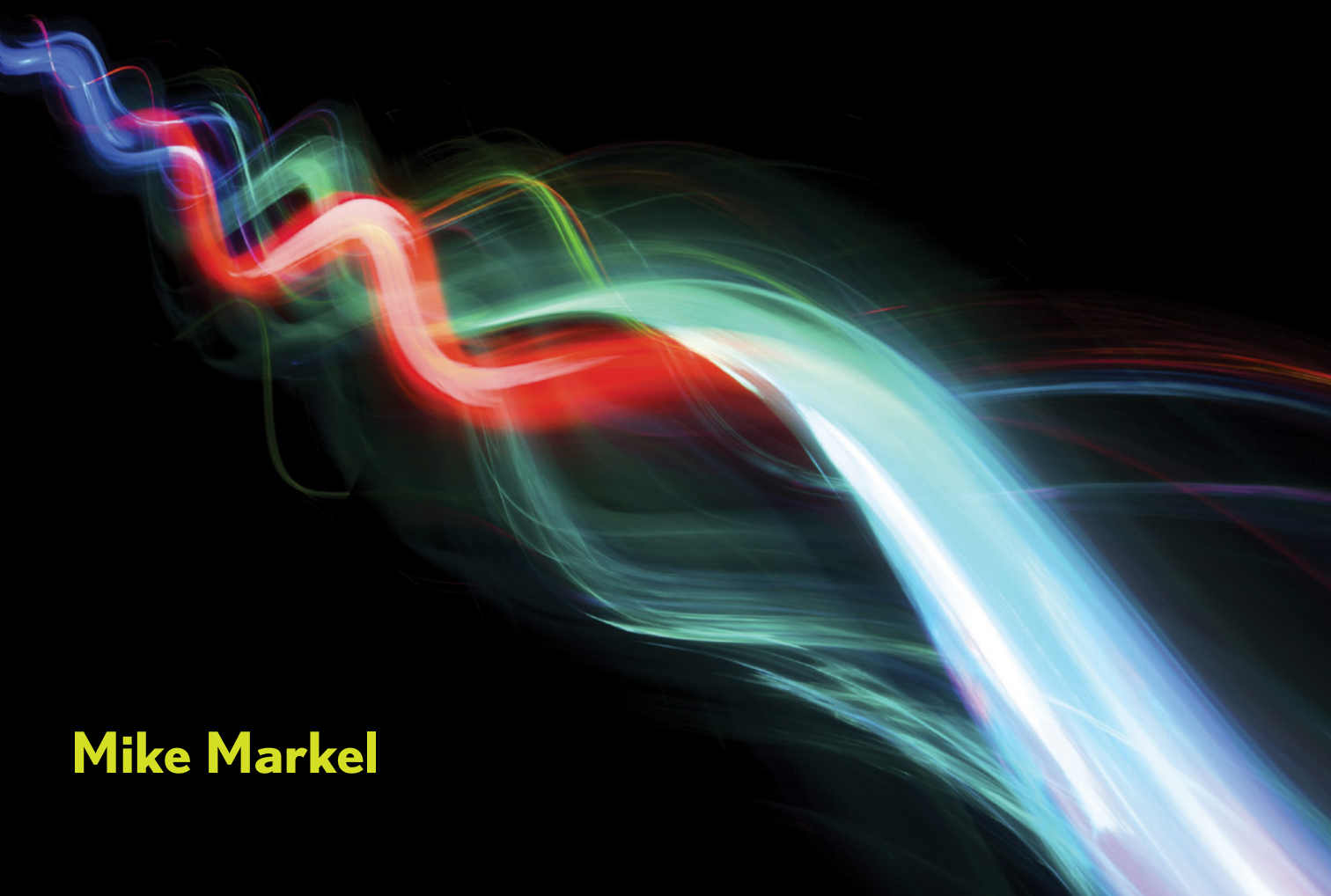


SECOND EDITION

Practical Strategies

FOR TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION



Mike Markel

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Inside LaunchPad for Practical Strategies for Technical Communication



Missing something? Instructors may assign the online materials that accompany this text. For access to them, visit macmillanhighered.com/ps2e.

LaunchPad materials are identified throughout the text with the  icon.

CASES

Document-based cases, previously included at the end of each chapter, are now presented online, where you can familiarize yourself with each scenario, download and work with related documents, and access assignment questions in a single space.

CASE 1: Using the Measures of Excellence in Evaluating a Résumé

CASE 2: The Ethics of Requiring Students To Subsidize a Plagiarism-Detection Service

CASE 3: Accommodating a Team Member's Scheduling Problems

CASE 4: Focusing on an Audience's Needs and Interests

CASE 5: Revising a Questionnaire

CASE 6: Emphasizing Important Information in a Technical Description

CASE 7: Designing a Flyer

CASE 8: Creating Appropriate Graphics To Accompany a Report

CASE 9: Setting Up and Maintaining a Professional Microblog Account

CASE 10: Identifying the Best-of-the-Best Job-Search Sites

CASE 11: Revising a Brief Proposal

CASE 12: Writing a Directive About Using Agendas for Meetings

CASE 13: Analyzing Decision Matrices

CASE 14: Choosing a Medium for Presenting Instructions

CASE 15: Understanding the Claim-and-Support Structure for Presentation Graphics

E-BOOKS

Document-Based Cases for Technical Communication, Second Edition, by Roger Munger, features seven realistic scenarios in which you can practice workplace writing skills.

Team Writing, by Joanna Wolfe, covers strategies for collaborating successfully in the workplace through written communication.

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS ACTIVITIES

Explore real multimedia documents that harness digital technologies in exciting new ways, and respond to prompts that will help you analyze them.

Interactive Graphic: Tom Giratikanon and David Schutz, *How Hard the Wind Will Hit Your Area, and When* (Chapter 8)

Online Portfolio: Blane C. Holden's Online Portfolio (Chapter 10)

Proposal Delivered as a Prezi Presentation: Andrew Washuta, *Marketing Project Proposal* (Chapter 11)

Report Presented as a Website: United States Geological Survey, *High Plains Water-Level Monitoring Study* (Chapter 12)

Interactive Graphic: Matthew C. Hansen et al., University of Maryland, Google, USGS, and NASA, *"Global Forest Change" Interactive Map* (Chapter 12)

Recommendations Presented as an Audio Podcast: Centers for Disease Control, *Influenza 2010–2011, ACIP Vaccination Recommendations* (Chapter 13)

Mechanism Description Using Interactive Graphics: Hybridcenter.org and Union of Concerned Scientists, *Hybrids Under the Hood (Part 2)* (Chapter 14)

Process Description Using Video Animation: North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), *Diverging Diamond Interchange Visualization* (Chapter 14)

Instructions Using Video Screen Capture: TechSmith, Jing Learning Center, *Capture a Video* (Chapter 14)

Instructions Using a Combination of Video Demonstration and Screen Capture: Texas Tech University, Multiple Literacy Lab (MuLL), *Recording Audio with iPod + iTalk* (Chapter 14)

Definition Using Video Animation: ABC News, *What Is the Cloud?* (Chapter 14)

DOWNLOADABLE FORMS

Download and work with a variety of helpful forms discussed throughout the text.

Work-Schedule Form (Chapter 3)

Team-Member Evaluation Form (Chapter 3)

Self-Evaluation Form (Chapter 3)

Audience Profile Sheet (Chapter 4)

Oral Presentation Evaluation Form (Chapter 15)

LEARNING CURVE

Master the material covered in the first six chapters of the text as well as key skills for multilingual writers with LearningCurve, an adaptive quizzing program that meets you where you are and gives you the extra support you need when you need it.

Working in the Technical Communication Environment

Analyzing Your Audience and Purpose

Researching Your Subject

Organizing and Emphasizing Information

Writing Correct and Effective Sentences

Articles and Nouns for Multilingual Writers

Prepositions for Multilingual Writers

Sentence Structure for Multilingual Writers

Verbs for Multilingual Writers

TEAM WRITING MODULES

These modules, built around five short videos of real team interactions, focus on the role of written communication in teamwork. They'll teach you how to use written documentation to manage a team by producing task schedules, minutes, charters, and other materials and also provide models for working on large collaborative documents.

TEST BANK

A test bank offers multiple-choice, true/false, and short-answer questions for every chapter in the text.

TUTORIALS

Engaging tutorials show you helpful tools and tips for creating your projects along with guidance on how to best use them, as well as the documentation process for citing the sources you use in MLA and APA style.

DIGITAL WRITING TUTORIALS

Cross-Platform Word Processing with CloudOn, Quip, and More (Chapter 3)

Tracking Sources with Evernote and Zotero (Chapter 5)

Photo Editing Basics with GIMP (Chapter 8)

Building Your Professional Brand with LinkedIn, Twitter, and More (Chapter 10)

Creating Presentations with PowerPoint and Prezi (Chapter 15)

Audio Recording and Editing with Audacity (Chapter 15)

DIGITAL TIPS TUTORIALS

Creating Styles and Templates (Chapter 3)

Scheduling Meetings Online (Chapter 3)

Reviewing Collaborative Documents (Chapter 3)

Incorporating Tracked Changes (Chapter 3)

Conducting Online Meetings (Chapter 3)

Using Wikis for Collaborative Work (Chapter 3)

Using Collaborative Software (Chapter 3)

Proofreading for Format Consistency (Chapter 7)

DOCUMENTATION TUTORIALS

How To Cite a Database in APA Style (Appendix, Part A: Documenting Your Sources)

How To Cite a Website in APA Style (Appendix, Part A: Documenting Your Sources)

How To Cite a Book in MLA Style (Appendix, Part A: Documenting Your Sources)

How To Cite an Article in MLA Style (Appendix, Part A: Documenting Your Sources)

How To Cite a Website in MLA Style (Appendix, Part A: Documenting Your Sources)

How To Cite a Database in MLA Style (Appendix, Part A: Documenting Your Sources)

SECOND EDITION

Practical Strategies

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FOR TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION

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Preface for Instructors

PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION is a shorter version of *Technical Communication*, which for 11 editions has remained a best-selling text for introductory courses in technical communication. *Practical Strategies* focuses on the essential topics, writing strategies, and skills students need to succeed in the course and in their professional lives. Its streamlined and reorganized chapters make it more concise than the larger book, but it remains an accessible and thorough introduction to planning, drafting, designing, and revising technical documents. *Practical Strategies* also offers detailed advice on the most common applications such as proposals, reports, and instructions.

Evident throughout this book is a focus on the expanding role of collaboration in the world of technical communication. Technical communication has always involved collaboration. A writer who needed to produce a user manual for a new software package would likely have interviewed the engineer who wrote the code. The company might also have convened a focus group to find out what users liked and didn't like about the prototype of the software. Now, however, there is more interaction than ever before between the people who produce technical documents and those who consume them. Often, that interaction goes in both directions. Using social media and new technologies, technical communicators can collaborate with their audiences at every step of the communication process. And thanks to online publishing, audience members contribute to the development of technical documents even after they have been published, by asking and answering questions, revising existing information, and contributing new information.

The types of documents that technical communicators routinely produce have changed as well. Microblog posts, contributions to discussion boards and wikis, and status updates to one's LinkedIn profile—once the raw materials of longer and more-formal documents—are now routinely used to communicate important messages.

Despite these changes, the fundamentals of technical communication are at least as important as they always have been. An inaccuracy in a microblog post communicating a project update is every bit as big a problem as an inaccuracy in a traditional progress report. And even though we live and work in an era that values brevity and quick turnaround, some information can be properly communicated only through the longer, detailed documents that have always been at the center of technical communication.

I have revised this new edition of *Practical Strategies for Technical Communication* to help students learn how to communicate effectively in the fast-paced, highly collaborative world in which they will work. Employers have never valued communication skills as much as they value them today, and for good reason. Today's professionals need to communicate more frequently, more rapidly, more accurately, and with more individuals than ever before. This book will help prepare students to do so—in their courses and in their careers.

Organization and Features of the Text

Practical Strategies for Technical Communication is organized into five parts.


- Part 1, “Working in the Technical-Communication Environment,” orients students to the practice of technical communication, introducing important topics such as the roles of technical communicators, a basic process for writing technical documents, ethical and legal considerations, effective collaboration, and uses for social media in collaboration.
- Part 2, “Planning and Drafting the Document,” focuses on rhetorical and stylistic concerns: considering audience and purpose, gathering information through primary and secondary research, and writing coherent, clear documents.
- Part 3, “Designing User-Friendly Documents and Websites,” introduces students to design principles and techniques and to the creation and use of graphics in technical documents and websites.
- Part 4, “Learning Important Applications,” offers practical advice for preparing the types of technical communication that students are most likely to encounter in their professional lives: letters, memos, emails, and microblogs; job-application materials; proposals; informational reports, such as progress and status reports; recommendation reports; definitions, descriptions, and instructions; and oral presentations.
- The appendix, “Reference Handbook,” provides help with paraphrasing, quoting, and summarizing sources; documenting sources in the APA, IEEE, and MLA styles; and editing and proofreading documents.

Help with the writing process is integrated throughout the book in the form of two prominent features.










- Choices and Strategies charts (see page 83, for example) are designed to help students at decision points in their writing. These charts summarize various writing and design strategies and help students choose the one that best suits their specific audience and purpose.
- Focus on Process boxes in each of the applications chapters (see page 293, for example) highlight aspects of the writing process that require special consideration when writing specific types of technical communication. Each Focus on Process box in Part 4 relates back to a complete overview of the writing process in Chapter 1 (see page 12).

New to This Edition

The Second Edition recasts the text's features in the context of today's professional environment. Chapter 1, thoroughly revised in light of the input of fellow technical-communication instructors, sets the stage for the text's new focus. The chapter about audience includes an expanded introduction that prepares students who are, for the first time, considering audiences other than their instructors. In addition, this chapter presents techniques for analyzing social-media data to better understand those audiences. The correspondence chapter now includes guidelines on how to represent one's organization on a microblog. The chapter on definitions, descriptions, and instructions covers the new role of discussion boards, wikis, and videos in disseminating information. Updated sample documents, both in the print text and online, provide opportunities for students to analyze the types of documents they'll need to produce or contribute to, such as a municipal government app that enables residents to report infrastructure problems from their phones, as well as an interactive map of global forest changes that allows different audiences to customize their viewing experience to obtain the precise information they need. New to the Second Edition of *Practical Strategies* are sample documents annotated with insights from conversations with the professionals who created them, such as a Prezi frame built for a sustainability startup's presentation at an investor conference.

In keeping with its promise of serving as a model of the principles it teaches, the new edition communicates in new ways. Reflecting the increasingly visual nature of today's learners and of technical communication itself, the Second Edition includes new "Thinking Visually" graphics, developed with feedback from instructors. This feature provides an accessible, modern take on key principles and concepts throughout the text. Online resources, labeled in the text with an  icon, are located in LaunchPad, a customizable online course space including a full e-book that can be packaged with new copies of the text for a significant discount. Cases are now presented in LaunchPad so that students can easily download and work with related documents. Tutorials introduce tools for multimodal composition, present helpful technology tips, and offer another means of learning documentation. LearningCurve adaptive quizzing activities, covering the first six chapters, help students master and apply concepts in a new, personalized way. LearningCurve activities for multilingual writers are also available here, as are video-based team writing modules that help students learn collaborative writing skills. Also available in LaunchPad are two full-length e-books: *Document-Based Cases for Technical Communication*, Second Edition, by Roger Munger, and *Team Writing*, by Joanna Wolfe. Finally, instructors can access a variety of instructor resources here, including a new test bank featuring multiple-choice, true/false, and short-answer questions for each chapter.

The table on the next two pages describes the updates made to each chapter in the Second Edition.

CHAPTER	WHAT'S NEW
Chapter 1 Introduction to Technical Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New focus on continuous collaboration between technical communicators and stakeholders • A discussion of the challenges related to producing technical communication and how to meet them • Thinking Visually: Characteristics of a Technical Document • Thinking Visually: Measures of Excellence in Technical Documents • A discussion of the skills and qualities shared by successful workplace communicators • New annotated sample documents that set the stage for those that will follow throughout the text, such as a company blog post and comment thread
Chapter 2 Understanding Ethical and Legal Obligations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A discussion of ethical and legal issues related to social media, including guidelines for using social media ethically in the workplace • Document Analysis Activity: Presenting Guidelines for Using Social Media • Thinking Visually: Principles for Ethical Communication
Chapter 3 Writing Collaboratively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinking Visually: Advantages and Disadvantages of Collaboration • Advice on choosing the best digital writing tool for a project • Tutorials on scheduling and conducting meetings online, creating styles and templates, reviewing collaborative documents, incorporating tracked changes, using wikis for collaborative work, and using collaborative software  • Screenshots of a real team collaborating on a press release, annotated with insights from team members • LearningCurve: Working in the Technical-Communication Environment, covering Chapters 1–3 
Chapter 4 Analyzing Your Audience and Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinking Visually: Determining the Important Characteristics of Your Audience • A new, more-detailed introduction to the role of audience and purpose • Advice on using social-media data in audience analysis • Case: Focusing on an Audience's Needs and Interests  • LearningCurve: Analyzing Your Audience and Purpose 
Chapter 5 Researching Your Subject	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice on using social-media data in research • LearningCurve: Researching Your Subject 
Chapter 6 Writing for Your Readers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New focus on emphasizing important information at various document levels • Instruction on writing grammatically correct sentences relocated from the Reference Handbook • Case: Emphasizing Important Information in a Technical Description  • LearningCurve: Organizing and Emphasizing Information  • LearningCurve: Writing Correct and Effective Sentences 
Chapter 7 Designing Print and Online Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice on designing documents for mobile screens • A tutorial on proofreading for format consistency 

CHAPTER	WHAT'S NEW
Chapter 8 Creating Graphics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thinking Visually: Characteristics of an Effective Graphic A discussion of infographics Document Analysis Activity: Interactive Graphic e Tutorial on editing photos e
Chapter 9 Writing Correspondence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidelines for representing your organization on a microblog
Chapter 10 Writing Job-Application Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice on establishing your professional brand Guidelines on creating and using a LinkedIn profile Tutorial on building a professional brand online e Document Analysis Activity: Online Portfolio e Case: Identifying the Best-of-the-Best Job-Search Sites e
Chapter 11 Writing Proposals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sample internal proposal: Tablet Study at Rawlings Regional Medical Center Document Analysis Activity: Proposal Delivered as a Prezi Presentation e
Chapter 12 Writing Informational Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sample progress report: Tablet Study at Rawlings Regional Medical Center Document Analysis Activity: Report Presented as a Website e Document Analysis Activity: Interactive Graphic e
Chapter 13 Writing Recommendation Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sample recommendation report: Tablet Study at Rawlings Regional Medical Center Document Analysis Activity: Recommendations Presented as an Audio Podcast e
Chapter 14 Writing Definitions, Descriptions, and Instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidelines for designing instructional videos Document Analysis Activity: Presenting Clear Instructions Document Analysis Activity: Mechanism Description Using Interactive Graphics e Document Analysis Activity: Process Description Using Video Animation e Document Analysis Activity: Instructions Using Video Screen Capture e Document Analysis Activity: Instructions Using a Combination of Video Demonstration and Screen Capture e Document Analysis Activity: Definition Using Video Animation e Case: Choosing a Medium for Presenting Instructions e
Chapter 15 Making Oral Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thinking Visually: Delivering the Presentation Advice on creating presentation materials using Prezi A sample Prezi presentation annotated with insights from its designer Tutorials on creating presentation slides and on recording and editing audio for recorded presentations and other projects e

Get the Most out of *Practical Strategies for Technical Communication, Second Edition*

The Second Edition of *Practical Strategies for Technical Communication* lives not only in print but also online, where you and your students will find an array of engaging resources to enhance your course. Bedford/St. Martin's offers resources and format choices that help you and your students get even more out of your book and course. To learn more about or to order any of the following products, contact your Macmillan sales representative, email sales support (salessupport@macmillan.com), or visit the website at macmillanhighered.com/ps2e.

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LaunchPad provides engaging content and new ways to get the most out of your course. Get an **interactive e-book** combined with **unique, book-specific materials** in a fully customizable course space; then mix our resources with yours.

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- LaunchPad also includes access to a **gradebook** that provides a clear window on the performance of your whole class and individual students, overall and on individual assignments.
- A **streamlined interface** helps students focus on what's due, and social-commenting tools let them **engage**, make connections, and learn from each other. Use LaunchPad on its own or integrate it with your school's learning management system so that your class is always on the same page.

LaunchPad for *Practical Strategies for Technical Communication*, Second Edition, includes the following book-specific media materials:

- **Cases** Previously located at the end of each chapter, these document-based cases now live online, making it easy for students to familiarize themselves with the case scenarios, download and work with related documents, and complete their assignments.
- **Document Analysis Activities** The online equivalent of the Document Analysis Activities included in the print book, these models introduce students to the kinds of multimedia documents that can exist only online—such as a recommendation report presented as a podcast and a definition delivered via video and animation. Each model is accompanied by a set of assessment questions to guide students in their analysis.

- **Downloadable Forms** Students can download and work with a variety of forms discussed throughout the text, including an audience profile sheet, a team-member evaluation form, and an oral presentation evaluation form.
- **LearningCurve** LearningCurve is an adaptive, game-like quizzing program that helps students master comprehension and application of the course material. LearningCurve activities cover the technical-communication environment, audience and purpose, research, organizing and emphasizing information, writing effective sentences, and communicating persuasively. Activities on reading and grammar topics, including common issues for multilingual writers, are also available.
- **Team Writing Assignment Modules** Based on *Team Writing* by Joanna Wolfe, these modules focus on the role of written communication in teamwork. The modules are built around five short videos of real team interactions. They teach students how to use written documentation to manage a team by producing task schedules, minutes, charters, and other materials and also provide models for working on large collaborative documents.
- **Test Bank** Instructors using LaunchPad have access to a robust test bank that offers multiple-choice, true/false, and short-answer questions for each chapter.
- **Tutorials** Engaging tutorials present digital tips and introduce students to helpful multimodal composition tools, such as Prezi and Audacity, providing guidance on how to best use them for projects. Documentation tutorials provide a visual way for students to learn citation.

For a complete list of LaunchPad content, see pages i and ii of this book.

To get the most out of your course, order LaunchPad for *Practical Strategies for Technical Communication* packaged with the print book at a **significant discount**. (LaunchPad for *Practical Strategies for Technical Communication* can also be purchased on its own.) An activation code is required. To order LaunchPad for *Practical Strategies for Technical Communication* with the print book, use ISBN 978-1-319-04774-0.

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Document-Based Cases for Technical Communication, Second Edition, by Roger Munger, Boise State University, offers realistic writing tasks based on seven context-rich scenarios, with more than 50 examples of documents that students are likely to encounter in the workplace. To order the textbook packaged with *Document-Based Cases for Technical Communication* for free, use ISBN 978-1-319-04773-3.

Team Writing by Joanna Wolfe, University of Louisville, is a print supplement with online videos that provides guidelines and examples of collaborating to manage written projects by documenting tasks, deadlines, and team goals. Two- to five-minute videos corresponding with the chapters in *Team Writing* give students the opportunity to analyze team interactions and learn about communication styles. Practical troubleshooting tips show students how best to handle various types of conflicts within peer groups. To order the textbook packaged with *Team Writing*, use ISBN 978-1-319-04775-7.

Instructor Resources

You have a lot to do in your course. Bedford/St. Martin's wants to make it easy for you to find the support you need—and to get it quickly.

Computerized Test Bank for Practical Strategies for Technical Communication, Second Edition, is a new test bank that features multiple-choice, true/false, and short-answer questions for every chapter in the text. The test bank offers a convenient way to provide additional assessment of students. Instructors using LaunchPad will find the test bank material available in the “Resources” section, where they can add the items they wish to their units for the course. The test bank files are also available to download from the Bedford/St. Martin's online catalog macmillanhighered.com/ps2e/catalog.

Instructor's Resource Manual for Practical Strategies for Technical Communication, Second Edition, is available in the “Resources” section of LaunchPad and as a PDF file that can be downloaded from the Bedford/St. Martin's online catalog macmillanhighered.com/ps2e/catalog. In addition to sample syllabi, chapter summaries, and suggested teaching approaches, the *Instructor's Resource Manual* includes suggested responses to every Document Analysis Activity, exercise, and case in the book. The manual also includes a unique series of teaching topics.

Additional Cases and Exercises for every chapter are available in LaunchPad, and you can choose which ones you assign to students. Suggested responses to each case and exercise are also available.

Lecture Slides are available to download and adapt for each chapter.

Acknowledgments

All of the examples in this book—from single sentences to complete documents—are real. Some were written by my students at Boise State University. Some were written by engineers, scientists, health-care providers, and businesspeople, with whom I have worked as a consultant for more than 40 years. Because much of the information in these documents is proprietary, I have silently changed brand names and other identifying information. I thank the dozens of individuals—students and professionals alike—who have graciously allowed me to reprint their writing. They have been my best teachers.

The Second Edition of *Practical Strategies for Technical Communication* has benefited greatly from the perceptive observations and helpful suggestions of my fellow instructors throughout the country. I thank Lisa Angius, Farmingdale State College; Katie Arosteguy, University of California, Davis; Monique Babin, Clackamas Community College; Jenny Billings Beaver, Rowan Cabarrus Community College; Sheri Benton, University of Toledo; Charles Bevis, University of Massachusetts Lowell; Olin Bjork, University of Houston–Downtown; An Cheng, Oklahoma State University; Elijah Coleman, Washington State University; Crystal Colombini, University of Texas at San Antonio; Teresa Cook, University of Cincinnati; Matthew Cox, East Carolina University; Ed Cuoco, Wentworth Institute of Technology; Jerry DeNuccio, Graceland University; Charlsye Smith Diaz, University of Maine; Carolyn Dunn, East Carolina University; Tomie Gowdy-Burke, Washington State University; Sandy Johnston, University of Maryland Eastern Shore; Amber Kinonen, Bay College; Tamara Kuzmenkov, Tacoma Community College; Jodie Marion, Mt. Hood Community College; Donna Miguel, Bellevue College; Bonni Miller, University of Maryland Eastern Shore; Mary Ellen Muesing, University of North Carolina at Charlotte; Ervin Nieves, Kirkwood Community College; Sabrina Peters-Whitehead, University of Toledo; Ehren Pflugfelder, Oregon State University; Neil Plakcy, Broward College; Kathleen Robinson, Eckerd College; Paula Sebastian, Bellevue College; Stella Setka, Loyola Marymount University; Terry Smith, University of Maryland Eastern Shore; Russel Stolins, Institute of American Indian Arts; Virginia Tucker, Old Dominion University; Gabriela Vlahovici-Jones, University of Maryland Eastern Shore; Lynne Walker, Bellevue College; Beverly Army Williams, Westfield State University; and several anonymous reviewers.

I would like to acknowledge the contributions of one of my colleagues from Boise State University, Russell Willerton. Russell developed two of the LearningCurve activities and contributed substantially to the test bank and to various instructor resources. I greatly appreciate his expertise and hard work. I wish to thank Elaine Silverstein, who developed the other three LearningCurve activities with great patience, wisdom, and care. I also wish to extend my gratitude to Jerilyn Bockerick and Alisha Webber at Cengage for

Preface for Instructors

helping to design the new “Thinking Visually” feature that appears in the Second Edition.

I have been fortunate, too, to work with a terrific team at Bedford/St. Martin’s, led by Regina Tavani, an editor of great intelligence, judgment, and energy. Regina has helped me improve the text in many big and small ways. I also want to express my appreciation to Joan Feinberg, Denise Wydra, Karen Henry, Leasa Burton, Molly Parke, Andrea Cava, Eliza Kritz, Anna Palchik, Carrie Thompson, Kathleen Karcher, Chelsea Rodin, Quica Ostrander, and Sally Lifland. For me, Bedford/St. Martin’s continues to exemplify the highest standards of professionalism in publishing. The people there have been endlessly encouraging and helpful. I hope they realize the value of their contributions to this book.

My greatest debt is, as always, to my wife, Rita, who, over the course of many years, has helped me say what I mean.

A Final Word

I am more aware than ever before of how much I learn from my students, my fellow instructors, and my colleagues in industry and academia. If you have comments or suggestions for making this a better book, please send an email to techcomm@macmillan.com. I hope to hear from you.

Mike Markel

Introduction for Writers

THE SECOND EDITION of *Practical Strategies for Technical Communication* offers a wealth of support to help you complete your technical-communication projects.

Annotated Examples make it easier for you to learn from the many model documents, illustrations, and screen shots throughout the text.

Note that the title is lengthy because it specifically names the main variables presented in the graph. Name all the important data in the title; it is better for a title to be lengthy than to be imprecise or unclear.

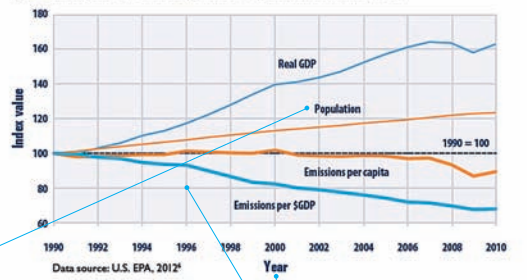
The designer has included a caption that explains how to read the graph. Because this graph is illustrating several items that are measured in different units and therefore cannot be plotted on the same scale (including population and greenhouse gas emissions), the designer chose to have the y-axis express variations from a norm. In this case, the norm is represented by the quantity of each item in the year 1990. If this graph illustrated several items that were measured in the same units, such as the sales figures, in dollars, of several salespersons, the designer would start the y-axis at zero.

Because the four data lines are sufficiently far apart, the designer placed the appropriate data label next to each line. Alternatively, the designer could have used a separate color-coded legend.

Each axis is labeled clearly.

Figure 3. U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions per Capita and per Dollar of GDP, 1990–2010

This figure shows trends in greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 to 2010 per capita (heavy orange line), based on the total U.S. population (thin orange line). It also shows trends in emissions compared with the real GDP (heavy blue line). Real GDP is the value of all goods and services produced in the country during a given year, adjusted for inflation (thin blue line). All data are indexed to 1990 as the base year, which is assigned a value of 100. For instance, a real GDP value of 163 in the year 2010 would represent a 63 percent increase since 1990.



Using different colors and thicknesses for the lines helps readers distinguish them.

The grid lines—both vertical and horizontal—help readers see the specific value for any data point on the graph.

FIGURE 8.12 Line Graph

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2012, p. 13: <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/pdfs/climateindicators-full-2012.pdf>.

Guidelines boxes throughout the book summarize crucial information and provide strategies related to key topics.

GUIDELINES Responding to Readers' Questions in a Field Report

When you write a field report, be sure to answer the following six questions:

- ▶ What is the purpose of the report?
- ▶ What are the main points covered in the report?
- ▶ What were the problems leading to the decision to perform the procedure?
- ▶ What methods were used?
- ▶ What were the results?
- ▶ What do the results mean?

If appropriate, also discuss what you think should be done next.

Ethics Notes in every chapter remind you to think about the ethical implications of your writing and oral presentations.

ETHICS NOTE

EUPHEMISMS AND TRUTH TELLING

There is nothing wrong with using the euphemism *restroom*, even though few people visit one to rest. The British use the phrase *go to the toilet* in polite company, and nobody seems to mind. In this case, if you want to use a euphemism, no harm done.


But it is unethical to use a euphemism to gloss over an issue that has important implications for people or the environment. People get uncomfortable when discussing layoffs—and they should. It's an uncomfortable issue. But calling a layoff a *redundancy elimination initiative* ought to make you even more uncomfortable. Don't use language to cloud reality. It's an ethical issue.

Document Analysis Activities, located both in print and online, allow you to apply what you have just read as you analyze a real business or technical document.

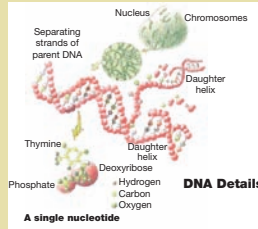
DOCUMENT ANALYSIS ACTIVITY

Integrating Graphics and Text on a Presentation Slide

The following slide is part of a presentation about the Human Genome Project. The questions below ask you to think about the discussion of preparing presentation graphics (on pp. 429–40).



Chromosome Facts



DNA Details

- number of chromosomes: 22 pairs + 1 pair sex-determining chromosomes = 46
- one chromosome of each pair donated from each parent's egg or sperm
- sex chromosomes: X,Y for males; X,X for females
- largest chromosome: #1 = ~263 million base pairs (bp)
- smallest chromosome: Y = ~59 million bp

1. How effective is the Human Genome Project logo in the upper left-hand corner of the slide?
2. How well does the graphic of DNA support the accompanying text on chromosome facts?
3. Overall, how effective is the presentation graphic?

TECH TIP**How To Create and Insert Screen Shots**

To show your reader what appears in a window on your computer monitor, you can insert a **screen shot**.

Select **Screenshot** from the **Illustrations** group on the **Insert** tab. You will see a small version of each window you have open on your desktop. Click the screen you want to show your readers, and Word will insert the picture into your document.



If your active screen has a dialog box open, you will see it pictured under **Available Windows**. Click on the picture of the dialog box to insert it.



To insert part of an active screen other than a dialog box, select **Screen Clipping**. You will see the active screen with a white shade over it. Use your cursor to draw a rectangular box around the part that you want in your screen shot.

You can modify screen shots by using the **Picture Tools Format** tab. For example, you can use the **Crop** tool in the **Size** group to hide unnecessary details.



If you plan to create many screen shots, consider using software designed to capture and edit screen images efficiently. Search the Internet for "screen capture software," such as TechSmith's Snagit.

KEYWORDS: screen shot, screen capture, format tab, crop

Tech Tips for using basic software tools give you step-by-step, illustrated instructions on topics such as tracking changes, creating graphics, and modifying templates. Keywords in each Tech Tip help you use the Help menu in your word-processing software to find additional information.

WRITER'S CHECKLIST

- Did you determine the questions you need to answer for your document? (p. 82)

Did you choose appropriate secondary-research tools to answer those questions, including, if appropriate,

- online catalogs? (p. 86)
 reference works? (p. 86)
 periodical indexes? (p. 86)
 newspaper indexes? (p. 87)
 abstract services? (p. 88)
 government information? (p. 88)
 social media and other interactive resources? (p. 90)

Did you choose appropriate primary-research methods to answer your questions, including, if appropriate,

- social-media data analysis? (p. 94)
 observations and demonstrations? (p. 96)
 inspections? (p. 97)
 experiments? (p. 97)
 field research? (p. 98)
 interviews? (p. 99)
 inquiries? (p. 101)
 questionnaires? (p. 102)
 Did you report and analyze the data honestly? (p. 105)

CASE 9: Setting Up and Maintaining a Professional Microblog Account

As the editor-in-chief of your college newspaper, you have recently been granted permission to create a Twitter account. The newspaper's faculty advisor has requested that, before you set up the account, you develop a statement of audience and purpose based on your school's own social-media policy statement and statements from other schools, newspapers, and organizations. To begin putting together a bibliography to guide your research and craft your statement, go to LaunchPad.

Cases in every chapter present real-world writing scenarios built around common workplace documents that you can critique, download, and revise.

For quick reference, many of these features are indexed on the last book page and the inside back cover of this book.

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