

ENG 238

---

# TECHNICAL WRITING: DEFINITIONS, DESCRIPTIONS, & INSTRUCTIONS

28 FEBRUARY 2018

PREPARED BY PROFESSOR JORDAN WINDHOLZ

DEFINITION

DESCRIPTION  
N

INSTRUCTION  
N



EXPLAIN

DEFINITION

DESCRIPTION

INSTRUCTION



often appear together  
in one document or in  
product information

# DEFINITION

A brief explanation

What something *is*

What something *means*

# DESCRIPTION

A longer explanation

*of features*

*of object, mechanism, or  
process*

# INSTRUCTION

Process description

Designed *to enable*

Someone *to do something*

# DEFINITIONS

## *Clarify*

A new finding or development

## *Translate*

Knowledge or information from one group to another

# DEFINITIONS

## Several Forms

Parenthetical

Sentence

Extended



# DEFINITIONS

## A series of categories

Larger category (Genus) narrowed by specifics (species)

Consider the definition for *horse*

“a solid-hoofed plant-eating domesticated mammal with a flowing mane and a tail...”

# DEFINITIONS

Specify the category

Don't describe an example

Avoid circularity

Use graphics to clarify

# EXTENDED DEFINITIONS

Graphics

Examples

Partition or Hierarchy

Principles of Operation

# EXTENDED DEFINITIONS

Comparison and Contrast

Analogy

Negation

Etymology

# DESCRIPTIONS

Objects

Mechanisms

Processes

# DESCRIPTIONS

Objects

Whole

Mechanisms

Part / Whole

Processes

Activity

# DESCRIPTIONS

Focus on *scope*

Introduce *clearly*

Provide *detail*

Conclude *briefly*

# INSTRUCTIONS

Follow writing process

BUT INCLUDE

*Usability Testing*



# INSTRUCTIONS

Consider *audience*

Consider *presentation*

Consider *safety*

# INSTRUCTIONS

Use **imperative** mood

Who, Why, When, What, How  
Long

# INSTRUCTIONS

Two kinds of statements

*Steps*

*What you do*

*Feedback statements*

*Description of the Effect of the step*

# INSTRUCTIONS

Step-by-step

Goldilocks rule

Not too much or too little

**YOUR DESCRIPTION**

**PROJECT**

Due Wednesday after break

You have already done

drafting in class

**YOUR DESCRIPTION**

**PROJECT**  
*Writing Process*

*Specify Audience*

*Consider Usability*

**YOUR DESCRIPTION**

**PROJECT**  
*Be Interesting*

*Write for your **AUDIENCE***

*Impress Me*