

Writing Workshop #1: Research and Planning

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NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION :: KANSAS TECHNOLOGY ENTERPRISE CORPORATION :: NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

The University of Kansas | The Ohio State University | Pennsylvania State University
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Outline

1. Goals of REU program
2. Outline and goals of writing workshops
3. Technical communication definition
4. Technical communication checklist
5. Research and planning process
6. Writing assignment #1



REU Program Goals

1. Provide a challenging and nurturing environment for all students.
2. Prepare students for research at the graduate level.
3. Establish and sustain connections between individuals and institutions.
4. Deliverables:
 - Completed Tasks (for example, UAV construction)
 - Student Papers, Reports, and Presentations
5. Engage students in the grand challenge of global climate change.



Writing Workshop Outline

Date	Reading Assignment	Writing Assignment	Discussion
June 6	Markel, 98-110 Blake & Bly, 3-19	n/a	Research & Planning
June 13	Markel, 128-149	Sources	Outlining & Organizing
June 22	Markel, 225-248 Blake & Bly, 63-74	Outline	Coherent & Effective Writing
June 27	Markel, 574-583	Body paragraphs	Using Sources Properly
July 5	Markel, 546-567	Quotations and references	Presenting Data; Writing Abstracts
July 11	Markel, 626-652	Rough draft	Presentations
July 18	n/a	Second draft; abstract	Presentation Feedback; Wrap-Up



Definition of Technical Communication

- Goal: to transmit technical information accurately
- Usually deals with an object, process, system, or abstract idea
- *Content* and *accuracy* are the focal points, not style or emotion



Technical Communication Checklist

(from Blake & Bly, pp. 4-18)

Good technical communication is ...

- Technically accurate
- Useful
- Concise
- Complete
- Clear
 - Reliant on short and simple words, sentences, and paragraphs
 - Free of jargon
 - Logically ordered
 - Supported with graphics when necessary
- Consistent
- Correct in spelling, punctuation, and grammar
- Targeted to a well-defined audience
- Well organized
- Interesting



The Research and Planning Process

(from Markel, pp. 99-100)

- Analyze your audience.
- Analyze your purpose.
- Analyze your subject.
- Work out a schedule and a budget for the writing project.
- Visualize the deliverable.
- Determine what information will need to be part of that deliverable.
- Determine what information you still need to acquire.
- Create questions you need to answer in your deliverable.
- Conduct secondary research.
- Conduct primary research.
- Evaluate your information.
- Do more research.



Avoid magical thinking.

- “The paper will write itself.”
- “I don’t want to do this now, but I won’t mind doing it later.”
- “The reader can read my mind.”
- “I’ll do the same thing I did last time, but it will have a different result.”
- “Spellcheck will catch all my mistakes.”
- “I work best under pressure.”





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WHERE DISCOVERIES BEGIN

Questions?

Writing Assignment #1



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