Sentence Definitions

There are times when a few words are not enough to explain a technical term. In this case, the definition provided needs to be more extensive. Sentence definitions can provide the additional information needed to help increase comprehension.

Single Sentence definitions are an explanation of a word using one sentence. These are more formal explanations than parenthetical definitions. Sentence definitions follow a similar form, which includes:

- The word being defined
- The class to which the word belongs
- The feature that distinguish the term from other words

For example, 'The heart is an organ that pumps blood through the body.' Notice that the word being defined is provided first (heart), then the word is put into a class or category (organ), and finally, distinguishing features are explained (pumps blood).

Example: computer

A computer is a machine that can store and process information.

Keeping the word-class-distinguishing feature format allows the readers to compare the word to terms they may already know, while also understanding how it differs from those words, which improves comprehension.

Extended Definitions

Although sentence definitions provide more specific details to define a word, there are times in technical writing when the term is so important to the document or so complex in its meaning that an entire paragraph or more is needed to help explain the term. This is when an extended definition is necessary.

Extended definitions are the use of a paragraph or more to expand on a word that may be difficult to comprehend. An extended definition almost always starts with a sentence definition, but then expands on the word by providing additional sentences about one or more of the following:

- The function of the term
- The location of the term
- The physical traits of the term

- The causes and effects of the term

Example- Computer -

A computer is **a machine that can store and process information**. Most computers rely on a binary system, which uses two variables, 0 and 1, to complete tasks such as storing data, calculating algorithms, and displaying information.