

Technical Descriptions

Technical descriptions

Descriptions of an object or tool

Descriptions of processes

Logical order in descriptions

- Move from
 - General to particular
 - Familiar to new
 - Obvious to surprising
 - Distant to close-up
 - One idea at a time
- Have in mind the image of a reader's dawning understanding, not an imitation of the system/product described

Answer these questions

- What is it like?
- What is it used for?
- What does it consist of?
- How does it operate?
- How do you use it?

Techniques in writing descriptions

- Comparisons
 - It may be helpful to compare an unfamiliar object to a familiar one
- Analogies
 - A formal comparison based on resemblances of two unrelated objects or ideas
 - E.g. current flow and water flow
- Avoid technical slang
 - What are some slangs used in your area?
- Think about your use of cliches
 - The blade is as sharp as a knife
 - It operates at lightning speed
- Use precise terminology
 - Avoid vague and subjective terms like nice, good, a lot, really
 - When necessary use modifiers/adjectives that actually add meaning to the reader

Explanations

- What is there
- Why it is there
- How it works

Steps to follow in writing explanations

- Give a general definition
 - Aim, purpose or result of the process/system
 - Why is it being done
 - Comparison to a familiar process
- General statement of the theory that lies behind the process
- General statement of how it is operated
- Over-view of components
- Details of individual elements in the system and the way they operate
- Fit the details into the larger pattern: repeatedly stress sequence and aim

Formal assignment
due: 17th November (no extensions)
Marks: 10

- Following today's lesson, write a description of your favourite software in around 250 words.

WARNING

WARNING: YOU MAY DO RESEARCH ON THE WEB BUT EVERYTHING YOU WRITE MUST BE THE PRODUCT OF YOUR OWN THINKING AND WRITING: NOTHING SHOULD BE SIMPLY A COPY OF SOMEBODY ELSE'S WORK. THIS MEANS YOU WON'T REARRANGE OR CHANGE A FEW WORDS TO PASS OFF SOMEBODY ELSE'S WRITING AS YOUR OWN. YOU WILL ONLY USE EXTERNAL SOURCES FOR OBTAINING FACTUAL INFORMATION. EVEN A SMALL VIOLATION OF THIS RULE MEANS YOU GET NO MARKS FOR THE ASSIGNMENT.