

FOCUS	READING ASSIGNMENTS	WRITING ASSIGNMENTS
<p>August 24 - 30</p> <p>Analyzing Technical Writing Situations</p>	<p>In D2L:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richard Straub's "Responding--Really Responding--to Other Students' Writing" • Assignment Sheet #1 • Past students' examples of Assignment #1 (Memo & Letter) <p>In Textbooks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gurak and Lannon, chpt. 5, "Structuring Information for Your Readers" • Gurak and Lannon, chpt. 10, "Memos and Letters" 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Class Discussion #2: Respond to at least 1-2 peers posts from last week by midnight Wednesday, Aug. 26. Worth up to 5 points. 2. Writing Workshop #1: Post a draft of your Rhetorical Analysis Memo (Part# 1, Assignment #1) to your workshop no later than midnight Sunday, Aug. 30.

Welcome to our second week—and great work so far everyone.

LAST WEEK, we discovered

- **Effective writing is rhetorical writing:** the writer considers audience biases (cultural, economic, social, etc.); education; reading styles; etc. to decide first on the best medium (letter, email, memo, etc.) and then what content to include. Style and tone and the use of jargon (or not) in technical writing all depend on the audience, i.e. the people slated to read the technical document. This concept will support your writing all term, including giving helpful feedback to peers this week and writing a successful set of instructions, so please take time to consider and understand its implications.
- **Effective technical writing is accessible—i.e. diverse readers can access the same information.** To do this, practice what I call the four Cs of technical writing:
 - **Conciseness**, which is covered well in this [OWL link](#). I will continue to stress this all term, but encourage you to read through these links now as we head into our first assignment. Essentially, you want to be as efficient as possible with your word choices. Get rid of any words, phrases or sentences that don't convey meaning. Often, there are a lot we can remove without sacrificing meaning to make our writing more direct and less wordy.
 - **Correctness** (correct grammar, mechanics and syntax)
 - **Concreteness** (specific, accurate language)
 - **Clarity** (which is achieved by concise, correct and concrete writing)

THIS WEEK we focus on analyzing professional writing situations—probably the most critical concept we’ll discuss all term. As is repeated throughout the readings for this course, failure to understand audience needs and assumptions is the number one reason technical and professional communication fails. Taking the time to analyze audiences, purposes, and contexts in depth is essential to developing effective technical and professional documents.

- FIRST**, read the required readings listed above. Take your time with the material please and read my chapter highlights at the end of this announcement.
- SECOND**, respond to at least one others post in [Class Discussion #2](#). To do this effectively, read Straub’s article about providing helpful feedback to peers, which is specific, constructive and thorough.
- THIRD**, draft a MEMO according to PART 1 of Assignment #1. This Rhetorical Analysis MEMO serves as a brainstorming exercise for next week’s assignment, a formal complaint letter stating a specific grievance and requesting a specific action to remedy that grievance. Specific assignment requirements and details are spelled out in Assignment Sheet #1.

WRITING & READING CONSIDERATIONS:

- **Read Past Student Example for Assignment #1.**
 - The first example is a [student’s rhetorical analysis memo and complaint letter](#). The RA serves as a necessary brainstorming for a successful letter—which is why I am requiring you spend time this week writing the memo (and therefore really considering audience) before drafting your letter next week (though of course you can get a head start on the letter and compose a draft this week, too).
 - The second is a [letter I wrote](#) regarding a packet of cashew butter that contained what I initially thought were pebbles but which turned out to be hardened goji berries. My daughter nearly cracked a tooth. I bought a second packet hoping the first was fluke and the same thing happened: though this time I nearly cracked a tooth. So I wrote a letter. And two weeks later, received several free packets of cashew butter in the mail along with a thank you note. Now, nearly two years later, they have changed the recipe to account for the potential danger (and, likely, lawsuits) by swapping dried berries for goji powder.
- **Understand the Importance of a Rhetorical Analysis.** Before I wrote my letter to Yumbutter, I did some research. I looked up their company online and read a bit about their mission and their founders. Young, hip folks. With this in mind, I shaped the tone and length of my letter to best fit their “style.” My language was formal, yet conversational. I did not focus on anger—which rarely elicits anything but more anger—but the issue and my purpose for raising it. **This is thinking and writing rhetorically, an essential step in writing any effective technical document.**

- **Consider, too, that people are impressed by letters.** Most people are too busy to sit down and write one—let alone print it, address an envelope and send it off. So if you do, you are likely to get a response. And often, some version of what you ask for. It's a win-win: they learn how to better serve their customers; you get your voice heard and sometimes money and goodies to boot.
- **Understand the difference between the Rhetorical Analysis (RA) Memo and the Complaint Letter:** The former is a **brainstorming exercise** that clearly and specifically identifies readers and their probable concerns/questions; thinking through such details ensures that you, the writer, will best meet the needs of the reader(s) and therefore clearly convey your message. You wouldn't necessarily share the RA Memo with anyone (except in this class); the letter, of course, would be sent or emailed as an attachment to your specific reader.
- **Completing the RA Memo will ensure rhetorical thinking, which is essential to writing an effective letter.** Writing will be easier, too, based on your careful and comprehensive analysis of those most likely to read your one-page letter. Clearly, one serves the other, but because purpose, format and readers are different, they are remarkably different documents.

WRITING WORKSHOP (WW) Details

Between now and midnight Sunday, you will share your MEMO with a small group of 5 readers in [Writing Workshop #1](#). Once you log onto the WW discussion, you will only be granted access to your group, so don't worry about navigating anywhere special on your end.

Writing Workshop Groups	
Grp #	Grp Members
1	Kallie R., John J., Elise McK., Amanda B., Alex L.
2	River K., Noah M., Nicole F., Kylie K, Dana P.M.
3	Spencer K., Morgan K., Marki S., Jake T., Alison C.
4	Kayleen K., Ian P., Cristina C., Arash A., Aaliyan K.
5	Seth J., Mikayla A., Maya K., Jonathan N., Enzo M.
6	Wonbin B., Trevor M., Rosemary S., Mia K., Luke S.
7	Toby W., Sheyenne G., Marena M., Katelyn B., Emily S.
8	Sydney T., Samantha M., Peter C., Cody F., Avery A
9	Nico M., Kathryn J., Gage H., Cooper W., Christian R.
10	Savannah S., Raina B., Olivia Y., Chase K., Andrew L.

Your initial WW#1 post is due **Sunday, Aug. 30, by midnight**; your response to a peer is due during week 3 (**midnight Wednesday, Sept. 2**) in WW #1. Combined activity for each week is worth **up to 5 points**.

READING NOTES

Gurak and Lannon, Chapter 5: “Structuring Information for Your Readers”

- Assessing readers for word choice and medium is important; but so too is how you structure individual pages within documents to best reach your readers. Learn about specific ways to do so in this chapter.
- Why do Gurak and Lannon say that chunking is “handled differently on the Web than on the printed page” (83)?
- What is the difference between spatial, chronological, problem-solution, and cause and effect sequencing? In what situations might they be used? (83-84)
- What is the purpose of an overview? What might it include? (87 – 90)
- Other issues that strike you as particularly important or worth discussing in this chapter?

Gurak and Lannon, Chapter 10, “Memos and Letters”

- Different organizations “have different preferences about when memos should be used in place of emails.”
- “Because memos are often read rapidly by busy recipients, they must follow this consistent, predictable format” (178).
- Gurak and Lannon stress that a memo should have just one topic (178). Why do you think this is?
- Differences between direct and indirect memo approaches, and reasons for using them.
- Pay particular attention to the memo structure outlined on p. 179: an opening paragraph that clearly states the main point or purpose of the memo, body paragraphs that provide background information, and a closing paragraph that requests specific action and/or or describes specific next steps.
- Common types of memos and their different purposes (181-184).
- Review of memo strategies (185).
- Letter parts and formats, including specific guidelines for writing and punctuating the salutation (185-188).
- What are the differences between block format and modified block format?
- Advice for establishing an appropriate tone (188-192).
- What is a “you’ perspective”?
- Common types of letters, their different purposes, and their unique features and conventions (193-202).
- What’s the difference between a routine claim and an arguable claim? What are the implications for letter writers? What ethical dilemmas might either type of letter present? (195-197).
- How ethical are the guidelines given for writing sales letters on p. 200?
- Other issues that strike you as particularly important or worth discussing in this chapter?