

ENCS 282: Technical Writing and Communication

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1 Style level

1.1 Formal: suggests expertise

- Long involved sentences
- Rhetoric, rolling parallels, periodic phrasing
- Extensive vocabulary
- Impersonal tone
- Conservative grammar
- Serious, dignified attitude toward subject and reader
- Highly technical message
- Specialized readers expect highly technical data with technical terms

1.2 Informal: suggests forthrightness

- Less involved sentences without looseness of colloquialisms
- Informal without familiarity
- Conventional language, elegance, simplicity
- Serious
- No contractions or slang
- Semi-technical message
- Less qualified or specialized readers expect data to be explained and interpreted

1.3 Colloquial: suggests neighborhood friendship

- Used for speaking informally to equals
- Short simple sentences
- Fragments, contractions
- Avoidance of learned words
- Simplified grammatical construction
- Personal or familiar tone
- Non-technical

1.4 Guidelines to write a formal report

Good practices

- A tone appropriate to the specific situation (businesslike, definite, user-friendly)
- Directness
- Highly specific and concrete words that cannot be misinterpreted
- Emphasis on factual data, statistics, and measurable elements

- Logical explanations that lead to credible conclusions
- Absolute adherence to the conventions of the language in which business is being conducted
- Use of graphics to clarify and support prose
- objectivity

Bad practices

- Irony and sarcasm
- Emotionally charged words
- Liberal use of first and second pronouns
- Liberal use of contractions and information

2 Writing a paragraph

A paragraph has a topic/subject, and a focus/reason. Background questions to answer to well inform the reader: TODO

- What
- Why
- When
- Where
- Who
- How

Once the topic sentence is determined, the text can be developed using explanation, example or an anecdote. Also, it can be developed using definition, comparison, analysis, hypothesis, negativism, physical description, cause, effect, explanation and data/proof. To conclude a paragraph or a paper, either the subject and focus can be restated, or a prediction can be made.