

# Linguistic techniques for explaining technical terms to non-technical audiences

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# What is Jargon?

Discipline specific and complex language used by experts.

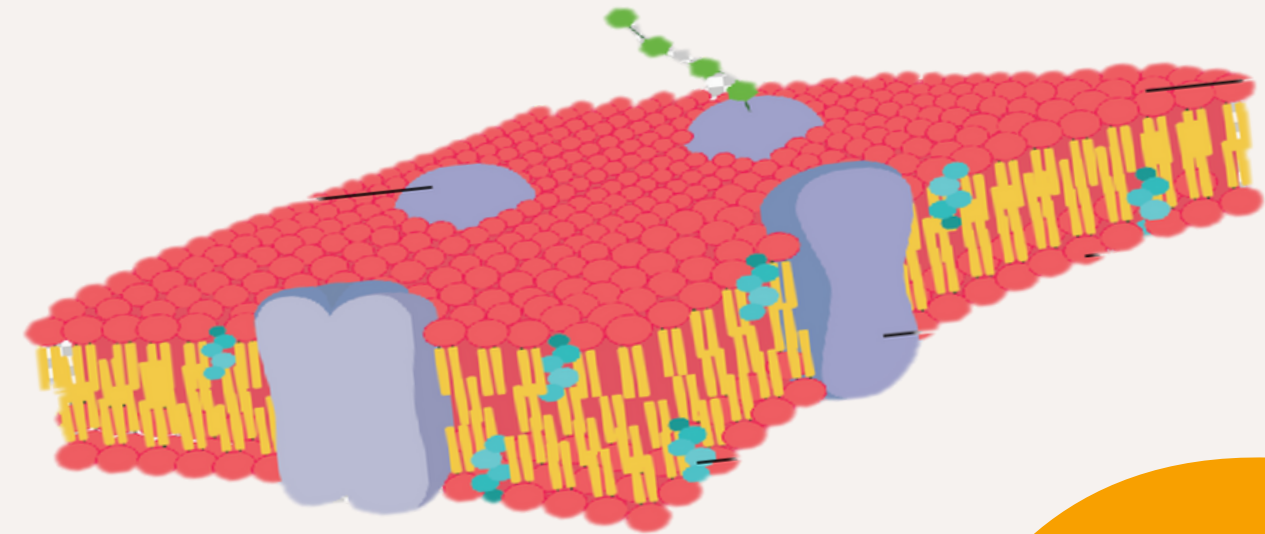
- Examples:
  - Bug
  - Hard Copy
  - Library
  - Framework
  - Bus
  - Cache

The slide features a light gray background with two large, abstract organic shapes in the corners. A brownish-orange shape is in the top right corner, and a darker orange shape is in the bottom left corner. Centered on the slide is the text "Techniques to Avoid Jargon" in a black, sans-serif font.

# Techniques to Avoid Jargon

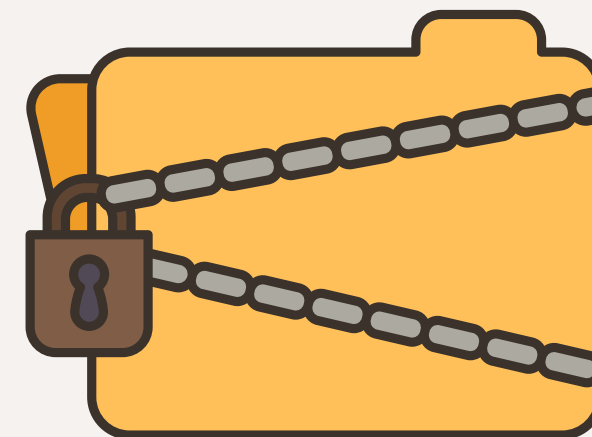
# Analogies

- Compare technical concepts with something familiar to the audience.
  - Computer Network - Highway
  - Computer's Memory - Workspace
  - Cell membrane - Gatekeeper



# Metaphors

- Explain technical concepts in a way that is **not literally true**, but helps getting the message through.
  - Encryption - Secret Code



# Personification

- Give human characteristics to nonhuman objects or concepts.
  - API - Waiter in a restaurant
  - Operating System - Conductor of an orchestra



# Strategies to keep in mind

Categorize

Exemplify

# Papers

- "Analogies, Metaphors and Mental Models for Technical Communication" by David R. Wooley and Carmen M. Simon.
- "Using Analogies and Metaphors in Technical Communication" by Karen A. Schriver.
- "The Role of Metaphors in Communicating Science" by Joshua M. Pearce.
- "The Effectiveness of Analogies in Teaching Mathematics to Non-technical Students" by Nidhi Sharma and Lalit Garg.
- "Using Visual Aids to Enhance Comprehension and Retention of Technical Information" by Mary Anne Amato and Barbara S. Chaparro.



# Papers Examples

- Some great examples:
  - computer's hard drive → file cabinet



- algorithm → recipe

```
// write a binary search algorithm
const binarySearch = (arr, target) => {
  let left = 0;
  let right = arr.length - 1;
  let middle = Math.floor((left + right) / 2);
  while (arr[middle] !== target && left <= right) {
    if (target < arr[middle]) {
      right = middle - 1;
    } else {
      left = middle + 1;
    }
    middle = Math.floor((left + right) / 2);
  }
  return arr[middle] === target ? middle : -1;
}
```



*My favourite dish* Pasta with bacon and tomato sauce

**Ingredients**

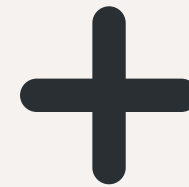
- 1 red onion
- 2 red peppers
- 120 g bacon
- 1 can (450 g) tomatoes
- 1 cup water
- olive oil
- garlic
- oregano
- 50 g pasta per person

**Method**

- 1 Cut the onion, red peppers and bacon into small pieces.
- 2 Heat some olive oil in a pan and fry the onion, red peppers and bacon.
- 3 Add oregano, garlic, tomatoes and water and cook for 20 minutes.
- 4 Cook the pasta in a big pot of boiling water.
- 5 Serve the pasta with the sauce, and enjoy!

# Conclusion

- Analogies
- Metaphors
- Personifications



- Examples
- Categories

# Discussion

# Discussion

How would you describe the jargon term "Cache" to a child:

- A **personal assistant** who keeps **important information** and documents within reach for **quick access**.
- A **snack drawer** that you keep in your room. Whenever you're hungry and **don't want to go all the way to the kitchen**, you can quickly **grab a snack** from your snack drawer.
- A **toolbox** for a **computer's processor**. Just as a toolbox stores the most **commonly used** tools for a project, a cache stores frequently used data in a **small, high-speed memory** for quick retrieval by the **processor**.

# Discussion

How would you describe the jargon term "**Cache**" to a law student:

- A **personal assistant** who keeps **important information** and documents within reach for **quick access**.
- A **snack drawer** that you keep in your room. Whenever you're hungry and **don't want to go all the way to the kitchen**, you can quickly **grab a snack** from your snack drawer.
- A **toolbox** for a **computer's processor**. Just as a toolbox stores the most **commonly used** tools for a project, a cache stores frequently used data in a **small, high-speed memory** for quick retrieval by the **processor**.

# Discussion

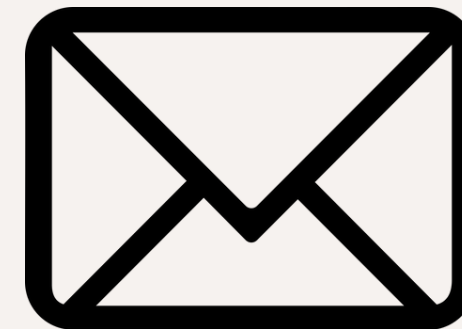
How would you describe the jargon term "Cache" to an engineer:

- A **personal assistant** who keeps **important information** and documents within reach for **quick access**.
- A **snack drawer** that you keep in your room. Whenever you're hungry and **don't want to go all the way to the kitchen**, you can quickly **grab a snack** from your snack drawer.
- A **toolbox** for a **computer's processor**. Just as a toolbox stores the most **commonly used** tools for a project, a cache stores frequently used data in a **small, high-speed memory** for quick retrieval by the **processor**.

# Discussion

- Try to explain the following jargon terms using on of the techniques that we presented:

- Email
  - to an elderly person
  - to a child



# Discussion

- Try to explain the following jargon terms using one of the techniques that we presented :
  - Bug
    - to your parents
    - to a child





**THANK YOU!**