

HS7-416: Technical Writing

Sentences

Lecture 3

Errata & Extra Information

- Loss is a noun, lose is a verb
- Writing, written, “preceding” the one before
- Hyphen is considered within words, and as a punctuation mark between words
- Resources on the Internet:
 - <http://www.cs.rmit.edu.au/~jz/writing.html>
 - www.m-w.com

Main Points

- Stressing forming *clear* and “correct” sentences
 - What a sentence is
 - Lots of examples
- The “proper” use of punctuation marks
 - A quick review of punctuation marks
 - Lots of examples

Forming Sentences

- A sentence should form a *complete* statement
 - When James got up this morning
 - he noticed that the postman had already called.

Forming Sentences

“At universities the importance of teamwork is taught by means of group assignments. Where a group is set a task with a solution that consists of many elements. The elements are divided among the group members so that each member is responsible for one particular part. This type of approach teaches students the idea of responsibility as well as how to be an active member of a team. Since each member must make a useful contribution before the group task can be a success.”

Forming Sentences

- Should contain a verb:
 - I tried the door. Locked. What now?
 - Another example.
- Keep the sentences short

Punctuation Marks

- 1-The number of members within a team depends on two factors; the size and complexity of the project.
- 2-A quality management system should be based on existing systems; amended and supplemented where necessary to conform with BS 5750.
- 3-Control should be exercised throughout the whole process from start to finish, products within a subcontractor's work may have to be included.
- 4-What are the main problems with the current system.

Punctuation Marks

- Full stop [.] , Comma [,],
 - I've used my new calculator, the one with the special functions, to check the calculation.
 - I've checked my calculations, and Dave thinks you should check yours.
 - However, hard work alone is not enough.
 - We have completed the calculations, the drawings, the model and the report.

Punctuation Marks

- Semicolon [;]
 - I've checked the calculations. Now we can work on the model.
 - Links two sentences that *could be* separate
- Colon [:]
 - "Introducing our special guest for tonight: Alexander the Great"
 - Some things are essential: passport, travellers cheques...
- Paragraph
 - New topic, line of thought. More than one line.

Punctuation Marks

- Brackets [()]
 - If omitted, still make sense: "They are often used to suggest a change of tone: the remarks in brackets may be more personal or light-hearted (or less important)."
 - [].]
 - But in case of whole sentence, or group of sentences [.]
- Dash [-]: informal

Punctuation Marks

- Hyphen [-]: clarity
 - radial-flow turbine
 - vanes create radial flow at entry
 - We have planned two day-long meetings
- Inverted Commas [“”]
 - As Herman Melville wrote: "Any human thing supposed to be complete, must for that reason infallibly be faulty."
 - Not literally. The above "sentences" are not complete.
 - Recording dialogue: not used by engineers

Punctuation Marks

- Question mark [?],
- Exclamation mark [!]
 - That is not often needed when engineers write, though it may frequently be implied when they speak!

Examples

“An engineer is appointed by a client to assess whether a project is appropriate, at a later date if the project goes ahead, the engineer may be involved a great deal with the technical aspects of production.”

Examples

“It was decided after analysing the subject title, that we should concentrate our efforts on WHY it was important to know who’s who in the management of a project, rather than describing, in greater detail the roles of the various members of the team.”

Examples

“It was decided after analysing the subject title, that we should concentrate our efforts on WHY it was important to know who’s who in the management of a project, rather than describing, in greater detail the roles of the various members of the team.”

“It was decided, after analysing the subject title, that we should concentrate our efforts on WHY it was important to know who’s who in the management of a project, rather than describing the roles of the various members of the team in greater detail.”

Examples

“Four months later, the contractors, reported that they were down to their last £1m. In other words, they were broke. Which stopped the banks from paying any additional cash, until they had complete assurance on the costs of completing the tunnel.”

Examples

“We must educate people, and change their attitude to engineering. If we fail to do so, there will be no one to blame, but ourselves.”

“The electronics industry has been healthy compared with other industries this can be clearly seen in the attached graphs.”

Examples

“This, coupled with high interest rates has caused many small engineering firms to cold.”

“Engineering will continue to be misunderstood, and we graduate engineers, are the ones who will suffer most.”

“The wall is relatively thin but, it is strengthened at regular intervals by buttress support.”

Examples

“Although these machines rarely need maintenance, do not have regular breaks like their human counterparts and do not arrive late they were not developed to replace humans.”

“Another interesting idea, is one that is currently used in Houston Texas.”

“There is no requirement for the engineer to be present, isn’t this unsatisfactory.”

The Last Comma in a List

•Simple list

- Paul, Mary, Mark and Jo

•Complex list

- For each overflow, I carried out a thorough survey on site, made detailed design calculations, prepared a plan and section, and supervised the completion of the contract drawings.

Summary

- Forming clear sentences
- Punctuation marks and their use
- Lots of examples