

# Documentation By, and For, Developers

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# 1 Welcome

## Acknowledgement of Country

San Francisco Bay Area Peninsula  
Ancestral home of the Ramaytush Ohlone

# 2 Who?

## Who Are the Docs For?

If nobody is reading them, there is no reason to write them.

## Example: Configuration Management

- Ansible
- Salt
- Puppet

## You

Look out for number 1!

## Team

Context

## Contributors

People working on the core (for first time)

## Developers

People building on the code plugins

## Users

- Writing YAML files
- Debugging YAML files

## Hats, not People

Everyone plays multiple roles!

## Personas

- Specific
- Concrete

### **What Do They Know?**

(And remember)

### **What Do They Want?**

Not bedside reading

### **What Are They Missing?**

Next step

### **What Are They Looking For?**

- Keywords
- Search terms

## **3 Kinds of Documentation**

### **Quickstart**

Generic guide

### **Quickstart: Good For**

Making something work

### **Quickstart: Bad For**

Troubleshooting

### **Tutorial**

A specific path

### **Tutorial: Good For**

Common use-case

### **Tutorial: Bad For**

Advanced use-cases

### **Example**

Documented sample

### **Example: Good For**

Copy-paste

### **Example: Bad For**

Non-specific use case

**Reference**

What does each thing mean/do

**Reference: Good For**

Answering specific questions

Troubleshooting

**Reference: Bad For**

Getting started fast

**FAQ**

Actually F

**FAQ: Good For**

Common stumbling blocks

**FAQ: Bad For**

Advocacy

## 4 Beyond Prose

**Screenshots**

RoI

**Diagrams**

- Great: Relationships
- Good: Structure
- Bad: Control flow

**Tables****Lists**

- Bullet
- Number
- Title

**Examples**

Self-contained vs. Succint

## 5 Good Documentation

### **Paying Rent**

Why is this sentence here?  
Why is this word here? ?  
Why is this word here?

### **Feedback**

Robots don't read

### **Accuracy**

Be concrete, be correct

### **Redundant**

Do Repeat Yourself

### **Organized**

Order  
Cohesion

### **Clear Titles**

Is this what I need?

### **Learning Flow**

Now, draw the rest of the owl

### **Unambiguous**

Technical terms are useful

### **Keep Scope**

Who is this for?  
What are they trying to do?

## 6 Avoid

### **What Not To Do**

Comic relief

### **Fancy Words**

Thusly, this API could be utilized in the denounment of your function...

### **Assumptions**

You already know...

**Insult**

Simply, all you need to to do is just pass a prime argument. Obviously, Mersenne primes are not a good idea here...

**Verbose**

count: How long to count for.  
This should be a number between 1 and 5.  
For example, 6 would not be a valid argument.  
Neither would 0.  
The number 9 is right out!

**Terse**

count: The count

**Inexact words**

count: The bound of the count

**Tangents**

count: Number between 1 and 5 to count to. The performance implications here depend on exactly how you define big-O notation.  
In general, there are several ways to define big-O notation, which are not completely equivalent.

**Rationalize**

count: A number from 1 to 5. Limiting the upper bound to 5 makes the implementation much simpler, and few people need to be able to count to higher numbers.

**Mislead**

count: Any number is supported here.

## 7 Tooling

**Language Native**

- JavaDoc
- Rust docs
- Etc.

## **Sphinx**

- Integration with (some) language native
- Long-form prose
- Semantic mark-up

## **MkDocs**

- Easier to get started
- Less functionality

## **Continuous Integration**

- Minimum: Build
- Medium: Lint/checks
- Awesome: Generate with link

## **Example Testing**

Partial line selection

## **Development Flow**

Doc change in same patch?

## **In or Out?**

- Reference
- Tutorials
- Guides
- Who is authoring?

# **8 Conclusion**

## **Final Thoughts**

- Just do it
- You'll suck
- You'll get better

### **Take Aways**

- Who?
- What?
- How?