Technical writers, also called technical communicators, prepare instruction manuals, journal articles, and other supporting documents to communicate complex and technical information more easily. They also develop, gather, and disseminate technical information among customers, designers, and manufacturers.

### Duties

Technical writers typically do the following:

* Determine the needs of end users of technical documentation
* Study product samples and talk with product designers and developers
* Work with technical staff to make products easier to use and thus need fewer instructions
* Organize and write supporting documents for products
* Use photographs, drawings, diagrams, animation, and charts that increase users’ understanding
* Select appropriate medium for message or audience, such as manuals or online videos
* Standardize content across platforms and media
* Gather usability feedback from customers, designers, and manufacturers
* Revise documents as new issues arise

Technical writers create operating instructions, how-to manuals, assembly instructions, and “frequently asked questions” pages to help technical support staff, consumers, and other users within a company or an industry. After a product is released, technical writers also may work with product liability specialists and customer service managers to improve the end-user experience through product design changes.

Technical writers often work with computer hardware engineers, scientists, computer support specialists, and software developers to manage the flow of information among project workgroups during development and testing. Therefore, technical writers must be able to understand complex information and communicate the information to people with diverse professional backgrounds.

Applying their knowledge of the user of the product, technical writers may serve as part of a team conducting usability studies to help improve the design of a product that is in the prototype stage. Technical writers may conduct research on their topics through personal observation, library and Internet research, and discussions with technical specialists.

Some technical writers help write grant proposals for research scientists and institutions.

Increasingly, technical information is being delivered online, and technical writers are using the interactive technologies of the Web to blend text, graphics, multidimensional images, sound, and video.