



# Simplified English, Concise Language, and Writing Style and Voice

Version 1.0



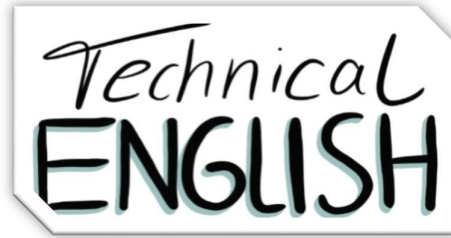
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## Introduction

This section content describes guidelines for different technical writing essential factors such as use of simplified English, concise language and maintaining the standard writing style and voice.



## Simplified English

Even though the technical product information can be available in different languages, we assume that the original version in American English will often be used by users that do not have English as the first language. To help these users we use simplified English, that is, a well-defined subset of American English adapted for the technology area and according to our “house style”.

### Simplified English - How does it help?

- Reduces uncertainty
- One term has one definition
- Improves reading speed and understanding
- Makes translation cheaper, easier and allows automated translations
- Makes writing more efficient
- Writers write less and more quickly, though with greater precision
- Increases safety
- Limits the room for error which means less legal liability

## Concise language

To create useful information that can be clearly understood by readers, the language in technical writing must be concise. Avoiding wordiness and redundancy are two such ways to achieve a concise language.

Good technical writing clarifies jargon, presenting useful information that is clear and easy to understand for the intended audience; poor technical writing may increase confusion by creating unnecessary jargon or failing to explain it.



## Wordiness

Avoid wordiness by:

- Ensure writing sentences simple and self-explanatory.
- Ensure keeping sentences that can be read once and understood right away.
- Ensure using short, simple words, that is, avoid overly technical words or jargon.
- Ensure limiting introductory texts.
- Ensure explaining the recommended path for performing action (only one way of doing things)
- Ensure writing relevant task information in the form of instructions.
- Ensure including a note wherever necessary to help the user correct their mistakes.
- Avoid using prepositional phrases.
- Avoid using adverbs to save space; only use them when really necessary.
- Avoid using unnecessary adjectives.
- Avoid using intensifiers such as the Just, Clearly, Really, or Very etc.
- Avoid using words that can indicate assumptions such as Generally, Sometimes, Usually or Frequently etc.

## Redundancy

Using redundant words add nothing to the information and cause confusion and a loss of interest.

Avoid the following types of redundancy:

- Repeated words and phrases
- Redundant pairs
- Redundant categories
- Redundant modifiers
- Obvious implications



## Writing Style and Voice

### Active and Passive voice

When you write with an active voice, the subject of the sentence performs the action, that is, “something does something”. When you write with a passive voice, the subject receives the action, that is, “something is done”.

- Whenever possible, use the active voice in technical writing.
- The active voice is more direct and concise than passive voice.
- Passive sentences sometimes make it unclear if a system or a user must perform a task. If a passive sentence does not clearly indicate who should perform an action, make the sentence active.

#### Example:

**Do:** Delete the abcd.xml file.

**Do not:** The abcd.xml file is to be deleted.

- The passive voice can be used instead of the active voice when knowing who or what performs the action of the verb is unknown, unimportant, or unnecessary.

#### Example:

**Do:** The application generates daily status reports.

**Do not:** Status reports are generated daily by the application.



## Gender-specific language

- Do not use gender-specific language in technical information, that is do not use pronouns such as he, she, his or hers.
- Use second person imperative or use plurals (users).
- Do not use any combinations such as he/she, s/he, (s)he or his/hers.
- Use service engineer rather than service men.

### Example:

**Do:** Check the logs for errors every hour.

**Do not:** The SME must check his logs for errors every hour.

## Point of view

Point of view is the perspective from which the content is developed. The three points of view are as follows:

- First-person point of view “I, we, me, us, mine and our” (not used in technical product information)
- Second-person point of view “You” (used for procedure descriptions and instructions)
- Third-person point of view, such as objects like “The tool” (used for descriptions).

**Note:** The third-person pronouns indicating gender (for instance, he, she, his or hers) are never used in technical product information

**Note:** Do not mix second- and third-person point of view. If you write “you” to address the user throughout your texts and then change to “the user”, the user may think that the information applies to somebody else.



## Tone of voice

Tone of voice refers to a set of guidelines that define the specific jargon that any organization, department or team has selected to standardize its written communication.

Technical Writers set company's tone of voice sets rules for readers' information solution.

- It is recommended that when you address the user you use the second-person point of view, that means, "you". When writing instructions, write the sentence in the imperative form so that "you" is implied but not stated.
- Be informative and clear.
- Use informal, everyday language.
- Be supportive and positive.
- Avoid terms that create hype, for example "fantastic", "cool", and "great".
- Avoid slang and jokes.
- Avoid content that might be sensitive from a political, cultural, or gender point of view.