



Advanced technical authoring training course

Introduction

Our *Advanced technical authoring* training course teaches you to use a set of levels of edit to copy-edit, and proofread technical documents for a range of problems, including:

- Grammar
- Business standards
- Document integrity

The set of 'levels of edit' in this course are based on industry-standard best practice, and form an 'off-the-shelf' complete editorial process for your business.

In an increasingly visual culture the presentation of technical documents grows in importance. This course gives you the skills to improve the look and feel of your documents, focusing on:

- Page layout
- Typefaces and fonts
- Graphics

Technical documentation is often the result of teamwork as much as the work of one individual. This course teaches you how to work productively in a range of team roles to enhance your professionalism and increase your marketability.

Duration

Two days.

You learn how to ...

- ▶ Use an editing process structured around industry-standard criteria to improve the quality of your technical documents.
- ▶ Decide whether to apply the process in full or in part on: user manuals, online help, technical reports, tutorials and standard operating procedures.
- ▶ Make effective use of graphics to convey information and to enhance the "look and feel" of your document
- ▶ Enhance a clear authoring style.
- ▶ Give editorial feedback that helps your team improve their performance.

In addition, as part of the course, delegates are invited to bring a sample of their work to receive editorial feedback on their writing.

Who should attend?

The course is appropriate for technical writers who want to:

- ▶ Improve their skill set.
- ▶ Improve the quality of the user and technical documentation they produce.
- ▶ Understand a structured editing process.

Activity-based training

The course is practical and activity-based. Throughout the course you complete a wide range of exercises designed to illustrate the techniques taught.

Courseware and certification

Delegates receive:

- ▶ Comprehensive courseware and exercise materials to refer to and use throughout the course, and to use as a refresher following the course.
- ▶ Checklists and job aids to focus each stage of the writing process.
- ▶ Report and user manual templates that incorporate best practice design and structure as taught in the course.
- ▶ A CD containing course exercise materials, checklists and job aids for use back in the workplace.
- ▶ A certificate confirming they have attended and successfully completed the course.

After course support

Delegates are entitled to 30 days email support from Armada to help with any post-training issues.

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Course outline

► Introduction and overview

► Module 1: Copy editing and proofreading

Differentiating proof reading and copy editing

Proofreading

Copy editing

- How to mark corrections
- Using proof correction symbols
- How to read corrections

► Module 2: Business and design standards for technical documentation

Company style guides

- Required document elements: cover and title page, spine information, credit statements, contents, abstract, half title page, page numbers, consistent headings in your contents, front and back matter
- References to other documents
- Document metrics (ISO9000, etc.)
- Page layout and content follow corporate standards
- Correct project or organisation naming conventions
- Marking document tracking information on documents
- Specifying publication information (copyright, access, etc.)
- Disclaimers

Style sheets and templates

In-house corporate standards and document control

Using editorial reference guides

► Module 3: Checking document integrity

Table of contents and page numbering

Numbering pages

Sequences correctly numbered or lettered

Checking headings, keeping heading unique, reference between headings

Maintaining consistency across your document set

Checking for missing or mislabelled graphics

References, notes, and appendices

Formatting

Checking the typographic specification: body, heading, specialised notes, emphasis, design, non-text elements type specifications, leading and column width

Position of type for cover, major breaks, typical page grid

Indentation and justification practices

Layout: page orientation, lists, widows and orphans, positioning for page elements

► Module 4: Graphics

How readers process technical documents

Improving your document's functionality

Page design

- Typefaces and fonts
- White space
- Layout and alignment

Expressing information with graphics

Identifying what will work as a graphic

Conveying the right level of detail

- Photos
- Drawings
- SmartArt

Expressing figures and statistics using charts and graphs

Checking that your graphics work

► Module 5: Grammar issues

Focusing sentences to communicate to the reader:

Putting the reader first

Different types of sentence

Making your writing more concrete

Verb and noun filters

Four key grammar problems in technical authoring

Subject-verb agreement

Complete sentences

Missing information

Unreadable text and how to fix it: Four common problems

Grammar and syntax

Usage issues

Creating cohesion terms: redundancy and transitions

Using parallel construction: sentences, tables and lists, headings

► Module 6: Editing and writing with others

Planning and estimating

Attending planning meetings

Maintaining contact with SMEs and authors

Editing excellence

- How to structure your editing time
- Editing at different stages in the writing process
- Using the levels of edit

Providing positive editorial feedback

- Working productively with your documentation team
- The myth of 'constructive criticism'
- Targeting the right area
- Taking yourself out of the equation
- Communication styles: dealing with people as they are, looking for positive motivation in a potentially negative situation
- Communicating effective criticism in a supportive manner