Technical Writing for Engineers
Presented by the Libraries and the Eberly Writing Studio
Workshop Facilitators

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Workshop Agenda

1. What is PACT?
2. Basic parts of a technical report
3. PACT analyses
   a. popular text
   b. technical report
4. PACT and your own writing
PACT stands for Purpose, Audience, Conventions and Trouble spots. These four terms shape most writing (and speaking) situations. All writing is driven by a purpose -- why are we writing, what do we want to happen as the result of our communication. We all write to audiences -- people who often shape how we say what we want to say. All writing is convention driven: there are rules with respect to format, length, organization, sentence structure, etc. And finally, we can all run into trouble -- things that can get in the way of our purpose: e.g. not understanding an assignment or an audience, or audience expectations, not following conventions, etc. . .
Basic parts of a technical report

1. Front matter
2. Beginning
3. Middle
4. End
5. References
6. Appendices
## Parts of a technical report (detail)

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<table>
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Using PACT

**Purpose:** What exactly do I want to happen?

**Audience:** Who is reading, listening, or viewing?

**Conventions:** What is expected in this context?

**Trouble:** What could get in the way of my goals?
Using PACT

Take a few minutes to read “Sound Transmission and Flooring Types,” and answer the following questions:

1. **Purpose**: What is the writer’s reason for communicating?
2. **Audience**: Who is the audience, and how do you know?
3. **Conventions**: What are some of the textual features of the article (e.g. sentence length, word choice, headings, etc.)?
4. **Trouble Spots**: What could get in the way of the writer’s goals?
Using PACT

“Sound Transmission and Flooring Types”
1. **Purpose**: inform/offer advice, define, compare
2. **Audience**: people interested in do-it-yourself, home improvement projects
3. **Conventions**: layperson definitions, scannable headings, short paragraphs, short sentences, sharable via social-media, comments section for additional advice, no references, no works cited
4. **Trouble Spots**: bias (writer is not a fan of carpet, may prefer cork)
PACT Comparison

Take a few minutes to read excerpt from the technical report you’ve been provided. Then Perform a PACT analysis using the questions on the handout. Record your responses on the large sheet of paper, and be prepared to present them.

- Purpose
- Audience
- Conventions
- Trouble Spots
Additional Resources

Carnegie Mellon Global Communications Center
- Establish Novelty with Four Rhetorical Moves
- Data Visualization
- IMRaD Cheat Sheet
Take Aways

- Four key concepts shape writing situations.
- PACT can help you unpack the requirements of a writing assignment.
- PACT can help you make a plan for what you write and how you will write.
Post-Workshop Survey & More Info

Give us your feedback:
tinyurl.com/ybdv565o

For more on Technical Writing:
libguides.wvu.edu/technicalwriting
Visit The Eberly Writing Studio!

SUMMER HOURS
M & W - 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM
T, TH, & F - 10:30 AM - 2:30 PM
LOCATION
G02 Colson Hall
WEBSITE
http://speakwrite.wvu.edu/writing-studio