

Writing as an Engineer

Technical writing is hard to read!!

1 – Know the Parameters

- Refer to Lab Report Guidelines given with each lab.

2 – Be Logical

- Sequential.
 - Especially when writing your methodology/procedure
- Put items in order of MOST important to LEAST.

3 – GET TO THE POINT!

- Eliminate wordiness. Be straight forward.

Example: “I regret to say that at this point in time I basically do not have access to that specific information.”
(20 words)

Or

“I don’t know.”
(3 words)

4 – Use Facts, Not Opinions

- Fact: “The NR-48 tool features multiple programmable transmitters and a five-station receiver array.”
- Opinion: “The NR-48 is by far the best piece of equipment for our purposes.”

5 – Use Simple Words

- Start vs Commence
- Is vs Comprises
- Use vs Employ
- Try vs Endeavor
- Make vs Fabricate
- Begin vs Initiate
- End vs Terminate

6 – Use Lists

Phrases, not sentences.

7 – Be Specific, Not Vague

- Vague: “The CF553 runs faster than the RG562 but is much more expensive.”
- Specific: “The CF553 runs 84% faster than the RG562 but costs \$4,320.00 more than the CF553.”

8 – Short Paragraphs

- Technical reading is overwhelming!
- So break up paragraphs into small ideas. (In technical writing, a paragraph does not have to be 5 sentences long!)