

MECHANISM DESCRIPTION ASSIGNMENT

Description

Description

A basic practice in technical communication is describing an object (a single unit) or a mechanism (two or more combined parts). It is an effective exercise to write so readers can visualize the object without visuals. Rarely will a description of an object or mechanism be a stand-alone document; rather, the description will often be integrated into a larger work. This assignment allows us to focus on specific characteristics of writing descriptions.

Objective

Objective

Describe an object or a mechanism providing an overall description with specific details of parts without visuals.

Organization

Organization

Consider the following outline for the mechanism description.

- I. Introduction
 - A. What is the mechanism? (clarify what you're writing about)
 - B. What is the purpose of the mechanism? (you may not know what the purpose is, and that's fine)
 - C. What is the general appearance of the mechanism? (provide a general overview the mechanism)
 - D. What is the orientation of the mechanism? (orient the reader to how you're viewing the mechanism)
 - E. What are principal parts of the mechanism?
- II. Part-by Part Description
 - A. Part number 1
 1. What is the part?
 2. What is the purpose of the part?
 3. What is the appearance of the part?
 4. What is the detailed description of the part?
 - a. Shape
 - b. Size
 - c. Relationship to other parts
 - d. Methods of attachment
 - e. Material
 - f. Finish
 - B. Part number 2
 1. What is the part?
 2. What is the purpose of the part?
 3. What is the appearance of the part?
 4. What is the detailed description of the part?

Organization

- a. Shape
- b. Size
- c. Relationship to other parts
- d. Methods of attachment
- e. Material
- f. Finish

III. Conclusion.

Guidelines

Guidelines

- Do not use graphics or illustrations
- Provide a sense of order
- Establish a sense of orientation
- Do not assume too much
- Do not let the reader get lost
- Use metaphorical language
- Avoid jargon (if used, explain it)
- Describe this specific mechanism or object (not all others)
- Use landmarks to establish position then move away.
- Draw before writing.

Checklist

Checklist

- Do you have a strong, developed introduction?
- Do you orient the reader?
- Do you orient the reader throughout the description
- Do you describe each part in detail?
- Do you provide accurate measurements and details?
- Is your writing clear?

Resources

Resources

- Riordan, Chapter 10, "Describing"