



# Technical Writer

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## Job Description:

Technical writers put scientific or technical information into language that is easy for other to understand.

## Gross Monthly Income:

\$4,900

## Wages:

Average median yearly pay is about \$59,000 a year in Utah.

**Schedule:** Have a set schedule, business hours. (8-5) May work part time.



## Advancement:

As technical writers gain experience, they may move into more responsible positions. Experienced writers may become senior writers. These workers have increased responsibilities and may supervise other writers. With several years of experience, technical writers may move into project management jobs.

## Education & Experience:

- ◆ Complete High School
- ◆ Bachelor's degree
- ◆ 1-5 years experience with a technical subject

## High

## School Courses:

- ◆ Computer Applications
- ◆ Journalism
- ◆ Keyboarding
- ◆ Probability and Statistics
- ◆ Technical Writing

## Work Conditions:

- ◆ High level of social contact with editors and people they interview.
- ◆ Nearly always work indoors.
- ◆ Work as part of a team.
- ◆ Must be very exact in their work. If a step is missing from the directions, or the writing is unclear, customers may be unhappy.
- ◆ Must repeat the same mental activities, such as reviewing technical materials.
- ◆ Must meet strict deadlines on a weekly basis.

**Travel:** None

## Job Outlook:



Small

## Hours a Week:

40

## Leisure Time:

Medium

## Knowledge:

- ◆ English Language
- ◆ Computers & Electronics
- ◆ Communications & Media
- ◆ Education & Training
- ◆ Computers & Electronics
- ◆ Mathematics
- ◆ Communications & Media

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## Overview

"Depress the button so that the shutter releases and enough light gathers onto the lens in which to capture an image."  
Huh?

If you read that line, would you know what was actually being said? Probably not. "English, please," you might say. "Because I don't speak techno-babble."

Translating complicated language is the job of technical writers, who would read the line written above and rewrite it to say something as simple as, "Push the button until the shutter opens and the camera snaps a picture."

Technical writers prepare many kinds of written materials. For example, they write manuals that give detailed information on how to install, use, or repair products. They also write technical reports and journal articles. They may write sales proposals or newsletters. Their goal is to make technical information understandable for people who do not have a technical background.

Technical writers begin a project by meeting with members of a technical team to learn more about the project. They find out about the requirements, such as how long the document should be and when it must be completed. They also learn about the document's purpose and audience. The next step is research. Technical writers read any information that is available, such as product catalogs or technical journals. They study drawings or mockups of the product, or observe the product in operation. They interview people who develop or work on the product, such as scientists or engineers. They take notes as they gather information.

Next, technical writers sort and organize the information. Then they prepare an outline of the whole project. They select photos or drawings to illustrate the project. In some cases, they decide what illustrations are needed and arrange for their production. They may also draw sketches or take photos themselves.

Technical writers create a rough draft according to technical writing standards. Most writers use computers to produce their documents. Writers submit copies of the rough draft to reviewers or technical editors. Editors write corrections and suggestions on their copies and return them. Based on these suggestions, technical writers make revisions and prepare a final draft. In addition, they keep records and files of their drafts and revisions. When the final draft is accepted, writers may assist in laying out the document for publication.

Pathway:

**Marketing**