

## WRTG 393 students,

The first writing assignment will be a **technical description for two different audiences**.

You will explain to both a non-technical audience and to a specialized audience how something works.

You will choose an object or a process with which you are familiar. You will then describe this object or process to an audience that with whom you share a degree of specialization. You will also describe this object or process to an audience that has little or no background of the subject.

*Keep in mind that, if you describe a process, you are not giving instructions on how to do something. You will write a set of instructions for writing assignment #2. For writing assignment #1, if you describe a process, you will describe an activity that takes place. You will describe how a phenomenon happens or how a mechanism works.*

Your description will include pictures. The description will use visual detail in both words and images.

Examples include the following:

- You are a member of a gaming community. You could write a description of how a game operates to individuals in your gaming community. You will also describe how the game operates to an audience of non-gamers. *You would not write a set of instructions on how to play the game. You would describe how the game works.*
- You are in a branch of the military. You could write a description of how a function of your unit operates to an audience of colleagues who are also in your branch of the military. You will also describe how this function works to a non-military audience. *You would not write a set of instructions on how to do something in the military unit. You would describe how a function or process in the military unit operates.*
- You are an auto mechanic. You could write a description of how spark plugs work in a four-cylinder engine to an audience of colleagues who work in your shop. You would also write a description of how spark plugs work in a four-cylinder engine to an audience of non-mechanics. *You would not write a set of instructions on how to install spark plugs. You would describe how spark plugs work.*
- You work in technical support at a computer store. You could write a description of how a graphics card works to colleagues in your tech support unit. You would also write a description of how a graphics card works to an audience that is not familiar with computers. *You would not write a set of instructions on how to install a graphics card. You would describe how graphics cards work.*
- You work in a restaurant. You could write a description of how the serving process works during a busy Friday night. You would write a description to fellow workers at the restaurant. You would also write a description to an audience that does not work at the restaurant. *You would not write a set of instructions on how to serve food in the restaurant. You would describe how the wait staff, cooks, managers, and other staff work together in serving food.*

*Overall, chapter 20 from Markel, “Writing Descriptions,” should be read thoroughly as you begin this assignment. Different types of descriptions call for different strategies. The chapter from Markel is an excellent resource in guiding your approach. The chapter is available in eReserves in our class. On page 549, Markel provides an excellent distinction between writing instructions and describing a process. Please become familiar with that section of Markel’s chapter as you consider your topic for this assignment.*

Your descriptions should answer the following questions:

- What is the object or process? How is it defined?
- What does the object or process do?
- What does the object or process look like?
- What is the object made of? (if you are describing an object and not a process)
- How does the object or process work?
- Why should the reader be interested in your object or process?

Your descriptions should explain the following:

- Why the object or process is significant for the audience
- How each of the functions of the object or process work
- Appropriate details

### **Strategies to Consider for this Assignment:**

Your description should follow one of these styles of organization

- Spatial –
  - this style might be used when you want readers to describe an object or process according to its physical layout. For example, in describing a flatscreen television set, you might start at the top and work your way to the bottom.
- Functions in order of importance –
  - this style would be used if you want to highlight the most important functions first, the next most important functions second, etc. For example, in describing a flatscreen television set, you might start with the pixels, which make up the picture, and then proceed to describe other functions.
- Chronological –
  - this style would be used if you want to describe the object or process according to time. For example, in describing a flatscreen television set, you might start with what happens first (the user turns the television on), what happens second (the pixels respond), what happens third, etc.

## Helpful Resources

- “Writing Descriptions,” chapter from M. Markel in eReserves
- [David McMurrey’s Technical Description: What does it look like?](#)
- [Scribd description of a computer mouse](#)

### Length:

1000-1400 words total. In other words, one description could be 500-700 words or so, and another description could be 500-700 words or so.

### Due Date:

Your instructor will notify you of the due date.