Preface

Overview

In today’s workplace, professionals in all fields are expected to adapt to a variety of communication situations. Virtually everyone must be able to write routine workplace documents such as memos, emails, letters, and informal reports. In addition, employees must create more complex forms of communication such as formal reports and proposals, instructions, definitions and descriptions, Web pages, oral presentations, video presentations, and more. All the while, these professionals must also negotiate technological innovations, communicate in a global marketplace, work in teams, write persuasively, research effectively, and understand the ethical implications of the documents they produce.

We wrote Strategies for Technical Communication in the Workplace as a medium-length textbook that covers all the preceding topics thoroughly and concisely. Like the first three editions, this fourth edition of Strategies draws on the strengths of our other technical communication book, the best-selling Technical Communication (14th edition). We hope that students and faculty alike will appreciate the new edition of this distinctive textbook.

What’s New in the 4th Edition

This fourth edition of Strategies for Technical Communication in the Workplace offers many new features, with an emphasis on updated discussions and examples of digital communication technologies and with a fresh new look and feel that students will appreciate. In addition, Learning Objectives at the outset of each chapter are now tied directly into the major sections of the chapter; model documents and pedagogical features have been revised or updated; and many new end-of-chapter Applications have been added. Another important update for this edition is the digital version of the text in an innovative platform called Revel that allows for interactivity, collaboration, and more. See page xix in this Preface for more information about Revel.

In detail, we have made the following chapter-by-chapter changes for this fourth edition of Strategies:

• Chapter 1, “Technical Communication: Global, Collaborative, and Digital,” features an updated introduction to the most common types of technical documents, as well as revised discussion of interpersonal and digital factors that can lead to team conflicts and a newly-written introduction to digital technical communication.

• Chapter 2, “The Research Process in Technical Communication,” has been thoroughly revised throughout to keep pace with the rapid changes in research technologies, placing less emphasis on the distinction between online and print sources and incorporating the latest information on locating secondary sources and using various types of secondary sources. A new figure provides an example of a cover email for an online survey.

• Chapter 3, “Providing Audiences with Usable Information,” includes revised discussion and examples to help students fully understand the process of analyzing an audience’s technical background as well as expanded discussion of additional usability
factors beyond audience and purpose that technical communicators must consider, such as length, format, and budget.

- Chapter 4, “Recognizing Ethical Issues in Technical Communication,” has been updated throughout to incorporate the latest information on how technology affects ethical issues in the workplace.

- Chapter 5, “Structuring Information for Your Readers,” features a new email example demonstrating an introduction-body-conclusion structure but also foregrounding the importance of social media in the workplace, discussed in more detail later in the book.

- Chapter 6, “Writing with a Readable Style,” provides a thoroughly revised section on the importance of using unbiased language, which incorporates rather than separates the discussion of nonsexist language.

- Chapter 7, “Using Audience-Centered Visuals,” includes a new section on using visuals fairly and accurately.

- Chapter 8, “Designing User-Friendly Documents,” provides new information on using templates and other digital design tools.

- Chapter 9, “Résumés and Other Employment Materials,” has been revised throughout to keep pace with new developments in the job search process, including using LinkedIn effectively, what to now include in the contact information portion of your résumé, adapting your résumé to the specifications of various job-search sites, interviewing via Skype, and using email for follow-up communication after an interview or job offer. In addition, all sample résumés in the chapter have been revised and updated.

- Chapter 10, “Memos and Letters,” now speaks to the increasing use of email rather than hard copy to send workplace memos and letters and how writers can make informed decisions as to when and how to send them over email. In addition, the chapter presents expanded discussion on the three most common types of memos, and most of the sample memos and letters have been revised and updated.

- Chapter 11, “Definitions,” includes a thoroughly revised section on legal, safety, and societal implications of definitions as well as discussion as to when to use a glossary or hyperlinked definitions.

- Chapter 12, “Descriptions,” features a revised complex product description as well as new discussion of the safety implications of descriptions.

- Chapter 13, “Instructions and Procedures,” has been thoroughly revised to provide several new sample instructions, as well as updated information on online versus print instructions, expanded discussion of user manuals and safety and legal implications of instructions, and a new section on assembly guides.

- Chapter 14, “Summaries,” includes a detailed new section on summarizing information for social media.

- Chapter 15, “Informal Reports,” provides new information on choosing an appropriate format when delivering informal reports. In addition, all of the sample informal reports in the chapter have been carefully revised and updated.

- Chapter 16, “Formal Reports,” features expanded discussion of the format of various portions of a formal report, as well as a sample formal report that has been thoroughly revised to conform to the latest APA style guidelines.

- Chapter 17, “Proposals,” includes a sample formal proposal that has been reformatted to conform to the latest MLA style guidelines.

- Chapter 18, “Email,” has been thoroughly revised. In addition to all new email samples
throughout, the chapter now includes a new introductory discussion about the cautions of using email, a new section with examples on the three main types of workplace email, and a revised and expanded discussion of style and tone in email messages.

- **Chapter 19, “Blogs, Wikis, and Web Pages,”** now includes discussion of “universal design” of Web pages as well as a new section on fairness considerations in Web-based communication.

- **Chapter 20, “Social Media,”** has been thoroughly revised to include new discussions of personal versus workplace use of social media, using Instagram on the job, using other popular social media on the job (Reddit, Tumblr, Pinterest), and credibility and legal issues surrounding the use of social media on the job.

- **Chapter 21, “Oral Presentations and Video Conferencing,”** presents a thoroughly revised section on using presentation software, including new material on the individual benefits of using various presentation software programs such as PowerPoint, Apple Keynote, Prezi, and Google Slides.

**Key Features**

To help you get a better idea how *Strategies* works as a whole, following is a point-by-point discussion of the key features of this book.

**Complete but Streamlined Coverage**

*Strategies* includes all topics essential for an undergraduate technical communication course in a compact yet thorough format. The book covers everything technical communicators need to know—from writing basic letters and memos, to writing complex proposals and formal reports, to delivering oral presentations and writing for the Web—in roughly 500 pages. In addition, *Strategies* offers innovative coverage of emerging technologies used in the workplace, including text messages, social networks, and online videos.

**Emphasis on Student Practice**

This book is guided by the idea of providing students with practical, accessible concepts that are easy to follow and that get students writing and designing documents immediately. One key feature, as the title suggests, is the Strategies box, which provides step-by-step advice to follow in writing and discussing a given document. In addition, chapters in Parts 3 and 4 emphasize the importance of “doing” immediately via the Let’s Get Started feature; students are asked to draft their best version of each chapter’s document type or communication situation before they read the chapter. Then, as they work through the chapter content, students are encouraged to review and revise their original work. Finally, every chapter, including the foundational and “blueprints” chapters in Parts 1 and 2, includes Applications exercises, grouped into general, collaborative, global, digital, and social media categories.

**Clear Explanations and Straightforward Organization**

As we wrote and organized this book, we kept in mind five essential questions students most frequently ask: “What needs to be done?”; “What should it look like?”; “How do I do it?”; “What should be avoided?”; and “How well have I done it?”. The features described previously focus on these questions. Also, marginal notes summarize and reinforce main points in each chapter.

The chapter sequence in *Strategies* proceeds from general foundational concepts and blueprints in Parts 1 and 2 to cumulatively more complex writing and communicating situations in Parts 3 and 4.
Practical Pedagogical Features

*Strategies* includes several practical, easy-to-access pedagogical tools. These features include:

- **Chapter Outlines and Learning Objectives.** On the opening page of each chapter, the outlines provide a quick orientation to the chapter topics and sequence, and they are tied into the learning objectives, which emphasize the practical skills students can expect to acquire.

- **Strategies boxes.** Featured in every chapter, the Strategies boxes summarize key strategies discussed in the text and provide additional pointers for approaching each communication situation.

- **Checklists.** End-of-chapter Checklists summarize each chapter, and more importantly, they emphasize “doing” by asking students to check off each item as they review their work.

- **Applications.** Called “applications” rather than “exercises” to emphasize applied learning, the end-of-chapter Applications fall into four categories: General Applications (for individual practice), Team Applications (for pair or group practice), Global Applications (for highlighting global issues in workplace communication), and Digital and Social Media Applications (for highlighting the use of technology in workplace communication).

Realistic and Accessible Annotated Model Documents

Model documents resemble the kinds of documents students will write in the workplace. Accessible, engaging, and easy to emulate, most of these documents are fully annotated.

Consistent Focus on Audience and Purpose

Technical communication in the workplace is more than a mere exercise in “information transfer”—it is also a social transaction involving individuals, teams, companies, and organizations that are national and international in scope. In the contemporary workplace, a one-size-fits-all approach to technical communication doesn’t work. Effective communication must be tailored for different audiences and different purposes. Today’s communicator must be smart about researching, summarizing, and customizing information to meet many different situations. *Strategies* has therefore been designed to provide much more than a “cookie cutter” approach to creating typical workplace documents and making presentations by focusing on key rhetorical principles of audience and purpose.

The Latest Technology and Global Issues Coverage

With the Internet and digital technology at our fingertips and with companies and teams spread across the world, communication reaches a wide audience and often is transmitted instantly. We receive or convey professional information in a variety of ways—handwritten, in word-processed documents, via email or text messaging; in video format; as a Web page; via blogs, wikis, or social networks; or as live presentations—and each medium and potential audience brings with it unique challenges about how to best present the information. *Strategies* incorporates relevant technology coverage and stresses the importance of thinking about global audiences wherever relevant.

Organization of the Book

*Strategies* begins with foundational concepts, then moves to “blueprints,” and then applies the foundations and blueprints to increasingly complex documents and communication situations.

- **Part 1 (“Foundations”)** introduces the underlying concepts for creating effective technical
communication. This section provides a definition of technical communication (Chapter 1); coverage of research as a pivotal part of technical communication (Chapter 2); an introduction to the analysis of audience, purpose, and other factors (Chapter 3); and in-depth coverage of workplace ethics (Chapter 4).

- **Part 2 (“Blueprints”)** builds on Part 1 by discussing four basic considerations for approaching each type of workplace document or communication situation: understandable structure (Chapter 5), readable style (Chapter 6), audience-centered visuals (Chapter 7), and user-friendly design (Chapter 8).

- **Part 3 (“Documents”)** applies the previous foundations and blueprints, presenting increasingly complex types of print documents. This section begins with the types of documents students need to get hired and concludes with the two most complex types of documents: formal reports and proposals. Specific documents covered in Part 3 include résumés and other employment materials (Chapter 9), memos and letters (Chapter 10), definitions (Chapter 11), descriptions and specifications (Chapter 12), instructions and procedures (Chapter 13), summaries (Chapter 14), informal reports (Chapter 15), formal reports (Chapter 16), and proposals (Chapter 17).

- **Part 4 (“Digital Media and Presentations”)** provides guidance for creating documents for digital media and for giving oral presentations. Included are chapters on email (Chapter 18); blogs, wikis, and Web pages (Chapter 19); social media (Chapter 20); and oral presentations and video conferencing (Chapter 21).

- **Appendices A (“Documenting Sources”) and B (“A Brief Handbook”)** offer guidance on citations and grammar. Appendix A includes guidelines for avoiding plagiarism and documenting sources completely and accurately in both MLA and APA format. Appendix B provides a brief handbook of grammar, punctuation, mechanics, and usage. This appendix also includes useful advice on formatting lists and using transitions in written work.

**REVEL™**

*Educational Technology Designed for the Way Today’s Students Read, Think, and Learn*

Revel is an interactive learning environment that deeply engages students and prepares them for class. Media and assessment integrated directly within the authors’ narrative lets students read, explore interactive content, and practice in one continuous learning path. Thanks to the dynamic reading experience in Revel, students come to class prepared to discuss, apply, and learn from instructors and from each other.

The Revel features accompanying Strategies are as follows:

- **Journal Prompts** appear at the end of every major section in each chapter, encouraging hands-on practice through writing. Students are asked to perform brief writing activities that involve reflection, brainstorming, drafting a portion of a document, or analyzing a particular document.

- **Multiple-Choice Quizzes** help reinforce facts and concepts as students move through each major section in each chapter (the end of each major section quiz features three questions directly tied to that section) and then again at the end of the chapter (the end of chapter quiz provides five questions covering various sections of the chapter).

- **Table Drag-and Drop** activities help students remember information by matching terms with their descriptions or placing parts of complex documents in the right order.

- **Fill-in-the-Blank and True/False Quick Check** activities are directly tied to the
Strategies boxes that appear in every chapter and provide a quick means of remembering concepts presented in these important boxes.

- **Let’s Get Started** activities, which appear at the beginning of each chapter in Parts 3 and 4, encourage students to begin “doing” immediately by producing the type of draft document or communication product discussed in the chapter based on their prior knowledge.

- **Shared Writing Activities** are tied to one or more of the chapter’s Journal Prompts in Parts 1 and 2 and to the Let’s Get Started activities in Parts 3 and 4, encouraging students to share, discuss, and critique each other’s work.

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**Supplements**

Make more time for your students with instructor resources that offer effective learning assessments and classroom engagement. Pearson’s partnership with educators does not end with the delivery of course materials; Pearson is there with you on the first day of class and beyond. A dedicated team of local Pearson representatives will work with you to not only choose course materials but also integrate them into your class and assess their effectiveness. Our goal is your goal—to improve instruction with each semester.

Pearson is pleased to offer the following resources to qualified adopters of Strategies. Several of these supplements are available to instantly download from Revel or on the Instructor Resource Center (IRC); please visit the IRC at www.pearsonhighered.com/irc to register for access.

- **TEST BANK** Evaluate learning at every level. Reviewed for clarity and accuracy, the Test Bank measures this material’s learning objectives with multiple-choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, short-answer, and essay questions. You can easily customize the assessment to work in any major learning management system and to match what is covered in your course. Word, Black-Board, and WebCT versions are available on the IRC, and Respondus versions are available on request from www.respondus.com.

- **PEARSON MYTEST** This powerful assessment generation program includes all of the questions in the Test Bank. Quizzes and exams can be easily authored and saved online and then printed for classroom use, giving you ultimate flexibility to manage assessments anytime and anywhere. To learn more, visit www.pearsonhighered.com/mytest.

- **INSTRUCTOR’S RESOURCE MANUAL** Create a comprehensive roadmap for teaching classroom, online, or hybrid courses. Designed for new and experienced instructors, the Instructor’s Resource Manual includes overall teaching strategies (including general teaching ideas, advice on how to use the Revel features accompanying Strategies, and sample syllabi) and chapter-specific resources (including chapter overviews, Learning Objectives, teaching tips, additional exercises, and quizzes). Available within Revel and in the IRC.

- **POWERPOINT PRESENTATION** Make lectures more enriching for students. The PowerPoint Presentation includes a full lecture outline and figures from the textbook and Revel edition. Available in the IRC.

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—Laura J. Gurak and John M. Lannon