Unit 20 – Lesson 32

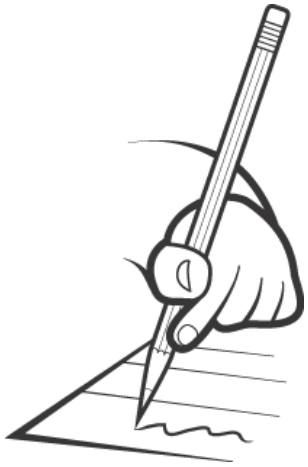
Writing Definitions – Expression of views and purpose

Definition is the statement giving the meaning of any word or term explicitly in a straight forward manner. Definitions are considered to be the foundation of technical writing. Definitions are two types - Simple and Extended

A simple definition denotes the class to which the term belongs and gives its characteristics in a brief way.

An extended definition is more elaborate which includes examples, procedures and descriptions in addition to the term, type and distinguishing characteristics.

Writing definitions helps to locate an object, concept or process within some system of knowing. While writing a definition one has to use specific language, that is it has to be scientific and technical. Apt choice of words must be used in a definition. A concept must be framed in simple but appealing manner with brevity. *Definitions are also expanded by using methods such as comparison and contrast, analogy, example and derivation. Look at the following definition.*



The XPI series is an electronic product that has been designed and built to take low DC voltage power from batteries and converted to AC power.

Extended definition

The XPI series is a DC to AC with auto line to battery transfer an integrated charging system, XPI series powers from AC power to DC source serving as an extended run UPS. When AC cable is connected to a wall socket, utility power goes to connected equipments and / or charges the battery set via charging system. In UPS mode, the XPI series automatically converts battery energy into AC power for backing up the connected devices.

Comparison

Comparison bring out the similar characteristics, aspects or qualities in two objects. While developing a paragraph, using the comparison mode, you need to decide the points of similarities and also think of specific examples to explain that similarity. The following conjunctions can be used to construct comparison paragraphs.

Similarly	**-**	**In the same way**
…likewise	**-**	**A is similar to B in that they….**
…the same	**-**	**A and B are similar**
…The same as	**-**	**Like A and B (verb)**
….also	**-**	**One way in which …..**
….too	**-**	**A similar to**
…..both	**-**	**Another way in A is**

Contrast

In contrast you bring out the dissimilar or contradictory aspects of the two main subjects. You have to think of specific examples to explain the differences.

Conjunctions and expressions to be used.

However – on the other hand

In contrast – even though + sentence

By contrast – although + sentence

But – whereas + sentence

Yet – Unlike + sentence

While

Nevertheless

All the same

Definition writing provides a simple or complex explanation of a term or concept. It also may offer a unique perspective on a common term or concept.

Simple definitions usually use the verb ‘to be’, followed by a general category and ending with more specific aspect of the term. Example A membrane is a sheet of tissue which covers or lines surface or divides an organ into lobes.

A membrane is = ….. A sheet of tissue = …... Which covers or lines surface or divides an organ into lobes =	Verb "BE" General category More specific information

When you express simple definitions, the part of the sentence that provides specific information is an adjective class. That class usually begins with **that** are **which,** but it can also begin with other relative pronouns depending on the information being provided.

Learning to write definitions of various levels is an integral part of technical writing. It helps in expressing one's views and purpose of presenting certain subject. Formal definition, informal definition (appears in brackets in a sentence to help clarify a concept), an extended definition and definitions expanded by using methods such as comparison and contrast are some of the key skills involved in writing technical descriptions.

To express one's views and the purpose of writing, using rhetorical strategies like definitions, compare and contrast, descriptions, analogy and classifications are used.

Assignment

Compile a set of terms relating to a topic that interest you like computers, maths, engineering, nature, grammar etc. and give them to a friend or classmates. Ask your friends to ask you a definition for each term and exchange roles after five words.

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Role play – Discussion speculating about future.

Role playing is learning how best to handle a situation in an honest and skilful manner. When two students take up role play the first salient feature of role play is both should be interested in playing their roles. There should not be the slightest reluctance; in fact they should be enthusiastic about the roles they should plan the parts and how they would enact their roles. In the class room they can be in their usual costume but add colour to their roles by their presentation the dialogue delivery and their expressions should explicitly tell the situation enacted. They should make the role play situation similar to the real situation.

Below given is a discussion between two friends speculating about future. Leela and Radha are two good friends since their school days One has finished engineering and the other medicine. They speculate about their future.

Leela: Radha, now that you have completed your MBBS and become a doctor, what are your future plans? Are you going for your post graduation or decided to work?

Radha: Yes, you are lucky you have a job at hand.

Leela: Ofcourse I am happy that I have a job but I am not satisfied with a mere B.E. degree I would like to go abroad and do my M.S.

Radha: Even I would love to do M.D. but the seats are very few and I am not very sure I can secure admission on merit. If I apply in a private institution I can not imagine the amount my dad has to pay for my seat. Though my dad would certainly take some loan and manage, I am convinced that I should not be such a burden. I am not happy to stop with MBBS either.

Leela: Same here, I can take a loan or my dad could finance my studies abroad; yet I feel after my post graduation when I return, my parents would want me to get married once again, the expenditure. My god! I really wonder what should we do?

Radha: I think we should have a frank chat with our parents and then decide.