Grade 7 Literacy
Week of December 14 – December 18

Lesson 1: Revising

Do not start this next assignment until you have fully completed your draft of your user manual.

Revise or rewrite your user manual so it reads more smoothly. This checklist will show you what to look for:

Edit your manual so that:

- your sentences flow easily

- your language is precise, clear, and varied

- you have used technical terms appropriately

- your information is accurate and complete

- your instructions are clearly explained and easy to follow

- you have included all the features (e.g., headings, graphics, etc.) you need to make your manual complete

Usability Test

Once you've made edits and feel confidence in the clarity of your instructions for readers, conduct a Usability Test.

Usability tests involve asking different people to read and actually use a draft of instructions. They help technical writers learn more about their audiences and what they can change in their instructions to make them more effective. You must conduct at least two usability tests of your set of written instructions.

Each person will need:

1. At least one printed copy of your Product User Manual.

2. Analyzing Technical Instructions worksheet

Tester's Role:

The tester (a family member or friend) will pretend to be the audience for the instructions.

Testers need to review the instructions, looking at it slowly page by page. Testers will look for errors such as typos and incomplete sentences, but they will primarily look for whether or not the instructions work, that is, whether the instructions make sense.

They should ask many questions:

- Are there steps missing?

- Are the directions easy to follow?

- Do the pictures accurately portray the item?

- Are the parts labeled correctly?

- How could these instructions be better?

Once each of your testers finish going through your user manual, have them complete the Analyzing Technical instructions handout (attached). If possible, print the worksheet for your testers.

Author's Role:

While the tester is testing the instructions, the author of the instructions should watch SILENTLY. The author cannot speak or help the tester. Remember, when most people use instructions, the writers are not present and users must figure things out on their own.

You can only be an observer in this process, but you will definitely want to watch closely, listen to the tester talk about problems, and take notes so that you can fix your instructions in the revision process.

Ensure you have a minimum of TWO testers complete the Analyzing Technical Instructions Sheet.

Analyzing Technical Instructions

Each of you has been given a set of written technical instructions. As a group, analyze your set of instructions for the following items. Take notes as you discuss.

1. Audience
   Who is the audience for the instructions? How do you know?

2. Purpose
   What are the instructions helping the audience do or create?

3. Rate Instructions—Easy vs. Difficult
   Are these instructions easy for the audience to use? Why or Why not?

4. Effective vs. Ineffective Elements
   Identify both good and bad parts of instructions.

5. Visual Appeal
   How does the set of instructions look? What about its the look and design that is effective or ineffective for the audience?

6. Language
   What kind of language does the document use? Is it appropriate for the audience? Give examples.