Technical Writing - Fall 2021

Text: No textbook

Instructor: Karelia Stetz-Waters

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Office Hours

Office hour times and Zoom links are listed here and updated if there are any changes.

Basic Information About the Class

Prerequisites:
WR 121 with a C or higher.

Welcome to Writing 227: Technical Writing
WR227 introduces you to the types of writing you encounter in business, industry, the academic world, and government. It examines the rhetorical nature of writing and asks you to think critically about content, audience, argument and structure.

Course objectives and outcomes in plain language:

After taking Writing 227, successful students will have learned to

- Create documents designed to help readers make decisions and solve practical, real-world problems.
- Evaluate and adapt to different technical and workplace writing situations by analyzing audience, context, stakes, and the writer's role.
- Demonstrate mastery of technical and workplace writing conventions including clean and clear design, style, and layout of print and web communications.

- Find and integrate research in written documents clearly, concisely, and logically; credit the source as appropriate.

Official course outcomes from catalog:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Analyze the rhetorical needs (the needs of their audience in relationship to the assignment) for college-level evidence-based technical writing assignments.
- Apply appropriate levels of critical thinking strategies (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation) in their written assignments, with an emphasis on technical, evidence-based analysis, reporting, application, and evaluation.
- Implement appropriate rhetorical elements and organization (executive summary, introduction, thesis, development and research-based support, visual evidence, conclusion, etc.) in their written assignments, with an emphasis on technical evidence-based analysis, reporting, and evaluation assignments.
- Locate, evaluate, and integrate high-quality information and opinion appropriate for technical evidence-based assignments.
- Craft sentences and paragraphs that communicate their ideas clearly and effectively using words, sentence patterns, and writing conventions at a high college level to make their writing clear, credible, and precise.

Course Work:
- Big Assignments (85%)
- Little Assignments (15%)
- Extra credit available

Assignment descriptions are listed at the end of the syllabus and on Moodle.

Required texts and materials:
Enrollment in this course requires successful (i.e. "C" level) completion of WR121.
- Access to a college library
- Access to a word processing program such as MS Word or Google docs
- Computer literacy

Free Version of MS Word

While Google docs is a very robust tool, it can be hard to format documents in Google docs. Word is easier and it is available free to students and teachers. Click here for details.

Class Policies, Expectations, and Resources

My Expectations for You
- Check Moodle *at least* three times a week.
- Read all Moodle announcements carefully.
- Complete all reading and assignments.
- Contact me if you are having difficulties in the class or if a personal crisis or emergency impacts your ability to succeed in the class and you would like extra help or accommodation.
- Be courteous when communicating online.
- Don't cheat or plagiarize. Violations of academic honesty will result in failure of an assignment or failure of the course.

Late Policy:
- All homework can be completed up to one week late. Late work cannot be revised.

Revision Policy
- On-time homework assignments may be revised for a higher grade. Please go to the Assignments tab and click on Revision 1 or 2 for complete instructions on revisions. I prefer that you chat with me before turning in a revision, but that is not required.

My Promise to You

I am tough but fair, and I'm here to help you in any way I can. That includes writing stuff and life stuff. If I can't help, I'll find someone who can. I check email once a day, Monday through Friday and try to empty my inbox every time. I answer student emails first, so **put WR 227 in the subject line.**

Grading Procedure
My goal is to return every assignment to you within one week of the due date. I am always happy to grade your assignment first. Just email me and let me know that you'd like priority grading.

LBCC Writing Center

Here is information on how you can access the Writing Center on Zoom using drop-in hours or scheduled appointments:

https://www.linnbenton.edu/student-services/library-tutoring-testing/learning-center/writing-support/index.php

Here's a way to send your work to the Writing Center and get a response via email:

https://www.linnbenton.edu/student-services/library-tutoring-testing/learning-center/writing-support/online-writing-lab.php

School Policies

Incompletes

If you have completed 80 percent of the course work by the end of the term but are unable, for reasons that are generally not your fault, to complete the rest, I will grant you an incomplete.

Center for Accessibility Accommodations

LBCC is committed to inclusiveness and equal access to higher education. If you have approved accommodations through the Center for Accessibility Resources (CFAR) and would like to use your accommodations in this class, please contact your instructor as soon as possible to discuss your needs. If you think you may be eligible for accommodations but are not yet registered with CFAR, please visit the **CFAR Website** for steps on how to apply for services. Online course accommodations may be different than those for on-campus courses, so it is important that you make contact with CFAR as soon as possible.

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism is a type of academic dishonesty that involves the theft of another person's idea, words, images, music/sounds, or creative works and/or deceit in the representation of who created the work by not properly crediting sources. Plagiarism,

one form of cheating or dishonesty, is not just the failure to give credit for an exact quotation. Plagiarism includes both intentional and unintentional acts, such as:

- Obtaining a paper on the Internet and turning it in as the student's own work; this is obviously intentional
- Copying sections of another's original document, photographs, artwork, songs/sounds, film, video images, lab project, or electronic files and putting the source material or text into one's own work without documentation, as if it were one's own original work;
- Copying a sentence, or an important exact phrase of two words or more, or a coined word (which may or may not have copyright protection) without the use of quotation marks and credit;
- Copying the structure of another's argument or premise, thesis, theory, design, or composition and merely translating key parts;
- Using another's results in one's own words without giving him or her credit, failing to document any borrowing when quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing, or importing and placing a graphic, sound bite or other medium.

LBCC Non-Discrimination Policy
Everyone is welcome at LBCC, regardless of whether they are black, white, Latino, native, gay, straight, Christian, Muslim, Jewish, male, female, transgendered, married, disabled, a veteran, a non-English speaker, an immigrant, or any number of other categories not listed here. What is more, LBCC sees our differences as a source of strength and an important part of education.

Assignments

These assignment descriptions are included so that students have a record of their course work. This can be helpful when transferring credits to another institution. These assignments are also listed in Moodle. You do not need to use the syllabus to get assignment descriptions.

Email Assignment

This assignment is based of the content of this article.

Goal of this assignment: Email communication is one of the primary modes of workplace communication. Good email habits will make you look professional. Good emails will get read. Poorly written emails often get ignored. Emailing effectively (including your professors) will help what you want in your work life. This assignment will help you learn this vital skill.

What is the assignment: Introduce yourself to me via email. Your goal is to show me that you are an interesting person (you are!) and a good student (you are!) Write your email using the principles of good email listed above. Emails due by Sunday. This assignment should be emailed to stetzwk@linnbenton.edu Remember to use the principles of good emailing every time you email me or any of your other professors.

How will I grade: When I grade, I'll be looking for the following:

- Salutation (Dear Professor Stetz-Waters)
- Friendly, professional content
- Paragraph breaks at least every 8 lines. (This goes for ALL assignments in this class.)
- Perfect spelling, grammar, and punctuation
- Writing that doesn't use any more words than necessary
- Pleasant close (like sincerely or respectfully)

Audience Analysis

Goals of this assignment

In this assignment you will learn more about the audience for the technical report. This assignment asks you to do two things: research current, useful information about the intended audience for your final project and describe how you will use this information to help shape the technical report you write.

Here is a sample assignment.

Remember, for this assignment, you are not researching your topic, you are researching the specific audience for your report.

Task

1. Review the technical report instructions. The audience you are researching here is the audience for that report.

2. In your adience analysis assignment, state your topic.

3. State the audience that you will reach with your technical report.

4. Write a 500+ word document that gives a research-based profile of your audience. The categories of information and specific characteristics you should consider for the analysis are listed below. Choose the ones that are most relevant to creating a well-rounded profile of your audience.

   Note: You may also research other characteristics of your audience, as long as they are relevant to the topic you have chosen.

   -- **Demographic information:** Sex/gender, age, household size, occupation, education, income level
   -- **Geographic information:** State, county, city, rural, urban
   -- **Psychographic information**: Needs, aspirations, hopes, values, interests, activities, attitudes, opinions, lifestyle, personality traits
   -- **Roles:** Action takers, advisors, creators, influencers
   -- **Communication channels:** Print, radio, television, social media

5. Conclude your analysis with a brief paragraph of how your audience research will affect the contents of your Technical Report.

6. Include in-text citation and a works cited page for the sources you used to describe your audience. The resources you choose must be credible.

7. Finally, on a separate page, include a brief write up for each source documenting the findings of your lateral reading

So far, you have started to build an idea for an audience from your imagination; **however, for this assignment you will need to do research** to answer the questions listed above.

Research Requirements for This Assignment

- Use at least five credible sources that pass the CRAAP test and appear to be reliable based on your lateral reading. Example
- Sources must meet the following requirements:
  - Be at least 1000+ words. Long articles give you depth and diversity of content.
  - If you are using online sources, they must be research-based. This slideshow illustrates how to tell if your web article is research-based.

Research Videos

Take a look at this PowerPoint and videos to help make your research process better and faster.

- How to tell if a source references another source (i.e. uses research)
- Using EBook Central
- Using the LBCC Library Databases

Format Requirements and Recommendations

Block Format

Almost all technical writing and business writing documents are written in block paragraph format. This means the following paragraphs are single-spaced. There is no indent at the beginning of a new paragraph. Paragraphs are separated by one line of blank space.

Headers
Technical writing uses headers to divide content and make it easier for readers to quickly navigate the information and find what they are looking for.

Short Paragraphs
Never include more than eight lines of text without a break.

What You Will Turn In

- **500+ word audience analysis** with in-text citations to support your claims
- **Bibliography** of sources in APA or MLA style
- **Screenshots** of your online sources that demonstrate they are research-based. You don't need to provide a screenshot if you use government, school, or nonprofit websites (ending in .org, .gov, .edu) or peer-reviewed journal articles.

How will I grade the assignment?

1. I will start by glancing at that document, looking at the headers to see whether it is easy to identify the information you have included.
2. Next, I will check if the document is presented using block text and short paragraphs.
3. I will make sure your resources match the research requirement (including whether you have included screenshots for your web resources and if you have correctly captured evidence of your online sources-that-reference-other-sources).
4. Then I will read your document carefully, asking myself, "Do I have a clear sense of who the specific audience is for the final project and how the technical report will meet this audience's unique needs and interests?"
5. Finally, I will check for mechanical errors and bibliographic format.

Teamwork Option

This assignment is the first of three parts of the final project. You can complete this assignment individually, in a pair, or as part of a team (no more than 4 people per team).

Before you get started, fill out the [Team Contract](). This contract ensures that everyone on the team agrees on who is doing what and when work will be completed. You do NOT have to do a team contract if you are not working in a team or pair.

When you submit the assignment, each team member needs to fill out the short [team evaluation](). Your assignment won't be graded until everyone on the team has done the survey.

TEAM WORK: This assignment can be completed as a team. Teams must fill out the [team contract]() before they begin work.

Report Assignment

This is part three of a large assignment that spans the entire term. It includes the audience anlaysis, report, tip sheet, and analyzing technical writing assignment.

Technical reports help specific people solve specific problems, make decisions, or take action.

Technical reports are always audience-focused. Your goal is to provide a specific audience the exact information they need at that moment without them having to read a word more than they need.

[The report is explained in depth in this lecture.](#)

Goal of the Report Assignment

This assignment is designed to teach and test the following:

- Does the writer know the difference between a broad audience (example: students) and a narrowly focused audience (example: veteran students in Oregon)?
- Does the writer know the difference between a broad topic (example: student loan debt) and a narrowly focused topic (example: the Perkins loan program)?
- Can the writer write on a narrowly focused report?
- Can the writer figure out exactly what a specific audience needs to know?
- Can the writer find and present research that goes beyond common knowledge?
- Can the writer write and design a professional document?

Topic

For this assignment you will help your audience (from the audience analysis assignment) solve or address a small, specific problem.

Topic Examples

- Many college students in Oregon are upset about the ever increasing cost of college tuition. How can an Oregon college student effectively participate in Oregon's state legislature to push for more support for higher education?

- Gender expectations vary greatly from culture to culture. How could an American woman effectively conduct business in Iran, given that expectations around gendered behavior differ greatly between Iran and the United States?
- Oregon's bans on field burning have improved air quality but sometimes result in the increased use of pesticides and diesel-powered tilling. What are the most environmentally friendly and cost-effective methods of accomplishing what field burning once did for grass seed farming?

Audience

Your report will be very narrowly focused and written with a specific audience in mind.

Here are examples of narrowly focused audiences:

- African-American college students in Oregon.
- Homeless LGBTQ youth in Portland
- Portland developers trying to build green houses at a competitive price
- American women doing business in Iran
- Residents of Linn County
- Parents of children with autism who are looking for appropriate daycare in Albany

The content you choose for your report should clearly reflect the needs of your audience. The report should not be directed at broad audiences like "anyone who cares about the environment" or "parents."

Report Format

Follow these formatting guidelines:
- Include a title page
- Include a table of contents
- Include an abstract
- Use block paragraphs
- Use first and second level headings
- Use descriptive headings that clearly identify content
- Use numbers for lists that occur in a particular order (such as instruction steps) and bullets for items that have no particular order (such as materials and supplies or helpful tips)

- Include images and graphics that are necessary to communicate the information. Do not include graphics for decorative purposes.
- Number pages (it's okay if the numbering starts on the title page)

Citation

Uses standard APA, MLA, or CMS citation style including both in-text citation and a works cited page.

Note: The rules that govern the use of sources differ between cultures. It is important that international students learn American conventions so that they can succeed in American colleges and universities. However, it is also important to remember that American rules are not universal.

See the Writing Center or reference librarians for help with citation.

A few other things to remember

- Technical reports generally do not use "I"
- Technical reports do not include the author's opinions or judgements, only researchable facts
- Technical reports do not use emotional language
- Technical reports are not persuasive or argumentative in the general sense of those words. Technical reports will lead readers to a particular course of action.

How will I grade?

1. First I will look at your bibliography. A good report usually uses about eight substantive sources. I'll check to make sure all the sources in the bibliography are used in the report.
2. Next, I'll scan the headings to make sure the document is easy to navigate.
3. Then I'll read the report looking for specific, in-depth content. Reports that do not go beyond common knowledge rarely score well.
4. As I read, I'll also assess how well you tailored your report to your audience. If I see a substantial amount of information your audience would not use or need, that will count against you. If I see specific information that is particularly useful to your audience, that will count in your favor.

5. I will check for correct, [concise writing](#).
6. Finally, I will check for correctly formatted in-text citations and works cited page.

Length

A+ reports tend to be between 1000 and 2000 words. Quality of content is more important than length. A short, concise report will almost always do better than a long, wordy report with extraneous content. You may count your works cited page in your word count, but remember: your goal is to provide high quality information, not to put a certain number of words on a page.

Support

Writing Center - I recommend sending your work to the Online Writing Lab for critique since you will not be able to revise the report. You can do this live on Zoom or via email. More here: www.linnbenton.edu/writing-center.

Reference Librarians - Reference librarians at the LBCC library would be happy to meet with you and discuss your research process and problems. They can help with brainstorming ideas, finding sources, and citation.

Chat with a librarian - The LBCC library website has a feature called "chat with a librarian" that allows you to chat with a live librarian 24/7. The chat line is staffed by librarians around Oregon.

Links in instructions - Click every link in this instruction set and study the explanatory material provided.

Citation Generators - Citations generators like [NoodleTools Express](#) can help format citations for sources you do not get from the LBCC library database or e-book provider. Those resources have their own citation generators.

The Writer's Diet - The Writer's DietThe Writer's Diet is an easy-to-use online tool that helps you identify if your writing is too wordy. Run your work through the test. If you receive a score that indicates wordiness, condense and clarify until your writing is lean.

[Sample Student Report](#)

This report comes from another instructor. The citation guidelines were slightly different for this student. I would like to see more in-text citation. I'd also like to see the bibliography divided into works cited (cited in report) and works consulted (read by the author but not specifically cited).

With that said, this is an excellent technical report. Here are a few things that make it great:
- The topic is important
- The report is easy to navigate.
- Information in the report is useful and could help people make decisions.
- Background information and definitions are only provided in as much as they are useful to the reader.
- The tone is professional.

Revisions

Reports that come in on time can be revised for a higher grade. See Week 10 for revision instructions.

Tip Sheet Assignment Description

Note About Teamwork

The tip sheet can be completed as a team. If you work in a team, you must complete this [team contract.](#)

Goals of this assignment

This assignment invites you to practice these important skills:

- Write concisely
- Focus on information that is useful to your audience
- Adjust your tone and word choice to meet the needs of your audience
- Design attractive documents
- Recognize that document design is more important in technical writing than in academic writing
- Evaluate research
- Incorporate credible research into your work
- Create a bibliography and sample in-text citations

If you can demonstrate these skills in the workplace people will read and respect your writing.

What is the assignment?

For this assignment, you will create a "helpful tips" sheet based off your report. Imagine someone came to you and said, "This report is nice, but I need to get this information to people faster. I need something they can read standing up in line or waiting in a doctor's office."

To do this, you will take the information in your report and distill it down to the most important information. Then you will design a beautiful poster or pamphlet to convey this information.

Format & Design

Your tip sheet should be visually appealing to your specific audience.

- Tip sheet should employ the measures of excellence you analyzed in the Analyzing Technical Writing assignment. That is to say, you should create a document that is professional, honest, accurate, concise, comprehensive, accessible, correct, and clear. (Of course, no document is perfect, but you should strive to excel in these areas.)

- Tip sheet should use colors and graphics appropriate to the audience and topic
- Tip sheet should employ the design principles explained in the course.

Design Program Requirement

To get an A+, tip sheets should be designed in a program like Canva or Venngage. Tip sheets prepared in Word or Google Docs will not receive higher than a B.

These programs have both free and paid services. You do NOT have to pay. The free options provide enough tools and templates to make effective Tip Sheets.

Why do I have to learn to use a program like Canva or Venngage?

This skill is more useful than you expect. Here are a few places where you might use this skill:

- Science majors/scientists have to do poster presentations at conferences
- Well designed handouts will make you look more professional when you give presentations
- Use Canva or Venngage to make signage at work.
- Create attractive infographics for your social media, especially if you are using social media to advertise a product or service.
- Design a business card
- Design advertisements for your business
- Make cute party invitations or your own greeting cards
- Make bulletins for your church services
- Create portfolios of your work

Language

Your tip sheet should be written according to the following guidelines:

- Always write as concisely as possible!
- Use language the audience would understand.
- Adjust your tone (funny, serious, scientific etc.) to fit the topic.
- Proofread carefully.

Citation Requirements

This kind of document generally doesn't use formal academic citation. However, it's still important that your audience knows where you got your information.

Figure out the most appropriate way to convey this information to your audience.

Sharing Your Tip Sheet

Downloading from Canva: Canva will let you download your Tip Sheet.

Sharing from Venngage: If you are using Venngage you will not be able to download your submission unless you pay to upgrade your account. You do NOT have to pay. To share your work, publish it (see below) to Venngage's community and include the link along with your bibliography and in-text citations.
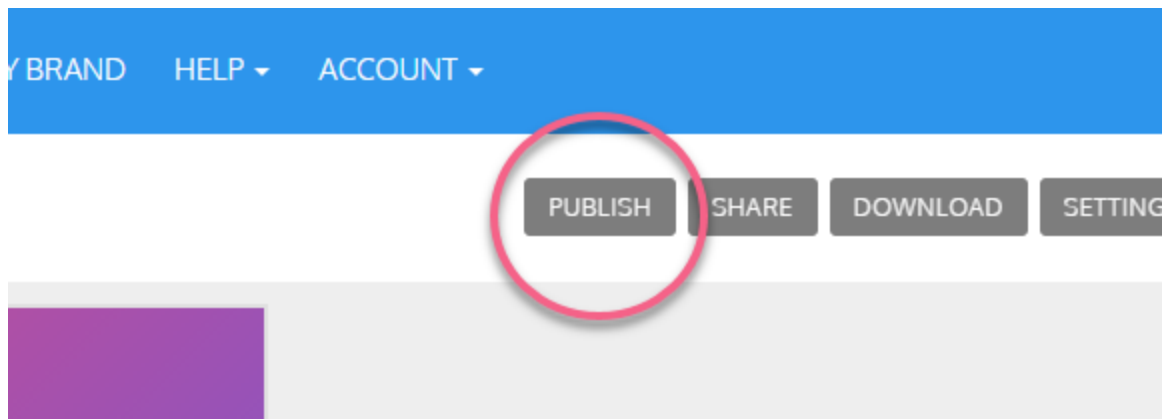
If you do not want to publish your work, you can take a screenshot of your work and send me that.

Special Writing Center Instructions

Projects done in Canva (or other template based document creation sites) are best saved as JPEG, PDF, or PNG files. However, the Online Writing Lab website can only accept .doc and .docx files.

You can still get help from the Writing Center! Just set up a Zoom session with the Writing Center instead. Set up a Zoom appointment or use the Zoom Drop-in Room at www.linnbenton.edu/writing-center.

If you aren't able to Zoom, you can email the Writing Center directly at writingcenter@linnbenton.edu, and they will figure out a different option to provide feedback.

Policies

Group Work

The tip sheet can be completed as a team. If you work in a team, you must complete this team contract.

Late Policy

This assignment can come in up to one-week late. Work that arrives within the one-week grace period receives full credit but cannot be revised.

Contact me if you have a situation that is interfering with your ability to turn this work in on time.

Example Tip Sheets

 Here are a few examples of professionally produced Tip Sheets. You can create something just as good!

- How To Get a Job with No Experience (scroll to bottom of page for the tip sheet)
- Covid 19: What You Need to Know
- Electrical Safety Tips for Hunters
- Exercising During Ramadan in the COVID 19 Pandemic

Analyzing Technical Writing Assignment Instructions

Table of Contents

Goals of this assignment:

Before you start writing, I want you to analyze someone else's document. Sometimes it's easier to see flaws in someone else's work. Once you see them, you can avoid them in your own.

What is the assignment?

Here are step by step instructions for completing this assignment.

1. Watch [this lecture](#) and, if you want to see my explain this concept to a face-to-face class, [this lecture](#).
2. Find a document created for the SAME audience for which you wrote your report.

Examples:

- A textbook
- Pamphlet
- TV advertisement (documents can be visual/audio for this assignment)

3. Using what you learned about your audience and what you learned writing the report, assess how well this writer/document creator tailored their document to the needs of your audience.

What to write in your analysis

Pick three measures of excellence. Write an analysis of how well/poorly the document met these measures. Use the following format:

For each measure, include four to ten well-crafted sentence.

- First sentence identifies what the measure is and what it means.
- Second sentence states where the document met or did not meet this measure of excellence.
- One or more sentences identify the strengths in this area.

- One or more sentences identify the weaknesses in this area.

NOTE: You must include some weaknesses. Almost no technical document is perfect in all areas. Make sure you identify flaws as well as strengths.

Please use headings and organize the sections of your document in this order:

4. Turn in your analysis and a picture/link to the document. (If your document is long, just take a picture of the cover, first page, etc.)

The measures of excellence are:

5. **Professional** appearance: Does this look like a document produced by a trained technical writer or graphic designer? If not, is there some reason why a less professional look is appropriate for the target audience.
6. **Honesty**: Are there places where this document deliberately tries to deceive or mislead the reader? Being dishonest is different from being inaccurate. Someone can have very good intentions and still be inaccurate.
7. **Accuracy**: Is the information in this document correct?
8. **Accessibility**: How easy is it to find individual pieces of information without reading the whole document top to bottom?
9. **Comprehensiveness**: Did thedocument include everything the audience needed to know?
10. **Conciseness**: Did the document contain anything it didn't need (either individual words and phrases or sections of content)?
11. **Correctness**: Were the grammar/spelling errors?

Formating

The following formatting rules should be used for all technical writing.

Block Format

Almost all technical writing and business writing documents are written in block paragraph format. This means the following paragraphs are single spaced. There is no indent at the beginning of a new paragraph. Paragraphs are separated by one line of blank space.

Headings

Good technical writers make it very easy for readers to find specific pieces of information (without reading the whole document). Use headings to separate information into small, easy-to-identify sections.

Short Paragraphs

Never include more than eight lines of text without a break.

Student Sample: Pamphlet warning teenager about the dangers of drugs.

Accuracy refers to whether or not the document contains information that is factual and verifiable. On one level the pamphlet was true. Drug use hurts people.

However, there were several things about the pamphlet that felt dishonest. The pamphlet made it sound like saying no to drugs was easy, and that teenagers who didn't say no were stupid. It didn't take into account all the reasons why teenagers use drugs, including the fact that they may have been introduced to drugs by their parents. It made a complex societal problem sound like a stupid decision teenagers should easily be able to avoid.

The pamphlet also described the worst case scenarios for each drug. According to the pamphlet, marijuana was "...a gateway drug that led to meth and heroin." It also said, "if you don't want to be an addict, don't smoke that first joint." But with legalized marijuana all sorts of people are using marijuana and not escalating to meth or heroin. The statement that marijuana use will always lead to harder drugs isn't just innacurate, but it could be dangerous. It's clearly innacurate, and because of this, readers might discount all the true information in the pamphlet.

I've changed this assignment since I last gave it, but if you'd like to see samples from a previous version of this assignment, here they are. These students had to analyze all the measures (not just three) and they had to analyze an instruction set.

Pack 'n' Play Care Set

How will I grade the assignment?

1. First, I'll look for block paragraph format, headings, and short paragraphs.
2. Next, I'll look for how clearly and concisely you write. Never use more words than you need. What to learn more?
3. Then I will look to see if your analysis shows a true understanding of the measures of excellence.
4. I will look at the quality of your analysis. A good analysis says what you think and provides support for your ideas. **Be sure to reference specific words, phrases, and design elements in the original document.**
5. Finally, I will check for mechanics (grammar, spelling etc.).
6. This assignment is eligible for revision (for a higher grade) if it arrives on time.