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Benvenuti al corso Technical English

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Agenda

- Description and presentation of diagrams in a scientific context**
 - General principles
 - Stylistic markers
 - Examples
- Description and presentation of tables /matrices /graphs**
 - General principles
 - Stylistic markers
 - Examples
- Technical process description**
 - General principles
 - Describing properties and process modifications
 - Examples
- Important Aspects of Technical Communication**

Technical Communication – Diagram Description

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Technical Communication – Diagram Description

Structure

- Introduction of topic (background, purpose)
- Reference to diagram /transition to actual description
- Description of main components including definitions of technical terms
- Function / Usage
- Significance

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Technical Communication – Diagram Description

Specific Stylistic Markers

- Purpose /usage phrases – *is used for, serves,*
- Location phrases – *in the centre, to the right of ...*
- Referencing phrases – *as can be seen / the diagram clearly shows ...*
- Sequence markers - *first, next, finally...*
- Defining phrases /structures – *known as, so-called, is a "tool/device", which ...*
- passive voice
- Present tense
- Neutral, factual, objective tone – no evaluative or personal phrases
I think vs this is
Good vs efficient for

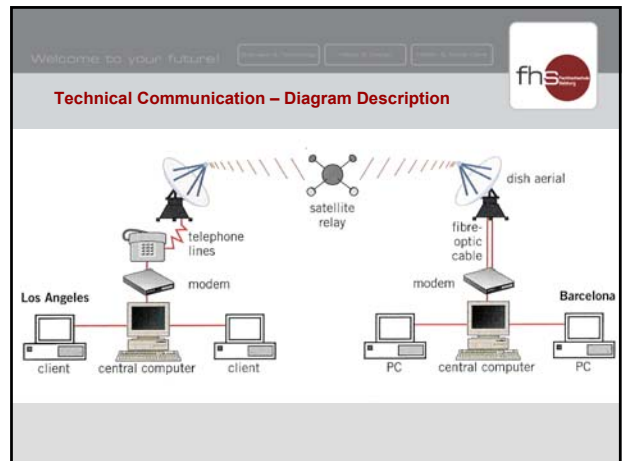
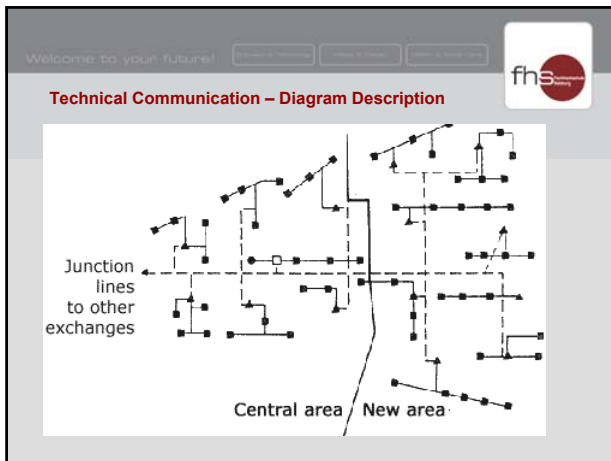
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Technical Communication – Defining Technical Terms

device
tool
system
component /part
method / technique which

<term> is a/n
technology
utility
approach
...

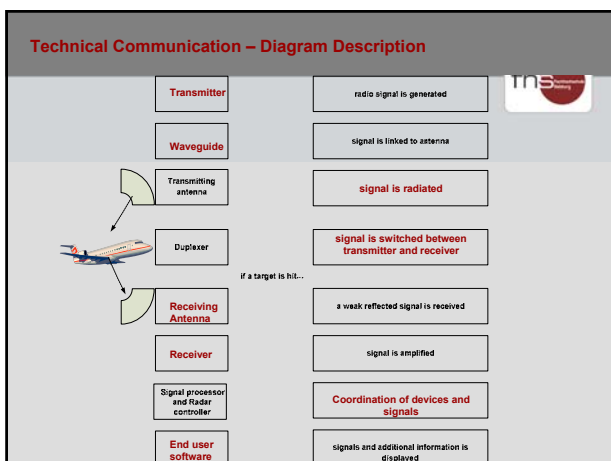
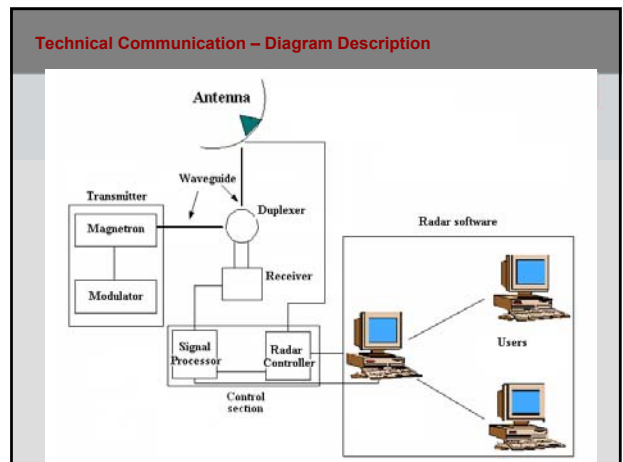
<term> is a/n <category> which < main characteristics>



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Technical Communication – Diagram Description

- introduce the visual / draw the audience's attention to it *Let's have a look at this diagram*
- give its main purpose *This diagram shows / illustrates / exemplifies*
- name the main components and define technical terms where necessary *In the center of the diagram you can see the main component / part of the system. The system consists of / comprises three main components*
- explain the main functions *The relay satellite is used to / functions as / is responsible for / acts as*
- give a concrete example how the system works *Let me now show you how the system works by following the route of an email message from Los Angeles to Barcelona*



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Technical Communication – Graph Description

Structure

- Introduction of topic (background, purpose)
- Reference to graph / transition to actual description
- Description of development / trend focusing on main aspects
- Significance / Interpretation

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Technical Communication – Graph Description

Specific Stylistic Markers

- Referencing phrases – *as can be seen / the diagram clearly shows ...*
- Sequence markers – *at first, in the first phase, next, finally...*
- Phrases referring to change - *increase, decrease ...*
- passive voice
- Present tense or present perfect with certain time-related conjunctions > specific field
- Past tense when referring to developments on a past timeline
- Neutral, factual, objective tone – no evaluative or personal phrases
- Interpretation phrases – *this may well indicate, the conclusion to be drawn is, the evidence suggests ...*

Graph Description – Vocabulary 1

fall	↓	decrease	↓	slip back	↓	stay level	→
climb	↑	drop	↓	go down	↓	double	↑
rise	↑	improve	↑	remain stable	→	halve	↓
even out	→	deteriorate	↓	increase	↑	stay the same	→
decline	↓	pick up	↑	slump	↓	go up	↑
hit a low	↓	reach a peak	↑	soar	↑	bottom out	→
recover	↑	advance	↑	gain	↑	fluctuate	
reach a trough	↓	remain constant	→	hit a low	↓	plunge	↓

Graph Description – Vocabulary 2

UP
 Verb phrases
 to increase by/to
 to rise by/to
 to go up by/to
 Noun phrases
 an increase of/to
 a rise of/to

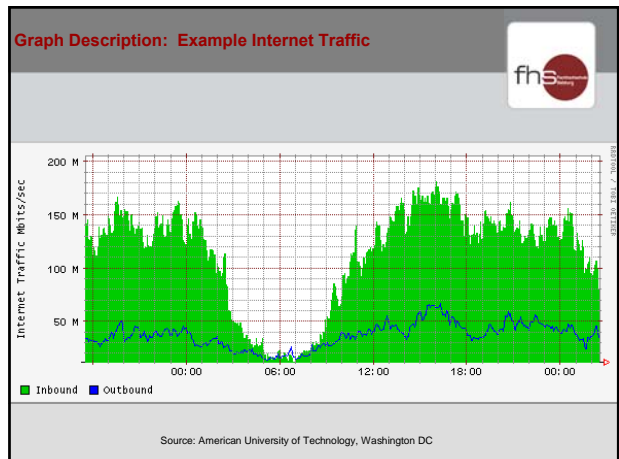
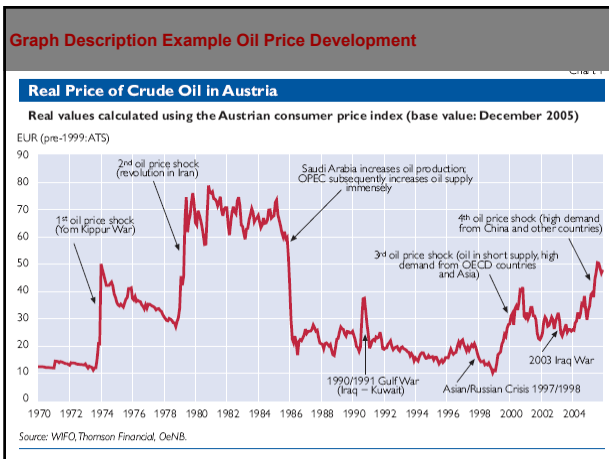
Down
 Verb phrases
 to drop by/to
 to go down by/to
 to decrease by/to
 to fall by/to

Noun phrases
 a decrease of/to
 a fall of/to
 a drop of/to

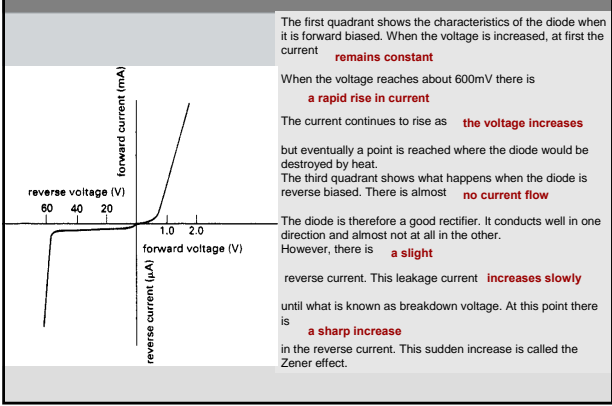
Others
 To stand at
 To reach a peak
 To reach a trough
 To bottom out
 To level off
 To remain constant

Graph Description – Vocabulary 3

Adjectives/Adverbs indicating the speed or rate of change	Fast/medium /slow?	Adjectives/Adverbs indicating the size of change	Order of intensity from highest to lowest
Constant /ly	medium	Slightly	7
Fast	fast	Moderate /ly	6
Gradual /ly	medium /slow	Considerable /considerably	4
Rapidly	fast	Negligible /negligibly	8
Sharp /ly	fast	Substantial /ly	2
Slowly	slow	Dramatic /ally	1
Steady /steadily	Medium /slow	Significant /ly	3
Sudden /ly	fast	Noticeable /noticeably	5



Graph Description Example Electronics



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Technical Communication – Process Description

Structure

- Introduction of topic (background, purpose)
- Reference to flow chart /transition to actual description
- Description of single stages
- Significance

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Technical Communication – Process Description

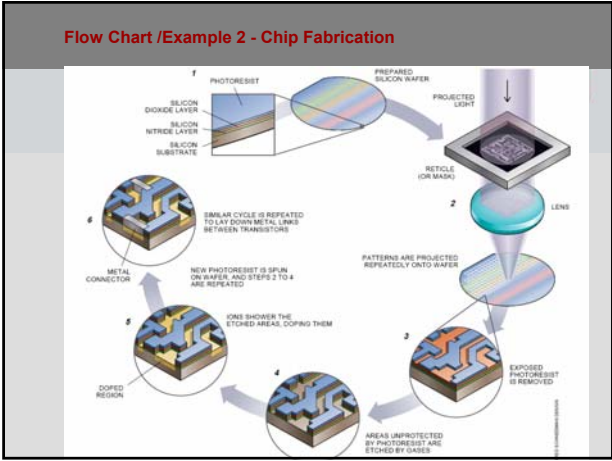
Specific Stylistic Markers

- Referencing phrases – *as can be seen / the flow chart clearly shows ...*
- Sequence markers – *first, as soon as, before, next, finally...*
- passive voice – focus on action
- Defining phrases /structures – *known as, so-called, is a "tool/device", which ...*
- „how-to“ Phrases – *by + ing, in order to ...*
- Present tense or present perfect with certain time-related conjunctions
- Neutral, factual, objective tone – no evaluative or personal phrases

Technical Communication – Process Description

Sequence Markers
 First(y) ...
 Second(y) ...
 Next ...
 Then ...
 After (that) ...
 Having done that ...
 Before doing ...
 At the same time ...
 Simultaneously ...
 Lastly ...
 Finally ...
 Eventually

Purpose Indicators
 to ...
 in order to ...
 so that ...
 in order that ...
 because ...



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Technical Communication – General Principles

- Functional**
 focussed on information for a specific purpose for a specific audience
- Audience-sensitive**
 level of detail and complexity dependent on intended readers
- Channel-sensitive**
 choice of medium and text type
- Logical**
 in arranging information and guiding readers
- Accurate**
 exact facts, precise terms, concrete language
- Standardised**
 Conforms to conventions of grammar, punctuation etc.

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Technical Communication – Evaluation Criteria

- **Clarity**
 - Content /overall structure
 - Technical terms
- **Coherence**
 - "Red thread"
 - Relationship among parts and paragraphs
 - Relationship within paragraphs
 - Conformity with overall purpose
- **Consistency**
 - Usage of technical terms
 - Capitalization
 - Neutral, objective tone
- **Conciseness**
 - Elimination of superfluous wording
 - Clarity and compactness of sentence structure

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Technical Communication – Audience

- **Experts**
 - advanced knowledge and skills in their field
 - Understand technical information and language within that field
 - Handle theory and practical application with ease.
- **Technicians**
 - Understand technical information and language within that field
 - Handle theory and practical application with ease.
- **Professionals(Non-experts)**
 - Have the education and ability to read and understand difficult and technical information
- **Lay (general)audience**
 - Have no specialized education but need practical information
 - May or may not be highly motivated to read information in full.

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Technical Communication – Organisation Principles

- **Order of location**
Ex.: planet system - from farthest to nearest
- **Order of increasing difficulty**
Ex: computer manual: from simple to complex aspects
- **Sequential order**
Typical of process descriptions
- **Chronological order**
Ex: graph description with reference to a timeline
- **Problem/solution**
Ex: experiment set-up
- **Inverted pyramid**
Essential message followed by facts in order of decreasing importance
- **Deductive order**
Generalization - detailed facts
- **Inductive order**
Facts in detail – generalization
- **List**

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Conclusion

K	Keep
I	it
S	short and
S	Simple

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**“If you can’t state your position in eight words or less,
you don’t have a position.”**
Seth Godin