BASIC COMPOSITION SKILLS

FOR ENGINEERING TECHNICIANS AND TECHNOLOGISTS

- Writing Practices
- Formal Reports
- Office Memos
- Business Letters
- Lab Reports
- Contract Proposals

DAVID W. RIGBY

THE WORDWORKS SERIES

Contents

Welcome to Wordworks v
About Basic Composition Skills vii
Chapter 1 Finding the Starting Line 3
Writing at Work 3 Disuse: The Statistical Realities 6 The Tasks of the Text 7
PART 1 Words at Work: The Preliminaries 11 Chapter 2
Thinking and Speaking 13
The Way We Think 13 Reality Checks 17 Getting a Handle on It All 20 The Way We Speak 24 Speaking Out 27 Conversation as a Contact Sport 31 Working in Words 35

Chapter 3

The Way We Write 43

The Third Medium 43
Talking to Walls 47
Reading the Fine Print 50
Blackboard and Chalk 53
The Challenge of Perfection 56

PART | The Workslace Writing Process 61

Chapter 4

False Starts 63

Deadlining: How Not to Do It 63
The Front-to-Back Method 69
Time Management for Writing Efficiency 73

Chapter 5

Project Preparation 81

Before You Write: Preparation Strategies 81
Project Evaluation 87
Your Calendar 91
Your Log 93
The Fact-Finding Phase 97
Stopping to Listen 99

Chapter 6

The Main Event 105

The Production Quota 105
At the Starting Gate: The Outline Method 111

A High Speed Strategy: The Sprint Method 119

The Completed Rough Draft 121

Phasing 125

Editing the Final Product 129

The Due Date 135

Technical Edits 137

Writers at Work 139

PART III Design Basics: Superstucture Logic and Infrastructure Logic 153

Chapter 7

Fundamental Project Architecture 155

Document Logic 155

The Basic Document Structure 161

Simple Architecture 169

Layout Fundamentals 175

Chapter 8

Compound Architectures 187

Double-Topic Architecture 187

Formatting by Topics 193

Formatting by Criteria 201

Formatting for Multiple Comparisons 207

Chapter 9

Outline Controls 219

Project Deviations 219

Outline Structure 223

Chapter 10

Paragraph Logic 241

241 Substructure Logic and Paragraph Design

Paragraph Progression

Paragraph Proportion and Scale 253

259 **Transitions**

Introductions 265

PART IV Document Prototypes: The Basic Formatting

Practices 273

Chapter 11

Memoranda 275

275 Standard Document Types

277 The Internal Network

The Memo 281

Chapter 12

Business Letters 293

The Correspondence Loop 293

297 **Business Letter Practices**

Insert Conventions 303

Cover Letters for Resumes and Proposals 315

Chapter 13

Laboratory Reports 333

Standard Lab Procedures 333

The Laboratory Report Narrative 339 **Chapter 14**

Bids, Estimates, and Proposals 363

Offers for Services 363 **Contract Strategy** 367

371 **Bids and Estimates**

377 **Proposals**

Appendices

Appendix A

Guidelines for Editing Projects 401

Appendix B

Templates and Tips 413

Acknowledgments

Index 441 435