

Homework 2: The Readability Memo – 5 points

Purpose: Learn how to conduct basic readability testing using mixed-methods research and learn how to write a memo summarizing test results

Audience: Your instructor, your peers, and future employers

The Assignment

For homework 2, you will conduct readability testing to determine the readability of your technical description. You will use your findings to revise your description if necessary.

Goals of the Assignment

This assignment will give you experience working with the complex projects technical writers often face in the workplace. More than just writers, technical communicators are often project managers, problem solvers, and decision makers who are involved in every level of development. For this assignment, you will work closely with three research participants from our class and one person outside of this class to test the readability of your description. The goals of the assignment are as follows:

- Learn about the theory and best practices guiding readability and usability testing
- Better understand the rhetorical situations (purpose, audience, context, medium, angle) involved in technical communication
- Practice using industry standard applications as part of the research and development process
- Document Design – Use rhetorically informed design theory (HATS, CARP) and appropriate technology to create a professional looking page for your posts
- Produce professional documents that offer clear recommendations for revising your description

Format

This memo *must* adhere to MLA, APA, or CMS guidelines and must be at least *500 words in length*. The report will follow guidelines from our text, be typed in 12-point Times New Roman (or similar font), single-spaced, with 1 inch margins all the way around. This is not a reflective or narrative piece; it is a professional memo reporting on the results of your testing. **Please follow the IMRaD** organization outlined in our text. Here is the basic outline for your memo:

- Introduction
 - **M**ethodology
 - **R**esults
 - (and) **D**iscussion
- Conclusion (Recommendation)

You might also reference the Purdue OWL Usability Report and its attendant documents. While the OWL report is much more complex than your report should be, it may help you conduct your research and compose your document.

Readability Memo Checklist/Feedback Form

On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest score, rate the following:

Audience analysis:

Cover letter:

Résumé or CV:

Grammar and mechanics (syntax, word choice, punctuation):

Overall score:

Please answer these questions about these documents:

1. Do the documents respond effectively and in a reader-focused way to the ad/graduate application?
2. Did the cover letter address the two main rhetoric goals – I am a good fit because...; I can help you because...?
3. What did you like about the documents?
4. What did you not like about the documents?
5. Do you have any suggestions about the documents to make them more effective?