Assignment 3: Instructional Manual

Value

This assignment is worth 15% of your final grade.

Background

This assignment requires you to prepare an instructional manual based on one of the assigned topics listed below. Instructions are step-by-step explanations of how to do something: how to build, operate, repair, or maintain things. When writing your instructional manual, you may also need to include descriptions and definitions. These are common elements in technical writing. You will be required to define your words clearly, making sure that you are using language that readers with wide ranging skills can understand.

Instructions

1. Choose one of the topics listed below for your instruction manual.
2. Review the example instruction manual assignment on the Library APA website and use this example as a template for your own assignment.
3. Include a title page in APA format for your assignment.
4. Your manual should be double spaced and no longer than 3 pages, but no shorter than 2 pages (not including the title page).
5. You do not need to use APA formatting (except for the title page), nor are you required to do any research or use secondary sources to complete this assignment, but if you do, you must cite all sources using APA formatting and attach a reference page for those sources.
6. There are three main parts to an instructional manual. Each part is described below.
7. Submit both your instructional manual and usability testing report to receive full credit for this assignment.

Instruction Manual Topics

1. How to send and receive email messages
2. How to grow your own vegetable garden from seed
3. How to homebrew beer
4. How to parallel park a car
5. How to change a baby’s diaper
6. How to play hockey
7. How to build a fence
8. How to sew curtains
9. How to build a deck
10. How to make the perfect cup of coffee
11. How to apply for a mortgage
12. How to make soap
13. How to replace a blown fuse
14. How to knit or crochet a blanket
15. How to sign up for using Skype
16. How to use filters in Instagram
17. How to play American football
18. How to paddle a canoe
19. How to filet a fish
20. How to tie-dye a t-shirt
Part 1 - Overview

What to include? First, you need to know your audience. For the purposes of this assignment, we are going to assume your reader knows nothing about the activity you are describing. We call these “basic beginners.” Because they are new to the topic, you need to provide them with an overview to the procedure. An overview will let them know if these instructions are the ones they need to be using for the procedure and they will be able to determine if the procedure is going to be too advanced for them. Also in the overview, you need to include a list of requirements or equipment needed. The overview should be no less than 4 sentences, plus a list of equipment needed, if necessary.

Part 2 – Usable Steps

You may be tempted to write a paragraph of instruction, but basic beginners are likely to be frustrated by this method. Instead, you need to break down each step of your manual and format it in such a way that one step logically follows another. For instance, you may choose a numbered list, or to write so that the first step starts with “first, do X,” followed by “second, do Y.” Using the word “you” is recommended, as it is more informal and user-friendly. You may also choose to incorporate pictures or other graphic/visual elements into the instructions to enhance usability. See the detailed information in the textbook for help with doing so. By the end of the step-by-step instructions, the reader should have the task completed with no problems or complications.

NOTE: Warnings and Cautions

No set of instructions is complete without a warning or caution. At some point in the document, you will need to warn the readers about potential hazards that can come with doing the procedure inaccurately. In this case, you must include some kind of symbol or text box to indicate contrast to the rest of the manual, so that the reader will notice the warning. You need at least one warning or caution, but can include two, if there are more concerns for your particular topic. The warning or caution needs to appear alongside the step that may be dangerous to undertake.

Part 3 – Usability Testing

When you have finished all parts of the assignment, you are required to test out your instructions. Find someone (classmate, friend, family member) who doesn’t know how to do the procedure you have written about and have them read your instructions. Give them the attached usability question sheet to fill out. If they have questions, you know that you have missed a step. This is also a good way to proofread for logic, grammar, and usability. Submit the completed usability testing sheet with your assignment.
Marking Rubric for Assignment 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose and audience are clearly stated; introduction orients the reader to the instruction set</td>
<td>/5</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Background, user assumptions, and complete list of materials and requirements identified</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instructions are complete, clear, and organized</td>
<td>/10</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Steps grouped and subdivided where appropriate</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Steps are numbered to show sequence</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Notes, cautions, warnings included where appropriate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Usability testing completed and report submitted</td>
<td>/5</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing is clear, concise, error-free, and appropriate for target audience</td>
<td>/5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Page layout and visuals contribute to usability</td>
<td>/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APA format correct, including page format, citations, captions, and references</td>
<td>/5</td>
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<td>Correct length</td>
<td>/5</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>/40</td>
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**Rubric notes** (double the numerical values for categories marked out of 10)

0 = does not meet expectations/missing
1 = meets minimum expectations
2 = needs improvement
3 = satisfactory
4 = good
5 = excellent