Episode 2:

Welcome back to the writing portion of this class. After watching this lecture, consider taking the quiz, or watch it again before venturing forth. This quiz should be a bit tougher than the last one, since the last one mainly dealt with procedural issues.

Today we are goin to talk about what technical documents are, and how our knowledge of them can help us to create a strong project report, but first some announcements.

I do have an announcement. In the last video, I wrongly stated in the video that the writing test would occur March 3rd. The correct date is March first. That is a MONDAY. Write it down, because you do not want to miss it (and I don’t want to get it wrong)

In order to make things go smoothly, I will be available at the Zoom link every monday morning from 8-10. If something is not working for you, please do not hesitate to pop in and let me know. Also feel free to ask me any questions you have about the class. Don’t worry, as far as I know, there are no stupid questions. Also, if you are watching this video the morning of February the 1st, there is a quiz due tonight, which you have probably already done, but maybe not. Additionally, there will be a quiz on the information covered in THIS video that

Today we are going to talk about what a technical document is, and how that knowledge can help you with the report of this class. I will be using the text Practical Strategies for Technical Communication 3rd edition for help as I go through some of its principles.

But let me use this opportunity to talk a little bit about myself again. I am an English major. That means that I like BOOKS. Long books, old books, books about gods, magic, and books about human suffering and joy. So when I was given the opportunity to teach technical writing, I was not super excited. When I thought about technical writing, I thought about all of the unimaginitive pieces of text like product manuals, copyright information, and the dreaded ITUNES AGREEMENT, and prepared to teach a dry and boring class about grammar… or something like that. But when I finally started teaching the class, I discovered that technical writing is not really the most boring way to write, but it actually creates a whole new way of seeing the world.

For a look at what I’m talking about let’s take a trip to just outside of Mexico city to the Pyramid of the Moon at Teotihuacan. This pyramid was completed in around the year 100, but its construction began a century before that. That means that somehow, the information about how to build the pyramid was transmitted across generations, and yet no such documentation exists. Whatever the method of teaching future generations about the nature of the project, and how to complete it, would be considered technical documentation according to our book.

Technical documentation is actually everywhere, defining the way that you engage with your world. Take for example, a door. There are plenty of ways of opening a door, and the appearance of that door communicates how to engage with it. The door may have a knob, its features appear to correlate with your own hand, which communicates that you can manipulate it in some way. If a door doesn’t have a knob, there may be a way to indicate how it does open. At the same time, the makers of a door expect certain information to have already been transmitted to you culturally, so that you will not be shocked to see a door that opens automatically. In this video, you can see how you can abuse that cultural knowledge to create confusion. They have placed an automatic door warning on a door with no automatic opener. Also they have removed the <https://youtu.be/Jrs84a2N4xQ> handle. This goes to show how much technical information is absorbed quickly by an individual to form conclusions about how to engage the world. What an exciting video.

Technical Documentation is everywhere, and it is not just about what words are on they page. The person to whom the message is going to be delivered is a big factor in the equation of how your document will appear.

Before we move forward, let’s open our conception of what a technical document is. In Mike Markel’s Practical Strategies for Technical Communication, the author decides to refer to all kinds of things

(READ THROUGH GRAPH).

Let’s take a look at this from Mike Markel’s Practical Strategies for Technical Communication.
According to this graph, these are some of the ELEMENTS of technical documents.

(GRAPHS ONLY AVAILABLE IN VIDEO)