

## **Technical Writing for the Criminalist**

Train your staff to write accurate, understandable, and complete reports with this onsite course. The credibility and professionalism of a crime lab is often made or broken on the quality of its written communications, yet criminalists and forensic scientists often lack the time, effort, and skill necessary to write well and to review effectively. Composition and technical writing courses taught in colleges and high schools do not adequately prepare criminalists for the specialized writing used in their field. **Technical Writing for the Criminalist** teaches relevant writing and reviewing skills, offering even the most veteran report writers something new and reinforcing existing skills.

This course also discusses current technical writing trends and tips, including

- Use of First Person Pronouns
- Plain English Trend
- Concise Wording
- Use of Active and Passive Voice
- Correct Punctuation and Grammar
- Effective Sentence Strategies

Taught by Ann Neumann, MA, JD, the course teaches clarity in technical writing with emphases on analysis of audience and purpose, organization, sentence structure, word choice, and sentence mechanics. Instruction includes a blend of lecture, class discussion, and individual and group work. The instructor reads and responds to participants' reports with individual comments for correction and revision. While the course is typically designed as a 24-hour class, the instructor can tailor the class to meet the needs of your lab. Call Ms. Neumann at (916) 739-1695 or email her at [aneumann@jps.net](mailto:aneumann@jps.net).

### *Praise for **Technical Writing for the Criminalist***

#### Before the Course

*The California Criminalistics Institute (CCI) is reel happy to have Ann Newman teach us good writing skills because she knows English better then we do, and she can teach it in a fun and exciting way so that even science geeks that took a very limited number of English class in college can understand what she is trying to tell us, so we can write better reports, letters, memos and grant proposals so our laboratories can get the needed equipment to do our jobs better on a daily basis. We learned good sentence structure, spelling, grammar, punctuation and how to affectively use dangling modifiers and participles. Everyone of us here at CCI has taken her class, accept Fred Tulleners because he retired, and we are much better at this writing stuff then you can imagine.*

#### After the Course

*The California Criminalistics Institute (CCI) has had the privilege of presenting Ann Neumann's "Technical Writing for Criminalists" (A120) course since 1999. Ann's excellent teaching skills, as well as her understanding of what forensic scientists do, make her the perfect instructor for this course. Ann continually receives some of the highest instructor ratings for each of her CCI classes. Each student who has taken her class has been complimentary and expressed how useful this class is in writing every day procedures. Ann's knowledge, enthusiasm, and presentation skills make her the perfect instructor for helping forensic scientists in their writing skills.*

John Rush, Program Manager  
Mike Giusto, Assistant Program Manager  
California Criminalistics Institute

*"Three days of reviewing grammar and proper punctuation? What are you trying to do to me!" This and similar comments were the exclamations from several forensic scientists when told they would be attending Ann Neumann's three-day "Technical Writing" class. However, the same examiners who experienced trepidation at attending had nothing but praise and high marks at the conclusion.*

*Approximately 50 forensic scientists from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department's Crime Lab have participated in her "Technical Writing" course over the past several years. Student expectations of the class were surpassed, and many stated that the information was presented in a fun and engaging manner. Students particularly liked the analogies used to remember the various grammar and punctuation rules as well as the text books that each student was able to keep.*

*One of the most valuable exercises was the review and critique of each individual student's own written reports. Ann's "Technical Writing" class has met our laboratory's objective in providing examiners with the proper tools to effectively review their written reports. I would recommend this class for all practicing forensic scientists who prepare detailed written reports.*

*Erin Trujillo, Assistant Director/Quality Manager  
Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, Scientific Services Bureau*

*One of the better decisions I made as Laboratory Director was to offer a technical writing course to my staff of forensic scientists. There was a definite improvement in the quality and clarity of their technical reports. In fact, I have asked Ann to return twice so that the rest of the staff can benefit from her teaching.*

*Robert A. Jarzen  
Laboratory Director, Sacramento County Laboratory of Forensic Services*

*Ann was well prepared for the specific needs of the report writers of the Scientific Investigations Division. In addition to her education and her experience with other laboratories, she prepared for this class by reviewing several reports of each member of the class to determine individual needs. An organized flow of information from the basics of grammar to creating an informative report in plain English was the basis of the class. In addition, Ann was ready to discuss and advise better ways of presenting information and conclusions for each of the specific disciplines within the laboratory.*

*Ann's willingness to share her knowledge and the enthusiasm she brought to the subject made the class fun and informative. I would highly recommend Ann to teach this class to any group of individuals no matter what their English skill level is.*

*Craig Ogino, Lab Director  
San Bernardino Sheriff's Scientific Investigations Division*

*One should aim not at being possible to understand but at being impossible to misunderstand.*