

# **MyTechCommLab Resources and Using MyTechCommLab**

MyTechCommLab is a dynamic, comprehensive site that engages students as it helps to improve their skills in the areas that matter most in technical communication—writing, research, and document design. Also included are extensive review and practice opportunities for basic grammar and usage.

Most activities in MyTechCommLab report to Grade Tracker, an easy-to-use feature that allows students and instructors to view student results on all of the site's exercises and activities.

The book-specific CourseCompass versions of MyTechCommLab provide complete e-books, book-specific resources, and extensive course management tools.

(PRINT THIS PDF TO USE AS A REFERENCE GUIDE AT ANY TIME.)

## **RESOURCES**

MyTechCommLab consists of five major areas: Model Documents, Writing Process, Research Process, Document Design and Graphics, and Grammar and Usage. To access any of these areas, simply click one of the buttons on the home page. The **Top Navigation Bar** will always list these areas, so you can move easily between them.

Once you have entered a particular area, its components will be listed on that section's home page, and the **Left Navigation Bar** will always list the components of the major areas for easy reference.

## **MODEL DOCUMENTS**

The Model Documents section consists of two parts: model documents, and document-based case studies & activities.

## **Model Documents**

Most instructors in technical communication want their students to see as many model documents as possible. MyTechCommLab includes more than 80 documents organized by category (letters, proposals, reports and research reports, memos, instructions and procedures, definitions and descriptions, emails, and more), most with pop-up annotations commenting on Planning and Researching, Organizing and Drafting, Style, Design, Graphics, and Revising and Editing. You can send students to this cache of documents to see examples, or you may want to craft assignments around them. This section also offers quizzes that cover the basic principles for creating documents in each category. All quizzes report to Grade Tracker, the easy-to-use management tool for instructors.

## **Activities and Case Studies**

Have students practice what they are learning by completing any of the more than 60 document-based activities designed for technical communicators and information managers, including activities for writing and revising memos, letters, career correspondence, proposals, reports, instructions, and more, along with case studies that focus on usability.

## **WRITING PROCESS**

This section includes two tutorials to help students become better technical communicators, as well as useful Weblinks and books.

### **Writing Process: Tutorial**

This tutorial leads students step-by-step through the writing process, focusing on documents and contexts typically found in technical communication. You may choose to have students work on one specific step, such as drafting, or you may choose to have them work through a series of guided exercises that allows them to build a writing project to completion.

### **Writing a Formal Report: Tutorial**

This tutorial focuses specifically on the skills and strategies students need to master, and the decisions they need to make, in order to create a formal report. Formal analytical reports are among the most common documents produced by technical communicators.

### **Activities and Case Studies**

This section duplicates the wealth of document-based activities and case studies that appear in the Model Documents section.

### **Web Links**

This annotated list of valuable Web resources about writing will take students both to sites specific to technical communication and to outstanding writing guides, grammar resources, sites with additional quizzes and exercises, usage and style guides, lists of common errors, ESL resources, and more.

### **Student Bookshelf**

The Student Bookshelf includes PDF files for two useful texts: *Workplace Literacy* and *Academic Literacy*.

## **RESEARCH PROCESS**

The powerful tools in this section will help students conduct research—a necessary part of much of the writing they do. There is a robust collection of resources including step-by-step guidance through the research process, access to four of the Web's most extensive research databases, and help with one of the most serious issues facing students today—plagiarism.

### **Research Navigator**

Pearson's proprietary research site offers step-by-step guidance through the research process, as well as online research tools and access to four robust business and academic databases (EBSCO, the *NY Times*, the *Financial Times*, and Link Library).

### **Avoiding Plagiarism**

This step-by-step tutorial helps students understand exactly what comprises plagiarism and how to avoid it using quotation, paraphrase, and summary. Have students use this site to explore issues of plagiarism, take self-scoring tests, and view sample papers to learn ways of avoiding plagiarism. All quizzes and activities report to Grade Tracker.

### **Student Bookshelf**

Students may refer to the *Research Navigator Guide for English* for help in using Research Navigator.

## **DOCUMENT DESIGN AND GRAPHICS**

This useful section includes two tutorials—on designing documents, and creating Web pages—as well as helpful Weblinks and PDF files.

### **Visual Rhetoric Tutorial**

The five main sections of this tutorial—Elements of Visual Rhetoric, Using Visuals, Types of Visuals, Using Color, and Document Design—will help students understand how to make strategic decisions when creating documents that include graphics and visuals.

### **Web Design Tutorial**

This tutorial will guide novices through the process of creating a Web page.

### **Web Links**

This annotated list of valuable Web resources for document design and graphics will take students to useful design guides, outlines for effective design, and tools to help them think visually, in addition to guidelines including images, graphs, tables, or photographs into their documents.

### **Student Bookshelf**

Students may refer to Susan Hilligoss's informative guide, *Visual Communication*, Second Edition, to learn how to analyze design decisions, and understand how these decisions contribute to the overall effectiveness of their writing.

## **GRAMMAR AND USAGE**

This section, originally designed for composition students, offers a wide array of resources for students who want or need to brush up on basic grammar, usage, mechanics, and punctuation skills. Students can take a Diagnostic and create an individualized study plan to identify their strengths and understand where they need to practice more, then use ExerciseZone to drill. An online handbook and a rich list of Weblinks completes the section.

### **Diagnosics**

Students can take one of two comprehensive 50-question diagnostics to evaluate their current command of skills in sentence grammar, basic grammar, punctuation and mechanics, and sentence style. The Results page will identify overall strengths and weaknesses, as well as provide specific question-by-question feedback. Results report to Grade Tracker.

### **ExerciseZone**

Have students use their diagnostic results to point them to practice in particular areas—or simply send them to ExerciseZone and have them pick an area to review. ExerciseZone includes thousands of practice items organized into 10-question practice sets on over 50 topics. Students can pick from Sentence Grammar, Basic Grammar, Punctuation and Mechanics, or Usage and Style topics, or choose to do sentence or paragraph editing exercises. Results pages provide question-by-question feedback. Results report to Grade Tracker.

### **ESL ExerciseZone**

If you have students whose first language is not English, or who grew up speaking English among other languages, you may want to suggest they visit ESL ExerciseZone —almost 700 exercises, organized into 10-question practice sets, targeted at areas most troublesome for speakers of multiple languages.

### **Longman Online Handbook**

This concise handbook provides explanations for the grammar points tested in ExerciseZone, as well as brief Check Yourself activities. Students may use it to read about topics either before or after they measure your skills in ExerciseZone.

### **Web Links**

This annotated list of valuable Web resources about grammar and writing offers outstanding writing guides, grammar resources, sites with additional quizzes and exercises, usage and style guides, lists of common errors, ESL resources, and more.