

# Writing for Technology and Engineering Teacher

## The Audience

Most of our readers are members of the International Technology and Engineering Educators Association. Our members are STEM Education professionals, from elementary to high school classroom teachers, local and state/province supervisors, and college/university faculty. Their common ground is an interest and involvement in technology and engineering education. ITEEA brings together technology and engineering education professionals to share ideas, engage in professional development, and improve public understanding of technological literacy.

## What to Write

Personal experience is probably the best source of article ideas. As a practitioner of technology and engineering education, you have encountered problems, developed solutions, and corrected mistakes that your colleagues can learn from. Have you created a program or solution that works better than anything you've used before? Do you have a fresh approach to an old problem or a cost-effective solution to a new one?

## “How-to” Versus “Case Study”

Your article has a better chance of being accepted for publication if you think beyond the scope of your own classroom and show readers, through examples, the relevance of your insights to their circumstances—that is, how to apply your insights to their own situations. A case study of a process, event, or solution at your school becomes valuable to readers when you focus on communicating the lessons learned rather than focusing on, for instance, describing the chronology of events. Thus, the framework of your article is not your school's case study but rather the how-to insights deduced from your classroom experience and explained through examples from that experience. Don't deter readers by making them guess about the connections between your experience and theirs. Readers are eager and grateful for tools that help them solve problems and achieve new levels of understanding about their challenges, but the information has to be readily applicable. In writing from your experiences, ask these kinds of questions:

- How can other teachers adapt what you've done?
- What kinds of pitfalls might they encounter?
- What costs are involved?

The rule of thumb is to try to anticipate a reader's questions, and then answer them.

## Getting It Down on Paper

You're ready to write. Like any skill, writing is improved by doing—again, and again, and again. Here are a few suggestions that may make it easier for you to get your thoughts in order.

- **Create a Working Title.** Your working title helps focus your ideas. Make it brief (three to six words), and use an active verb.
- **Provide the byline.** That is, provide your name and those of any coauthors as they should appear in print.
- **Write a lead sentence or paragraph that compels your audience to read the article.** Among the devices you can incor-





porate into a lead are a surprising statistic, a witty or shocking quotation, a question, a scenario, or an analogy. Most important, your lead must be relevant to your topic and get to the point quickly. What is the purpose of your story?

- **Write freely, and let go of your inhibitions.** Don't attempt perfection in the first draft of your article. This is the time to get down all your thoughts.
- **Use subheadings in the manuscript as a signal to the reader the direction and focus the story is taking.** For example, the "Getting It Down on Paper" heading of this section of these guidelines is a subhead. Use one at the beginning of every major section of thought, or at least once every few pages.
- **Pay attention to tone.** The tone you adopt is crucial to your article's readability. You risk turning off readers by preaching or lecturing. Convey your ideas by showing, not by telling readers what they should do. Pretend that you are explaining your ideas to a colleague, face to face. Avoid excessive jargon, and define the jargon you must use. By the same token, don't create acronyms, and spell out any common or necessary acronyms with the first usage.
- **Write in the third person, even when discussing yourself or your classroom.** Rather than saying, "I wrote this robotics lesson plan," instead write, "A west central Florida middle school technology education teacher wrote a robotics lesson plan."
- **Be comprehensive.** Use details that add clarity. Provide statistics, dates, and quantities that support your points. Note the people involved, the money required, the time and resources available for a solution, and the tools or measures used to evaluate success. Pertinent information that is related but perhaps self-contained (e.g., steps in a process or a list of resources) can often be organized in a sidebar (a box of information that stands apart from, but within, the article.)
- **Include the 2020 Standards for Technological and Engineering Literacy or other STEM Standards.** Provide these at the benchmark level. Writing that your design brief covers *STEL8* is virtually meaningless as it is generic and covers K-12. If you are talking about a middle school classroom, consult the Standards document at that level and choose the benchmarks that can be clearly linked to what you are writing about.
- **Citations.** Provide citations and references in the correct APA format for any statements require support. For example, if you write that American girls are better in science than boys, you need to back up that opinion with cited research. Making an assertion often only requires one good citation. Including 4-6 citations per statement adds redundancy and interferes with the reader's ability to follow the article. While those citations may be appropriate for a dissertation, they would not be in *TET*. If the article is too technical, with pages of references, it will either be rejected or recommended for a more appropriate publication. Articles for *Technology and Engineering Teacher* must be readable.
- **Point out the relevance to others.** Make your points using examples from your experience; then explicitly tell readers how they can apply your experience in their classrooms.
- **Write as you would speak.** Shun the passive voice in favor of the active voice.
- **Make your conclusion as memorable as your lead.** Instead of merely summarizing, try to surpass the limits of the article. To quote the editors of Harvard Business Review, "A good conclusion adds something new, but relevant to the article—a forecast, a challenge, a clinching bit of evidence, or, ideally, something to do on Monday morning."
- **Provide a bio.** Write a one-sentence author identification (providing the author's full name, title, current affiliation, location, and email address) at the end of the manuscript.
- **Ask for help.** Don't hesitate to email ITEEA's editorial staff with any questions.
- **Edit your article thoroughly at least twice.** Delete unnecessary words and phrases. Turn passive sentences into active ones (e.g., change "The strategic plan was created by the team" to "The team created the strategic plan.") Move paragraphs to achieve continuity. Rewrite entire sections. Make sure that every paragraph follows logically from the one before it. Introduce subheadings at least every other page. Don't be satisfied until every sentence says precisely what you want it to say. If you do this up front, there's less chance that the article will require extensive rewriting after submission
- **Double check the accuracy of your article using the "red check" method.** Return to your original source material and verify every name, date, fact, and figure, placing a red check mark over each in your manuscript. Accuracy is your responsibility. Remembering how irritating it is to see your own name misspelled in print is motivation enough for rechecking.
- **Test market your article by asking a few colleagues to read it.** They may point out ways to clarify your message, add an example, or liven up your lead sentence. Another tip is to read it out loud. This technique usually uncovers misplacement of commas.

- **Graduate and Undergraduate Students.** TET has seen an increase of articles from students in recent years. This is an invaluable way for students to improve their job prospects and professional development. Before submission, however, please have your professors thoroughly review your draft article. This step will save the Review Board extra time and effort and improve your chances for acceptance and expedite publication.

## Submitting Your Manuscript

- **Take two minutes to review the checklist that accompanies these guidelines to ensure that your manuscript is in the correct form.**
- **Include supporting material.** If you have art work, photographs, charts, or tables to accompany the article, submit them as separate high-resolution images with the article. If you submit photographs, write captions for them and place the captions at the end of the article, following the one-sentence author identification.
- **Submit electronically.** Please submit your manuscript as a Microsoft Word attachment, with a cover letter, in an email to [kdelapaz@iteea.org](mailto:kdelapaz@iteea.org).
- **Direct all inquiries to Editor-in-Chief, Technology and Engineering Teacher via email at [kdelapaz@iteea.org](mailto:kdelapaz@iteea.org).**

## Evaluation and Decision About Acceptance

All submitted articles are assigned a tracking number, acknowledged via email, and then forwarded to the editorial review board chairperson to be entered into peer review. The review includes these features:

- Prior to initiating the peer review, any information that could identify an author is removed from the manuscript by the review board chair.
- Three members of the editorial review board are asked to review each manuscript to judge its suitability, appropriateness, and quality as a possible article for publication in *Technology and Engineering Teacher*. The peer review process generally takes approximately one month to complete.
- Reviewers' recommendations are compiled by the chair of the editorial review board. If there are major differences among the reviewers, another reviewer will be assigned to review the manuscript and the recommendations made by the initial reviewers. The additional reviewer prepares a summary review. This process, if necessary, usually takes an additional four weeks.
- Each manuscript is then rated as:
  1. accepted without changes,
  2. accepted pending minor revisions,
  3. accepted pending major revisions, or
  4. rejected
- In addition, articles will be recommended for publication in either *Technology and Engineering Teacher* (print) or the *TETe* (electronic) version. Generally, articles recommended for *TETe* are appropriate for publication, but are too long for print publication, too dry and technical, or include too many references.
- Recommended revisions are sent to authors for incorporation in the manuscript. In some cases, authors may submit a rationale for not making certain recommended revisions. Authors are asked to submit revised manuscripts within eight weeks.

## Copyright Transfer

Once the article has been accepted, you will be asked to sign a copyright transfer agreement that gives *Technology and Engineering Teacher* and ITEEA the right to publish and republish the article. By signing the agreement, you are asserting that you have read and reviewed [ITEEA's copyright guidelines](#), and that your manuscript is completely compliant with ITEEA's guidelines.

## Copyediting

Your writing style is your own, and we make every attempt to preserve it as we prepare your manuscript for publication. But we will make an effort to make the copy as substantive, clear, and lively as possible. If your article is substantially revised, we will send you the edited version, and you will have about three days to review it.

If questions arise after that, we'll contact you; but otherwise, the next time you see your article will be when it's in print. You will receive two complimentary copies of the issue of *Technology and Engineering Teacher* in which the article appears.

## Author Checklist

Your submitted article:

- Does not exceed 3000 to 4000 words, including references and sidebars.
- Is an original work that has not been published elsewhere.
- Does not promote a product, service, or company.
- Has a three-to-six-word working title with an active verb, followed by a one-sentence or one-paragraph lead that compellingly explains the purpose of the article.
- Contains a byline and ends with a one-sentence description giving the author's full name, title, and association or company and its location.
- Includes a photograph of the author, in electronic format and with a resolution of at least 300 dpi.
- Includes sidebars for pertinent facts or data that do not fit within the main body of the article.
- Is accompanied by a cover letter addressed to the editor-in-chief and includes any supporting charts, photos, or artwork.
- Has been double-checked for accuracy using the "red check" method.
- Is submitted as a Microsoft Word attachment in an email to [kdelapaz@iteea.org](mailto:kdelapaz@iteea.org).

## Style Rules

*Technology and Engineering Teacher's* style guidelines help ensure that its articles reflect consistent usage. Here are some rules we would like you to apply:

1. When you refer to an association, corporation, or business for the first time, use its full name, followed by its acronym in parentheses. For example, "the International Technology and Engineering Educators Association (ITEEA)." In subsequent references, you may use the acronym only.
2. Capitalize titles when they precede a person's name ("Executive Director John Doe, DTE, says..."), but lowercase them when they follow the name ("John A. Doe, DTE, executive director of..."). Verify that names and titles are complete and accurate.
3. Use a person's full name and job title in the first reference; in subsequent references, use last names only. Never use titles such as Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms. and Dr. Distinguished Technology Educator (DTE) is the only designation *Technology and Engineering Teacher* places after a name; academic degrees and other credentials (such as M.D., and Ph.D.) may be referred to if relevant, but should not follow a name.
4. Spell out the numbers one through nine; from 10 on, use Arabic numerals. Use Arabic numerals for addresses and dates.
5. Paragraphs are composed of two or more sentences that develop a single idea. No paragraph should be longer than half a page.
6. Separate or highlight key points with numbers or bullets in lists.
7. Use the serial comma (for example, "red, white, and blue" - not "red, white and blue.")
8. Do not use footnotes. Include all references in the actual body of the article, following APA guidelines.