

Technical Writer

Explain complicated products clearly enough that somebody can actually use them. Writing, but paid like tech.

TYPICAL PAY

\$90,390

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$57k to \$145k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

2 to 4 years

after high school

DEMAND

Limited

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Software companies, engineering and medical firms, government ag...

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 9 to 12
English and a science or computing subject together. The combination is the whole job in miniature.
- 2 A degree** 2 to 4 years
Technical communication if your school has it. Otherwise English, journalism, engineering or a science. Employers hire from all of these.
- 3 Build a portfolio** While studying
Write real documentation: a setup guide for an open source project, a manual for something in your house, instructions for a process at your job.
- 4 Internship or first junior role** One summer to a year
Documentation teams take juniors. A single internship is often enough to be taken seriously afterwards.
- 5 Learn the toolchain** First year on the job
Structured authoring, a help publishing tool, and version control. This is the part that separates a technical writer from a writer.

Pros and cons

- + The best paid ordinary writing job in the country
- + Remote work is normal, and has been for years
- + You learn how things genuinely work, in detail, for a living
- Growth is slower than average and drafting tools are pressing on the simpler work
- Documentation is the first budget cut when a company is squeezed
- You depend on busy engineers who see explaining things as an interruption

Optional boosts

Documentation as code. Structured authoring. Help publishing tools. API (application programming interface) documentation.

Good to know

The job title hides a dozen jobs

Reported titles in this occupation include engineering writer, medical writer and requirements analyst. The skill is the same, the subject matter is not, and the subject matter is what your pay is really based...

Writers now use programmers' tools

On software teams documentation is written in plain text, stored in Git and GitHub next to the code, reviewed like code and published automatically. A writer who can work that way is worth more than on...

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Technical Writers (27-3042.00)
O*NET OnLine: Technical Writers
Michigan Technological University
USAJOBS, the official federal hiring site

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/technical-writer>



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