

■ CAREER ■

What you should know before starting a career in TECHNICAL WRITING

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Any software or technical product requires an accessible and understandable guide for its users, be it tutorials detailing the step-by-step process to use that product or documentation explaining its features and functions. This is where technical writers come in.

While often confused or interchanged with content writing, technical writing serves a distinctly different purpose. Technical writing is the process of transforming complex technical information into accessible content for target audiences or users. It involves creating manuals, user guides, documentation, and other instructional or informational materials, such as updating changelogs that help users understand software, hardware, and other technical products. Technical writers may also have to write UI (user interface) texts and product descriptions for the company's website.

Content writers, on the other hand, usually have to write blogs, social media posts, and other marketing materials on a variety of topics. As the name suggests, technical writing is a bit more 'technical' and precise in every sense, whereas content writing requires more creativity.

Technical writing is one of the most important and growing fields in tech companies worldwide. While developers work on building the software, technical writers are needed to make that software understandable for users. Thus, to be a technical writer, you need to have good writing and analytical skills.

Depending on the type of company you're working for, you may require some knowledge of programming

and software development, but in most cases, this is not mandatory. Usually, technical writers are taught the basics of the company's software and how to use it. For instance, if the company works on web development based on a particular content management system (CMS), the technical writer will be kept up-to-speed on how to use that CMS before they are tasked with work.

Furthermore, technical writers are required to do some additional tasks beyond writing. A key part of technical writing is constantly collaborating with developers, product managers, UI/UX designers, and other team members to gather information and ensure the documentation is consistent and up-to-date. A technical writer needs to properly understand how the features of a product work and think of ways to easily explain that to potential users. This requires thorough research of the product and similar products on the market as well as frequent collaboration with the dev and design teams.

Due to how closely technical writing is linked with software development, it is a good alternative for Computer Science or Computer Science and Engineering majors who want to work in the field but are not necessarily interested in jobs that require coding or a lot of technical skills. However, one does not need to have studied Computer Science to be a technical writer; anyone from any background can enter this field so long as they are good at writing and research. Companies mainly observe an applicant's writing portfolio and aptitude when hiring technical writers.

In Bangladesh, technical writing is an expanding field. One of the main reasons why this field

is used interchangeably with content writing is because companies in the country tend to combine these roles within their teams. Often, content writers and people in marketing roles are tasked with technical writing responsibilities. Companies tend to name their roles: "content analyst", "research associate", or simply "content writer".

To understand which role requires technical writing, you need to check the job responsibilities and requirements listed by the company before applying. It is worth noting that due to the hybrid nature of these roles, being a technical writer in Bangladesh means you may also have to do marketing and content-oriented work, such as creating and editing video tutorials, writing blogs, and writing and managing the company's social media posts. While it does forego the specialised nature of technical writing, the bright side of this kind of work means you gain more versatility in your career trajectory and can pivot to marketing and content management roles later on.

Technical writing is a great way for people who are talented in writing and have great analytical skills to find work in software companies, IT firms, and start-ups. As long as you know how to write user-centric content, are able to research and understand technical products well, and can learn additional yet related skills such as video editing when needed, then technical writing may be the right career path for you. While most companies in Bangladesh might not treat technical writing as its own specialisation, the work itself is still an important part of the tech industry and the hybrid roles they offer can allow you to use technical writing as a stepping stone to other fields.

