



Writing Helpful Help

Checklist for Evaluating Topics

Remember to use “chunking” when deciding what to write. This checklist will help you make sure you’ve included the most common chunks when relevant. It also reminds you to watch for other elements that make for an effective procedure topic.

- ☐ Action-based Title

When deciding on your title, relate the title to a question the reader would ask, or describe a task that readers want to know or remember how to complete.

- ☐ WIIFM Statement

Readers want to know “what’s in it for me?” Tell them right away.

- ☐ Landmarks

Make topics easy to scan by providing a sentence that sets up steps before they begin.

- ☐ Steps

Remember that each action should be its own step. Separate each step with a number, bullet or some other icon to clearly mark it.

- ☐ Screen shots/Images

Provide visuals, but only where they will help clarify the information. Enhance the visuals with annotations like numbers, arrows or highlighted areas of the image.

- ☐ Did you include too much or too little?

Try to include everything the reader needs to know *for this task*, without including anything extra. The “extras” can be other topics, if needed, which you can connect with hyperlinks.

- ☐ Check readability

Aim for a reading level of the average 12-year-old.