
**Language resource management —
Controlled human communication
(CHC) —**

**Part 4:
Basic principles and methodology for
stylistic guidelines (BSG)**

*Gestion des ressources linguistiques — Communication humaine
contrôlée (CHC) —*

*Partie 4: Principes de base et méthodologie pour les lignes directrices
stylistiques*

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

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For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), see www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 37, *Language and terminology*, Subcommittee SC 4, *Language resource management*.

A list of all parts in the ISO 24620 series can be found on the ISO website.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html.

Introduction

It can be generally understood that English has evolved into the representative international common language, i.e. lingua franca. When browsing the internet, people can find many English sites. According to an estimation made by W3Techs in 2022^[6], English is used by 60,4 % of all the websites whose content language is known. ASD-STE100^[3], one of the representative controlled English rule sets, has been downloaded by 71 % non-English-native-speaking countries compared with 29 % English-speaking countries^[4]. This is natural considering communication methods with other countries. Currently, people generally communicate with other people in non-English speaking countries by using English via the internet, email and social media. Therefore, it is necessary to make the communication tool (i.e. English) more understandable and translatable. This document provides guidelines for non-native English speakers to write English in an easy-to-understand manner, not just native English speakers.

At the same time, almost one-third of internet sites (39,6 %) are written in languages other than English according to the W3Techs report^[6]. People should use plain, concise and understandable language because so many of their counterparts are not good at English and stick to their own language. By making the language as plain as possible, these counterparts will be able to understand it, and they will be able to apply it to machine translation. As a result, people can find that they need two languages: English and their own language. In order to facilitate communication worldwide, it is necessary for people to make English and their own language plain, comprehensible and easily translatable, i.e. to make languages bi-directionally accessible.

In addition, in some countries, there is an active movement to improve the language itself so that it can be communicated in an easy-to-understand and non-misunderstood manner in order to promote communication. Typical examples are plain languages^[5] and ASD-STE100^[3]. Both have a long history, especially ASD-STE100^[3], which was first released in 1983. In addition, plain languages have evolved into the languages of various countries, not just English. In the future, it could be helpful to have writing rules that cover both plain languages and ASD-STE100^[3] across the board.

It is possible that the writing rules of this document overlap with the rules of plain languages and controlled languages (such as ASD-STE100^[3]), but it also includes other detailed rules. This is to be able to address various languages in detail. The writing rules are not based solely on one language, as is the traditional practice, but instead by comparing English with a linguistically different language such as Japanese.

Writing using this document can facilitate communication around the world by writing original text that is easy for the readers to understand and by improving the quality of machine-translated output text.

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Language resource management — Controlled human communication (CHC) —

Part 4:

Basic principles and methodology for stylistic guidelines (BSG)

1 Scope

This document establishes a set of basic writing rules, called “basic principles and methodology for stylistic guidelines (BSG)”, for writing in English that can be applied to other languages, facilitating communication in each language and from a language to other languages. It includes conceptual writing rules as well as specific grammar ones.

This document is designed to facilitate written communication in English for native and non-native English speakers. It allows English native and non-English native speakers to smoothly communicate through social media or email using English, or to translate into their local language. Furthermore, this document is applicable to the languages of each community. In other words, it aims to promote bi-directional communication between two particular languages.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminology databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

— ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>

— IEC Electropedia: available at <https://www.electropedia.org/>

3.1

basic principles and methodology for stylistic guidelines

BSG

guidelines specifying common writing rules applicable to many languages

3.2

technical communication

process of defining and creating information for use to be delivered as information products for the safe, effective, and efficient use of a supported product throughout its life cycle

[SOURCE: ISO 24183:—¹), 3.1.1, modified — Notes 1 to 3 to entry deleted.]

3.3

plain language

communication in which wording, structure and design are so clear that the intended readers can easily

— find what they need,

1) Under preparation. Stage at the time of publication: ISO/DIS 24183:2022.

- understand what they find, and
- use that information

[SOURCE: ISO 24495-1:2023, 3.1]

3.4 **controlled language**

language restricting the grammar and vocabulary used, to reduce ambiguity and complexity and to help people to understand the content

3.5 **keyword**

word or phrase used to describe the main content (nouns and verbs) of a document in a consistent manner

3.6 **part of speech**

category to which a word is classified according to each syntactic function

EXAMPLE Noun, verb, adjective.

3.7 **internationalization**

process of generalizing a product so that it can handle multiple languages and cultural conventions without the need for re-design

Note 1 to entry: Internationalization takes place at the level of programme design and document development.

[SOURCE: Localization Industry Standards Association (LISA)^[7]

3.8 **localization**

process of taking a product and making it linguistically and culturally appropriate to the target locale (country/region and language) where it will be used and sold

Note 1 to entry: The term derives from “locale”: a place where something particular happens or is done. Translation (T9n) is one of the activities in localization.

[SOURCE: Localization Industry Standards Association (LISA)^[7]

4 Principle

Since there are many common factors and rules among languages, it is possible to create a set of writing rules that is applicable to many different languages.

5 Methodology — How to apply the rules

The task of simplifying language can be divided into two groups: sentences and words. Sentences are involved in syntactic and grammatical issues, which can be applicable to all languages. On the other hand, since words (or vocabulary) heavily depend on the language of each country, it is difficult to find and apply common rules.

The BSG given in this document concentrate on simplifying language by sentences, including clauses and phrases. Any difficulties related to writing sentences can be solved by applying the 3C rules in technical writing and technical communication: clear, correct and concise:

- clearly showing the sentence structure and not making the structure complicated;
- writing in statements of fact, and distinguishing between facts and opinions;

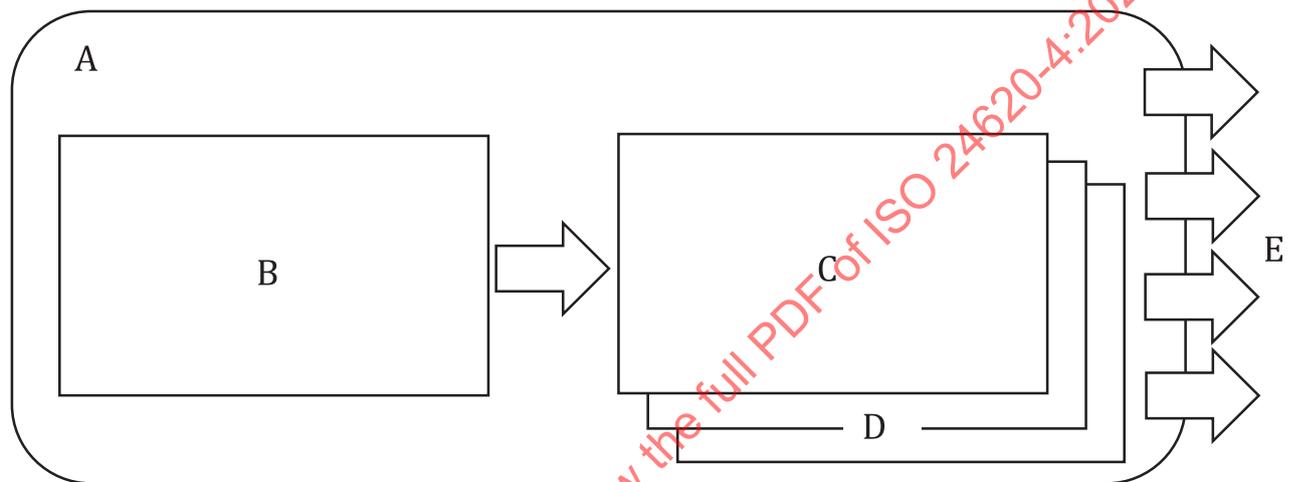
- giving simple and concise expressions.

The 3C rules are applicable to any language, and are used in many writing guidelines for plain languages and controlled languages.

BSG in one language can be created immediately by applying this English version to that language. Some grammatical or syntactic ingenuity can be required.

6 Steps to create the stylistic guidelines (BSG)

There are two necessary phases to complete BSG: internationalization and localization. [Figure 1](#) shows and explains the relation of the two concepts.



Key

- A globalization (G11n)
- B internationalization (I18n) or generalization
- C localization (L10n)
- D translation (T9n)
- E simultaneous shipment

Figure 1 — Terms used in globalization

Based on the BSG rules (in English), create language rules corresponding to each of the English rules. To do this, an idea of internationalization is necessary to find similarities in languages to make them more generalized, rather than finding differences.

After internationalization, the production stage moves to the language-specific matters: localization. A dictionary specific to the language selected, including the approved words and deprecated words, can be necessary (“vocabulary control”). The dictionary should be created for each language to make effective use of this rule set. However, creating a dictionary is not mandatory. If it is too time-consuming to create a dictionary, starting with just the writing rules is possible.

7 Stylistic guidelines rules (BSG)

7.1 Types of rules

This clause provides the 55 BSG rules, which comprise 8 sentence-length rules (see [7.2](#)), 8 paragraph rules (see [7.3](#)), 14 construction rules (see [7.4](#)), 6 modification rules (see [7.5](#)), 12 vocabulary rules (see [7.6](#)) and 7 other rules (see [7.7](#)).

7.2 Sentence length

7.2.1 BSG Rule 1.1: Write in short and concise sentences.

EXAMPLE

- No: When the Control application of the inspection system is started up, the IS screen is displayed for checking and setting the data necessary for detailed inspection, such as program, default values and functions. (33 words)
- Yes: When you start the Control application of the inspection system, the IS screen is displayed. (15 words)
You can use the IS screen to check and set the data necessary for detailed inspection, such as program, default values and functions. (23 words)

NOTE See Rule 1.2 (7.2.2) for identifying essential information. See Rule 3.13 (7.4.3) for the order of sentences.

7.2.2 BSG Rule 1.2: Divide essential information from ancillary information. Write the essential information first.

EXAMPLE

- No: The research laboratory, located in the ancient capital city of Nara in Japan and famous for its unique management policy, has developed a device with a self-diagnosis function, usually seen in the neural medication field, which has gradually been increasing its presence. (42 words)
- Yes: The research laboratory has developed a device with a self-diagnosis function. (11 words) The function is usually seen in the neural medication field, which has gradually been increasing its presence. (17 words) The laboratory is located in the ancient capital city of Nara in Japan and is famous for its unique management policy. (21 words)

The information enclosed by commas (underlined text) in the “No” sentence in the Example is ancillary, not-essential information. Place the ancillary information in separate sentences after the sentence with the essential information.

NOTE See Rule 3.13 (7.4.3) for the order of sentences.

7.2.3 BSG Rule 1.3: Divide a compound sentence that does not share subjects and predicates.

EXAMPLE

- No: Press the SHIFT button and then the device automatically detects the difference.
- Yes: Press the SHIFT button. The device automatically detects the difference.

7.2.4 BSG Rule 1.4: Divide a sentence with complicated nested constructions into simple sentences with a clear structure.

EXAMPLE

- No: When the linkage is complete, the inner domain is recorded if the operation is in the Lock mode.
- Yes: The operation is engaged in the Lock mode. When the linkage is complete, the inner domain is recorded.

7.2.5 BSG Rule 1.5: Separate overlong modification(s).

EXAMPLE

No: ABC research laboratory has developed a device with a self-diagnosis function, usually seen in the neural medication field, which has gradually been increasing its presence. (25 words)

Yes: ABC research laboratory has developed a device. The device has a self-diagnosis function, and it is usually seen in the neural medication field, which has gradually been increasing its presence.

7.2.6 BSG Rule 1.6: Separate a lengthy adnominal (attributive) clause from the subject.

EXAMPLE

No: The intranet Q&A site that facilitates knowledge sharing and communication among employees has been established.

Yes: The intranet Q&A site has been established. The site facilitates knowledge sharing and communication among employees.

We have established the intranet Q&A site.

7.2.7 BSG Rule 1.7: Use a complete sentence to introduce lists.

EXAMPLE

No: In addition to invoking, managing, and scrolling windows, the windowing environment can

- customize windows,
- manage libraries and files, and
- search text.

Yes: In addition to invoking, managing, and scrolling windows, the windowing environment can be used as follows:

- to customize windows;
- to manage libraries and files;
- to search text.

7.2.8 BSG Rule 1.8: Avoid interruptions in the middle of a sentence.

EXAMPLE

No: To automatically define a libref each time SAS starts, add

```
libname _saswa <location-of-your-knowledge-base>;
```

to your autoexec.sas file.

Yes: To automatically define a libref each time SAS starts, add the following statement to your autoexec.sas file:

```
libname _saswa <location-of-your-knowledge-base>;
```

SOURCE: Reference [8].

7.3 Paragraph**7.3.1 BSG Rule 2.1:** Destructure a long sentence into a group of short sentences. Use 20 words for an instruction and 25 words for a description.

EXAMPLE 1

No: If you want to set up an ideal environment during an example creation operation, especially a graphic example creation operation, or a file editing operation, especially graphic file editing operation, or a data saving operation, especially graphic data saving operation, click "Environment" twice to execute the generation. (47 words)

Yes: If you want to set up an ideal environment, click “Environment” twice to execute the generation during the following operations: (20 words)

- an example creation operation (especially a graphic one); (8 words)
- a file editing operation (especially a graphic one); (8 words)
- a data saving operation (especially a graphic one). (8 words)

EXAMPLE 2

No: After you have removed the electrical power from the system, make sure that the refueling panel switches go back to their normal position. (23 words)

Yes: Remove the electrical power from the system. (7 words) Make sure that the refueling panel switches go back to their correct position. (13 words)

SOURCE: ASD-STE100.^[3]

7.3.2 BSG Rule 2.2: Include only one topic or task per sentence.

If two or more topics or tasks are included in one sentence, it is possible that readers will not be able to understand the meaning and will be confused.

NOTE One word, one meaning; one sentence, one meaning/topic; one paragraph, one topic: these are well-known basic concepts for good writing.

EXAMPLE

No: Set the TEST switch to the middle position and then release the SHORT-CIRCUIT TEST switch.

Yes: Set the TEST switch to the middle position.

Release the SHORT-CIRCUIT TEST switch.

SOURCE: ASD-STE100.^[3]

7.3.3 BSG Rule 2.3: Include only one topic per paragraph.

Do not include two or more topics in one paragraph. A strong paragraph is structured with one topic sentence and other sentences that support the topic.

EXAMPLE

No: For an instructional information, an active voice sentence clearly tells who should carry out the action. To make a precaution message effective, you should show the consequences of the potential risks to the user. The passive voice focuses on the result since the object in an active voice sentence is dealt as the subject. On the contrary, the active voice lets the reader to follow the instructions. If an imperative sentence is used for an instruction, an English native speaker feels more directly addressed.

The example paragraph shown above is difficult to read and grasp. The causes are as follows:

- the paragraph includes several topics (actually four topics);
- keywords for each topic are shown without any threads (mutual relation is not apparent);
- there is no relation between the sentences, i.e. no logic flow.

7.3.4 BSG Rule 2.4: Lead from known information to unknown information.

EXAMPLE 1

No: A stabilizer is provided on the machine to stabilize the main unit.

Yes: The main unit of the machine is equipped with a stabilizer.

EXAMPLE 2

No: The Synchronization button is provided with Footswitch to keep the timing close to each cycle.

Yes: Footswitch is equipped with the Synchronization button to keep the timing close to each cycle.

7.3.5 BSG Rule 2.5: Use consistent keywords and terms to avoid unnecessary synonyms and similar phrases.

EXAMPLE

No: The type of data shown in the screen can differ depending on the sort of data you select in the display.

Yes: The type of data shown in the screen can differ depending on the data you select in the screen.

7.3.6 BSG Rule 2.6: Show things in parallel grammatical form if they are parallel.

EXAMPLE 1

No: A positive result will be got in the normal operation while you get a negative result in the reverse operation.

Yes: You get a positive result in the normal operation while you get a negative result in the reverse operation.

If two or more ideas are parallel, they are easier to grasp when expressed in parallel grammatical form. Single words should be balanced with single words, phrases with phrases, clauses with clauses.^[9]

EXAMPLE 2

No: See page 28 for information on selecting an appropriate number and to structure the utility configuration.

Yes: See page 28 for information on how to select an appropriate number and how to structure the utility configuration.

EXAMPLE 3

No: You cannot use the Edit function to change the designated file, set up the Utility or protect the data.

Yes: You cannot use the Edit function to change the designated file, to set up the Utility or to protect the data.

EXAMPLE 4

No: You can enjoy the following merits derived from the membership system of your shop:

- listing direct mail addresses;
- to obtain credibility for your shop;
- you can grasp buying trends;
- increase the number of participants for your events.

Yes: You can enjoy the following merits derived from the membership system of your shop:

- listing direct mail addresses;
- obtaining credibility for your shop;
- grasping buying trends;
- increasing the number of participants for your events.

7.3.7 BSG Rule 2.7: Use transitions (connective words) effectively.

EXAMPLE

No: These safety precautions are the minimum necessary for work in a fuel tank. The local regulations can make other safety precautions necessary.

Yes: These safety precautions are the minimum necessary for work in a fuel tank. But local regulations can make other safety precautions necessary.

7.3.8 BSG Rule 2.8: Use the itemization technique to show items in parallel.

EXAMPLE

No: To get an optimum effect, you should not add any additive agents to gas. You should use high quality gas with a purity of 98 % or more. Do not use heavy oil or light oil. You should not use biofuels. Also, you should avoid using any catalytic agents.

Yes: To get an optimum effect, you should use high quality gas with a purity of 98 % or more, and you should not do the following:

- add any additive agents to gas;
- use heavy oil or light oil;
- use biofuels; or
- use any catalytic agents.

7.4 Construction

7.4.1 BSG Rule 3.1: Use juxtapositional clauses no more than twice in a sentence.

Similar to Rule 2.8, itemize juxtapositional clauses to show the information clearly.

EXAMPLE

No: The alert icon indicates that an error is detected in the program, a miscalculation is done in the MPU, or a misinterpretation is found in the sub-set.

Yes: The alert icon indicates one of the following:

- an error is detected in the program;
- a miscalculation is done in the MPU; or
- a misinterpretation is found in the sub-set.

7.4.2 BSG Rule 3.2: Do not use many words to create a compound noun phrase by using the preposition “of”. The maximum is three words.

EXAMPLE

No: General Assembly Meeting of the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of Japan

Yes: General Assembly Meeting held by the Network of Associations of Local Authorities in Japan

7.4.3 BSG Rule 3.3: Do not frequently use the preposition “with.” If necessary, paraphrase it (to mean “accompanied by”).

EXAMPLE

No: Install the panel with the green fasteners.

Yes: Install the panel that has green fasteners.

Install the panel together with the green fasteners.

Use the green fasteners to install the panel.

SOURCE: ASD-STE100.^[3]

7.4.4 BSG Rule 3.4: Do not mix the conjunctions AND and OR (e.g. A and B or C).

EXAMPLE

No: Oxygen and oil or grease make an explosive mixture.

Yes: Oxygen with oil or grease makes an explosive mixture.

A and B or C: It is not clear whether this means “A and B” or “A and C” or “(A and B) or C”.

7.4.5 BSG Rule 3.5: Show the end of the term clearly (use more specific word or add a comment, if necessary).

EXAMPLE

No: The shop will be closed from 29 December to 3 January.

Yes: The shop will be closed from 29 December through 3 January. (American English)

The shop will be closed from 29 December 29 to January 3 inclusive. (British English)

7.4.6 BSG Rule 3.6: If there are several conditional clauses, clarify whether they are AND or OR.

EXAMPLE

No: The damaged ticket is reissued when:

- the name of the receiver can be scannable;
- the date printed on the ticket can be scannable;
- the endorsement has been done.

Yes: The damaged ticket is reissued when all the following conditions are satisfied:

- the name of the receiver is scannable;
- the date printed on the ticket is scannable; and
- the endorsement is done.

7.4.7 BSG Rule 3.7: Do not use demonstrative pronouns alone (use them as an adjective: context marker).

EXAMPLE

No: The TCDoc file is stored in the TC folder on the desktop. Drag and drop this onto the USB to copy it.

Yes: The TCDoc file is stored in the TC folder on the desktop. Drag and drop this TCDoc file onto the USB to copy the file.

7.4.8 BSG Rule 3.8: Avoid a nominalization style (describe an action with the corresponding verb).

EXAMPLE 1

No: He makes a recommendation to the Immigration Authority to reject her application.

Yes: He recommends that the Immigration Authority reject her application.

EXAMPLE 2

No: The modification of the current system has been done successfully.

Yes: The current system has been modified successfully.

7.4.9 BSG Rule 3.9: Do not omit the object for a transitive verb.

EXAMPLE

No: If installed, remove the shims.

Yes: If the shims are installed, remove them.

7.4.10 BSG Rule 3.10: Use the active voice to show an instruction (use the second person).

EXAMPLE 1

No: When the Reset button is pressed to stop the machine, the Stop indicator momentarily blinks.

Yes: When you press the Reset button to stop the machine, the Stop indicator momentarily blinks.

EXAMPLE 2

No: If this button is pressed while the machine is running, the alarm icon is shown on the display.

Yes: If you press this button while the machine is running, the alarm icon is shown on the display.

7.4.11 BSG Rule 3.11: Use the imperative to show a step procedure.

When completing a step procedure, use this rule.

EXAMPLE

No: The unnecessary chips have to be thrown into the trashcan.

Yes: Throw the unnecessary chips into the trashcan.

7.4.12 BSG Rule 3.12: Use the passive voice to show a result.

EXAMPLE

No: If you find an alarm number on the display, eliminate the cause of the alarm.

Yes: If an alarm number is shown on the display, eliminate the cause of the alarm.

7.4.13 BSG Rule 3.13: Use the most appropriate writing order for descriptive sentences, including:

- known to unknown;
- general to specific;
- easy to difficult,
- simple to complex;
- chronological;
- essential to additional (important to unimportant).

EXAMPLE (known to unknown)

No: Art paper is categorized in coated paper. Bookpaper and copier paper are categorized in uncoated paper. Coated paper is “coated” on the surface. Uncoated paper is not “coated” on it. Printing paper can be divided into two groups: coated paper and uncoated paper.

Yes: Printing paper can be divided into two groups: uncoated paper and coated paper. Uncoated paper is not “coated” on the surface. Uncoated paper includes bookpaper and copier paper. Coated paper is “coated” on the surface. Coated paper includes art paper and coated paper.

7.4.14 BSG Rule 3.14: Put a comma between the antecedent or conditional phrase/clause and the main clause.

EXAMPLE

No: To get the best OCR (Optical Character Recognition) quality place the object at the centre of the perimeter columns.

Yes: To get the best OCR (Optical Character Recognition) quality, place the object at the centre of the perimeter columns.

7.5 Modification

7.5.1 BSG Rule 4.1: Add a modifier or modifying phrase just before the word to be modified.

EXAMPLE 1

No: The default column pointer location is column 1.

Yes: The default location of the column pointer is column 1.

EXAMPLE 2

No: Syntax-checking mode is only in effect during the step in which the program encountered the error.

Yes: Syntax-checking mode is in effect only during the step in which the program encountered the error.

7.5.2 BSG Rule 4.2: Do not put a long modifying phrase between the noun and verb.

EXAMPLE 1

No: The cat, which is on top of an orange wall, walks.

Yes: The cat walks on top of an orange wall.

EXAMPLE 2

No: The institute cannot, though it tries to figure out the problem, find an appropriate solution.

Yes: Although the institute tries to figure out the problem, it cannot find an appropriate solution.

7.5.3 BSG Rule 4.3: Break an overlong subject phrase to make concise sentences.

EXAMPLE 1

No: The rest of the existing documents such as brochures, catalogues, training materials, service manuals, owner's manuals and specifications are further important resources.

Yes: The rest of the existing documents are further important resources. They are brochures, catalogues, training materials, service manuals, owner's manuals and specifications.

EXAMPLE 2

No: The long physical sector protruded forward from the stay and displayed on the remote screen plays an important role in the system.

Yes: The long physical sector plays an important role in the system. The sector is protruded forward from the stay and displayed on the remote screen.

7.5.4 BSG Rule 4.4: Clarify a modification by changing the word order.

EXAMPLE

No: The improvement for the chemical treatment he proposed has been approved by the board.

Yes: The improvement he proposed for the chemical treatment has been approved by the board.

7.5.5 BSG Rule 4.5: If necessary, repeat the modifier.

EXAMPLE 1

No: Table X is effective function and table.

Yes: Table X is effective function and effective table.

EXAMPLE 2

No: The stored query is executed when you use the view in the functional SUS procedure or subroutine.

Yes: The stored query is executed when you use the view in the functional SUS procedure or the functional subroutine.

7.5.6 BSG Rule 4.6: Remove a complementary description enclosed by the parentheses in a sentence. Move the description just after the sentence or paraphrase the sentence.

EXAMPLE

No: The Arrange item aligns the icons for the data objects (in multiple rows, if needed).

Yes: The Arrange item aligns the icons for the data objects. The icons can be arranged in multiple rows.

7.6 Vocabulary

7.6.1 BSG Rule 5.1: Use specific words. Do not use equivocal words.

Especially, do not use phrasal verbs (see Note below) that can have several different meanings. For example, “come out” has 18 different meanings.

EXAMPLE 1

No: Negative numbers stand for the bottom n values.

Yes: Negative numbers represent the bottom n values.

EXAMPLE 2

No: This compound can give off poisonous fumes.

Yes: This compound can release poisonous fumes.

SOURCE: ASD-STE100.^[3]

NOTE Phrasal verbs can make it difficult for non-English speakers to immediately understand the meaning. For example:

call off	→	cancel
back out	→	withdraw
turn down	→	refuse
rule out	→	exclude
put off	→	postpone
(be) cheesed off with	→	(be) fed up with = weary or tired

Use specific words to explain a thing or a matter precisely, without using equivocal or ambiguous words. Specific words and familiar words sometimes conflict with each other; the more specific, the more it becomes difficult, and the more familiar, the more its meaning becomes ambiguous. See [7.6.2](#) for more information.

7.6.2 BSG Rule 5.2: Differentiate nouns/verbs appropriately, e.g. between weak verbs and strong verbs, or German-origin words and Latin-origin words (similar to the relation between native Japanese words and Chinese-origin words).

German-origin words are mainly used in daily life and are generally easy to understand. Latin-origin words, or Latinate words, are used in academic papers and are difficult to understand. However, German-origin words usually have multiple meanings and Latin-origin words have a specific meaning. For accuracy purposes, Rule 5.1, using specific words (i.e. Latin-origin words) is good for written text. But if it is necessary to expand the target readers, German-origin words should be used. Thus, it is necessary to trade off the use of words depending on the target readers. Examples are given in [Table 1](#).

Do not use long words or big words.

Table 1 — German-origin versus Latin-origin words

German-origin word	Latin-origin word
rainfall	precipitation
put out	extinguish
check	scrutinize
burn	incinerate
high air pressure	anticyclone

7.6.3 BSG Rule 5.3: If there are two different words with the same spelling, replace one of them to differentiate the meaning (orthography).

EXAMPLE

No: She went to the bank on the bank.

Yes: She went to the bank on the river's edge.

7.6.4 BSG Rule 5.4: Use concrete and plain expressions for difficult technical terms and abbreviations (acronyms).

EXAMPLE 1

No: The dossier contains each of the following:

Yes: The report contains each of the following:

SOURCE: ASD-STE100.^[3]

EXAMPLE 2

No: According to the research laboratory, it is called melatonin a.k.a. "sleep hormone."

Yes: According to the research laboratory, it is called melatonin also known as "sleep hormone."

7.6.5 BSG Rule 5.5: Do not use a compound word consisting of more than four words.

EXAMPLE

No: Pressure adjustment cylinder vending lock lever

Yes: Vending lock-lever of the pressure adjustment cylinder

7.6.6 BSG Rule 5.6: Paraphrase polysemic words (homographs) to clarify the meaning.

EXAMPLE

No: The pretty large sounds of the stream in the sound located in the designated area are sound and comfortable.

Yes: The comparatively large sounds of the stream in the straits located in the designated area are steady and comfortable.

7.6.7 BSG Rule 5.7: Omit unnecessary words (pruning).

EXAMPLE

No: The following memo summarizes the points briefly.

Yes: The following memo summarizes the points.

7.6.8 BSG Rule 5.8: Keep the same term consistently for a specific idea: keyword (nouns and verbs).

EXAMPLE

No: Check the screen of your monitor while another display shows the product from the opposite side.

Yes: Check your monitor while another monitor shows the product from the opposite side.

Keywords such as nouns (subjects) and verbs determine the original meaning of a sentence. Other parts of speech are adjectives and adverbs that modify nouns and verbs, and can be function words such as prepositions.

7.6.9 BSG Rule 5.9: Do not use English mixed with other languages such as Japaglish, Ginglish, Yinglish, Ringlish, Singlish, Inglish (Hinglish), Chinglish, Tinglish, etc. Remember that they cannot convey the correct meaning of English (and are false friends).

EXAMPLE

No: He airdashed* to the baggage claim and waited there with baggravation.

Yes: He hurried to the baggage claim and frustratingly waited for his baggage while the other passengers were already picking up theirs.

In the “No” sentence in the Example, the verb “airdash” is an English word. The sentence also includes a buzzword, “baggravation”, that is difficult to understand.

7.6.10 BSG Rule 5.10: Always be aware of the conceptual differences between English and the own language. If necessary, add an English translation.

EXAMPLE 1

No: Image as balmy as a lemon?

Yes: Clean and crisp image.

EXAMPLE 2

No: Click the icon in the left top side of the display.

Yes: Click the icon in the top left-hand side of the display.

7.6.11 BSG Rule 5.11: Do not use onomatopoeia specific to a language or a group.

EXAMPLE 1

No: The western sky was flashed.

Yes: There was a flash of lightning in the western sky.

EXAMPLE 2

No: We should not be dragged on the matter.

Yes: Let's close the matter.

7.6.12 BSG Rule 5.12: Paraphrase the expressions unique to the own language (affected by language metaphors). Internationalize all expressions.

EXAMPLE

No: Draw a circle with the size of 1 Euro coin.

Yes: Draw a circle with the diameter of 23,25 mm.

7.7 Others

7.7.1 General

7.7.1.1 BSG Rule 7.1: Write sentences logically, plainly and accurately.

A leap in a logical expression can confuse the reader who then cannot easily read through the document. It is important to follow the Gricean maxims^[10] of quality, quantity, relation and manner.

7.7.1.2 BSG Rule 7.2: Obey grammar and syntax rules.

Needless to say, this is the basic rule in communication.

EXAMPLE

No: He likes the actor more than me. (ambiguous statement)

Yes: He likes the actor more than he likes me.

He likes the actor more than I do.

7.7.1.3 BSG Rule 7.3: Differentiate affirmative and negative sentences.

Use affirmative sentences in procedural writing and descriptive writing (in main text).

Use negative sentences to get attention from the reader in warnings and cautions.

7.7.1.4 BSG Rule 7.4: Write positively (do not use double negatives).

Write as positively as possible. Negative sentences, especially “double negatives”, can lead to confusion or put an unnecessary burden onto the readers’ mind because they have to replace one of the negative expressions with a positive one to understand the meaning. However, negative expressions can be useful to attract the attention of readers and show a potential risk in warnings.

Compare the following three sentences:

- “You can’t win the lottery if you don’t buy a ticket”: two negatives giving a positive meaning;
- “I Can’t Get No Satisfaction” (Rolling Stones): putting an emphasis on “No”;
- “It is no less important to measure the actual size”; showing the two are equivalent.

EXAMPLE

No: You can’t win the lottery if you don’t buy a ticket.

Yes: You have a chance to win the lottery if you buy a ticket.

In this Example, the negative sentence is more motivating for customers.

7.7.1.5 BSG Rule 7.5: Be aware of the ambiguity of a partial negation.

In these cases, the sentence can mislead the readers. In particular, consider the position of the negation (no/not).

EXAMPLE 1

No: All the people are not satisfied with the result.

Yes: Not all the people are satisfied with the result.

EXAMPLE 2

No: That application is not found on all machines.

Yes: That application is not always found on all machines.
Depending on the machines, that application is not available.

EXAMPLE 3

No: I do not know all of the employees of that company.
Yes: I know some of the employees of that company.

7.7.1.6 BSG Rule 7.6: Do not use unnecessary signs or symbols.

If unnecessary signs or symbols specific to the language are used in documents, they can become corrupted during the translation process and cause problems. In addition, they make it difficult for screen readers to recognize characters and therefore prevent people with visually impairments from being able to access the document.

7.7.1.7 BSG Rule 7.7: Keep consistencies with writing style including tone.

7.7.2 Style

7.7.2.1 General

Style is mainly used to create the cosmetic appearance of sentences. By unifying the style, the structure of the document can clearly be shown to readers, which raises its readability.

NOTE The structure of the document can be implied by applying different styles for each hierarchy.

7.7.2.2 Different styles

Each of the styles given in [Table 2](#) affects the characteristics of the document. When choosing the left-hand side styles, the document becomes more rigid and formal. When choosing right-hand side ones, the document becomes more casual and informal. A specific tone (or atmosphere) can be created by selecting each style from the list. When the tone to use has been decided, use it coherently.

Decide on using the singular or plural form for each object and be consistent throughout the document, e.g. “document or documents”, “it or they”, “he/she or they”.

When using the third-person pronoun, be gender neutral and always write both pronouns, e.g. “he or she”, “s/he”. Alternatively, use “they/them” to refer to the singular form.