

Below you will find guidelines to make English-language documentation easier to read for non-native English-speakers as well as less ambiguous to ensure accurate and efficient translations. Some of these guidelines may apply to your industry more than others.

### *Writing for a Global Audience*

- Keep it short and clear
- Avoid Americanisms, clichés, puns, word play, slang, idioms
- Avoid marketing lingo and acronyms
- Avoid cultural references, such as gender-specific roles, humor, ethnic or historical references, analogies, and metaphors. When choosing to include cultural references, encapsulate such content into well-defined locations.
- Don't be cute, i.e. humor is culture-specific and does not translate well
- Punctuate properly
- Write in complete sentences
- Be specific
- Spell check automatically as well as manually
- Be consistent with terminology
- Define acronyms and abbreviations
- Make sure that direct and indirect objects are unambiguous
- Include relative pronouns (which and that)
- Use "that" (introduces restrictive clause) and "which" (introduces nonrestrictive clause) correctly
- Use the active voice
- Put statements and questions in positive form
- Avoid the ambiguous use of gerunds
- Avoid conjunctions and contractions as much as possible
- Avoid using nouns as adjectives
- Avoid the ambiguous use of modal auxiliaries, such as *will, would, may, might, can, could, shall, should, have to, ought to* and *must*

### *Simplified English, Global English or Controlled Language (CL)*

- Many companies rely on CL to avoid ambiguity of English language
- Software to ensure that writers follow the CL rules (e.g. [acrocheck™](#))
- Sentence length: max. 20-25 words
- Paragraph length: max. 6 sentences
- Noun cluster length: max. 3 words ("main gear onboard door retraction winch handle" → "the retraction winch handle to the onboard door of the main gear")
- Missing articles not allowed ("clean surfaces" → "clean the surfaces" or "the clean surfaces")
- Make sure compound terms are clear ("operator contamination" → "contamination by the operator" or "contamination of the operator")
- Multiple commands not allowed in a single sentence

### *Miscellaneous*

- Establish standard linguistic style guidelines and glossaries, to be used consistently across all types of communications
- Consider Content Management Systems and Controlled Authoring/Content Reuse tools to facilitate creation and localization of English source content