



Technical Instructions

J. CHRISTY MCKIBBEN

PRINCIPLES OF TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION JULY 2013

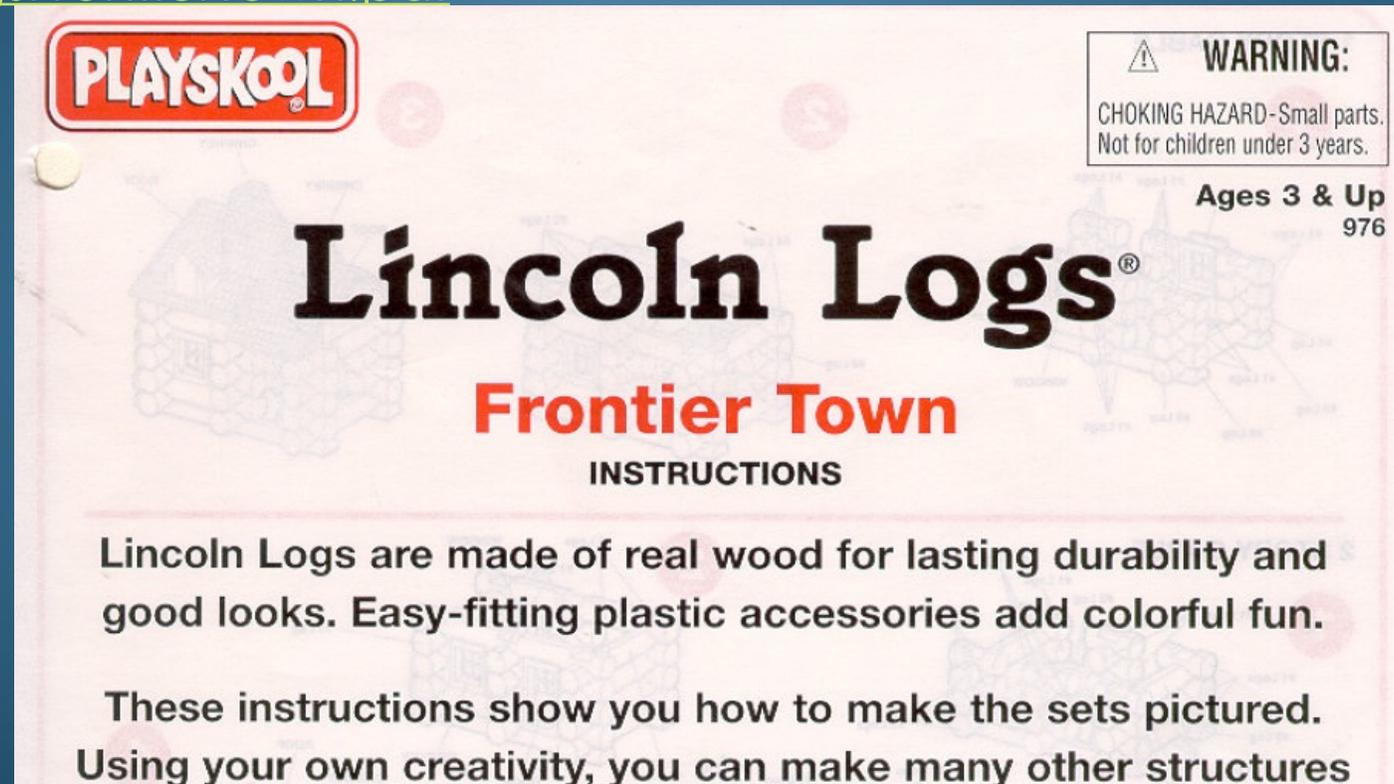
Technical Communication is



- ▶ Interactive and adaptable
- ▶ Reader centered
- ▶ Reliant on teamwork
- ▶ Visual
- ▶ Bound ethically, legally, and politically
- ▶ International and cross-cultural

Lincoln Logs Frontier Town Instructions

- ▶ <http://www.hasbro.com/common/instruct/LincolnLogsFrontierTown.pdf>



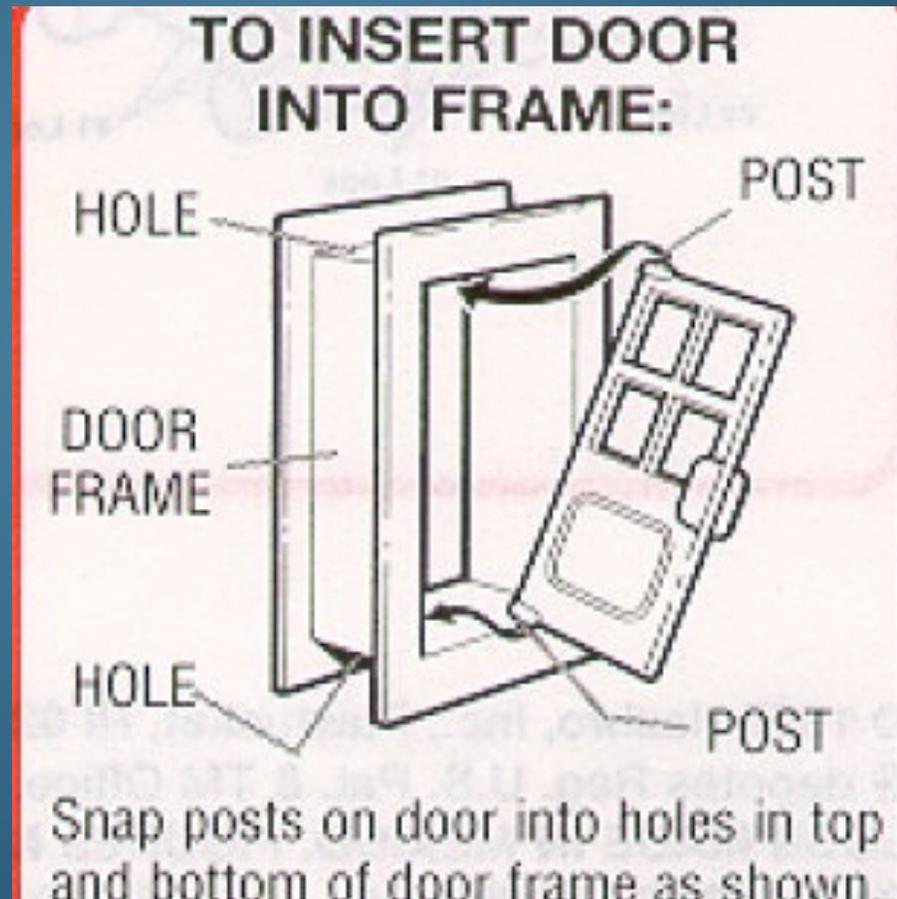
Interactive and adaptable

- ▶ Online instructions
- ▶ Contact information



Reader centered

- ▶ Efficient
- ▶ Easily understood
- ▶ Action oriented



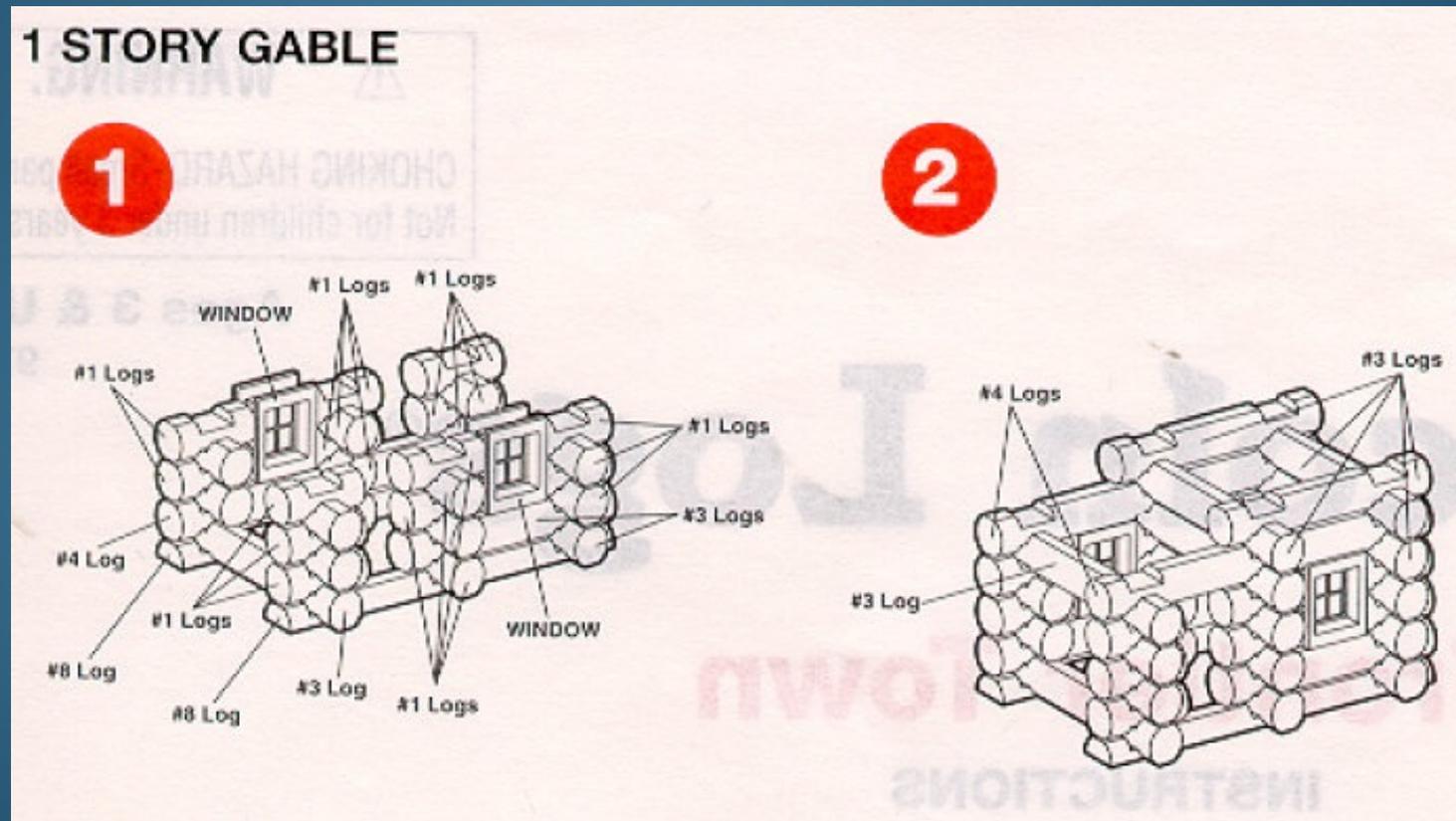
Reliant on teamwork



- ▶ Writers
- ▶ Specialists
- ▶ Team presentations

Visual

- ▶ Headings
- ▶ Graphics
- ▶ Lists



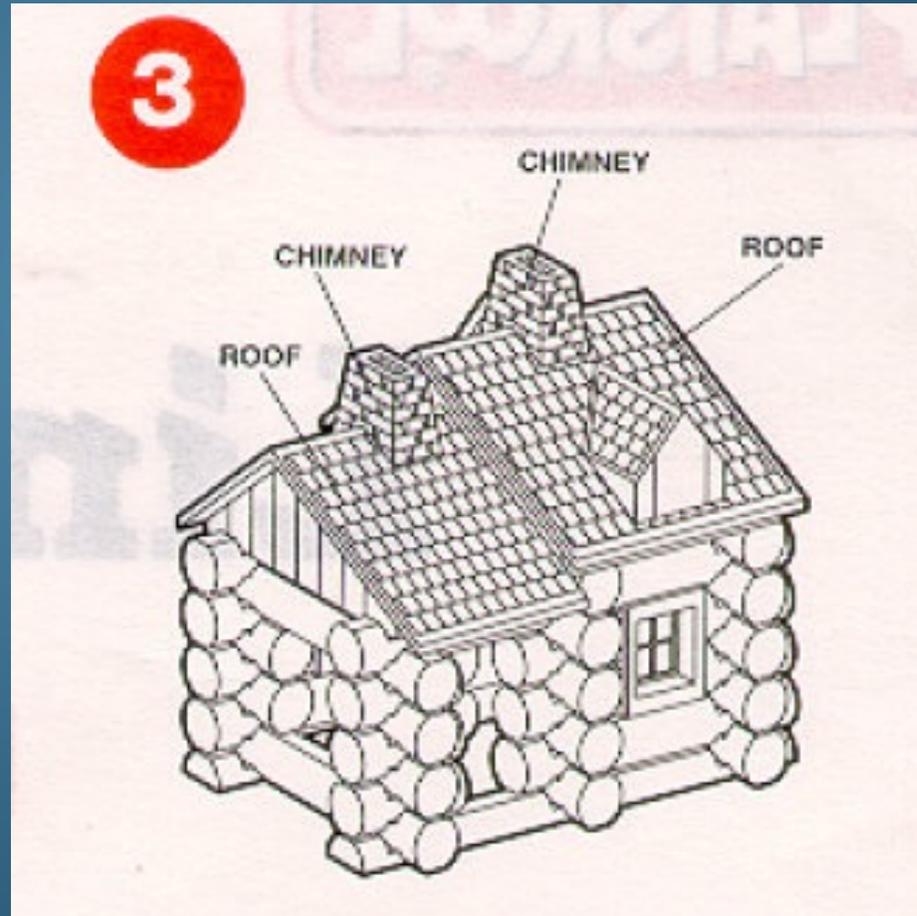
Bound ethically, legally, and politically

- ▶ Legal considerations
- ▶ Ethical considerations



International and cross-cultural

- ▶ Accessed via Internet
- ▶ Adaptable to diverse cultures/languages



Comparisons

Technical Documents versus Academic Essays

In my experience the process of writing technical documents versus academic essays is similar. The technical writing process may be broken down into the following stages:

- ▶ Planning and researching
- ▶ Organizing and drafting
- ▶ Improving the style
- ▶ Designing the document
- ▶ Revising and editing

I use all of these stages in both technical and academic writing. A writer doesn't always follow a certain order. It may be necessary to jump around, as needed, between the stages.

Contrasts

Technical Documents versus Academic Essays

- ▶ The **audience** is more diverse for technical documents versus academic essays (Technical: endless possibilities; Academic: instructor, students).
- ▶ Technical documents usually have more of a **purpose** (examples: call to action or making a decision).
- ▶ There is usually a focus on the **design** of a technical document, which is untrue for most academic essays. Technical documents may include illustrations, photographs, and any other graphic deemed necessary; academic essays rarely include these kind of graphics.

References

- ▶ <http://www.hasbro.com/common/instruct/LincolnLogsFrontierTown.pdf>
- ▶ Johnson-Sheehan, Richard. *Technical Communication Today*. New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc., 2012. Print.