



Université Internationale
de Casablanca

LAUREATE INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITIES

Nous innovons pour votre réussite !

Engineering English

Technology in Use:
Technical Explanations

Simplifying and Illustrating Technical Explanations

When talking to non-specialists

- Don't use technical jargon. Use
- Even using everyday language, technical concepts may be complex and difficult to explain, hence dull/boring.
- Don't oversimplify things (patronize). Adults don't want to be spoken to like a child.

Simplifying and Illustrating Technical Explanations

- ▶ Use everyday language whenever you can.
- ▶ Use an amount of technical language and give *straight forward explanations* on what is meant in everyday language.
- ▶ Compare technical points with everyday life that you are familiar with (paint a picture).
- ▶ Use humor and amusing anecdotes.

Simplifying and Illustrating Technical Explanations

ANSWER
KEY

Technical terms for a construction site:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| 1. Substructure | 1. The part of the structure below ground |
| 2. Pile foundation | 2. A column going down into the ground |
| 3. To pore (a pile) | 3. To drill |
| 4. In situ concrete | 4. Concrete poured on site in its final position |
| 5. Pre-cast piles | 5. Made/ " Pre-made at the factory |
| 6. To drive in (a pile) | 6. To hammer in |
| 7. Pile driver | 7. Like a giant hammer |
| 8. Drive auger | 8. Like a giant drimm |
| 9. Bentonite | 9. Type of clay suspension/mud |

Simplifying and Illustrating Technical Explanations

▶ Simplifying the language

- In simple terms
- Put simply
- In other words
- Basically

▶ Simplifying the concept

- Effectively
- Essentially
- Basically
- It's (like) a ...

▶ Focusing on technical terms

- What we call
- What we refer to as

▶ Illustrating with images

- If you imagine
- If you picture

Simplifying and Illustrating Technical Explanations

Sample
rephrased
text

There are two types of pile foundations: end-bearing piles and friction piles.

Essentially, end-bearing piles are used when you have soft ground which is on top of hard ground or rock. **Basically**, the piles go through the soft ground and sit on the hard ground below. *It's a bit like building over water.* The soft ground is like water, which can't support anything, and the hard ground below is like the seabed. **Put simply**, the piles are like stilts.

Friction piles are different. They're used when there's no hard ground. **In simple terms**, the sides of the pile grip the soft ground around them. **If you picture** *a nail in a piece of wood*, it's the same thing. The nail is gripped by the wood around it. Sometimes the bottoms of friction are made wider. **Imagine** *a leg with a foot at the bottom*, it's the same principle.

Simplifying and Illustrating Technical Explanations

Activity

You are showing a non-specialist visitor around your company and explaining technical concepts using simplified language.

In pairs, practice explaining a product or type of technology that you are familiar with. Include useful language and phrases for simplifying and rephrasing.

Useful language

This is what we call a ... This is what we refer to as a ...
Basically/Effectively/Essentially , it's (like) a ...
In other words ... In simple terms ... Put simply ...
If you imagine a ... If you picture a ...