



Simplified Technical English, ASD-STE100

SIMPLIFIED TECHNICAL ENGLISH

Specification ASD-STE100

European Community Trade Mark No. 004901195

**International specification
for the preparation of technical documentation in a controlled
language**

ISSUE 7, JANUARY 2017

ASD incorporates AECMA, EDIG and EUROSPACE.

Rue Montoyer 10, 1000 Brussels, Belgium Telephone: +32 2 775 81-10, Fax: +32 2 775 81-12
info@asd-europe.org www.asd-europe.org

“If you simplify your English, you are freed from the worst follies of orthodoxy... And when you make a stupid remark, its stupidity will be obvious, even to yourself.”

George Orwell (1946) - Politics and the English Language.

What is ASD Simplified Technical English?

ASD Simplified Technical English (STE) is an international specification for the preparation of technical documentation in a controlled language.

STE has two parts: a set of writing rules (part 1) and a controlled dictionary (part 2). The writing rules cover aspects of grammar and style. The dictionary gives the general words that a writer can use.

When and why was STE developed?

English is the international language of science, technology, and human relations. It is also the language of the aerospace and defense industry. However, it is not often the native language of the readers of technical documentation. Many readers have a limited knowledge of English. Complex

sentence structure and the large number of meanings and synonyms that many English words have can cause confusion.

In aviation, it is mandatory to correctly understand maintenance and operation documentation to make sure that systems operate safely and correctly and to protect human lives.

In the late 1970s, the Association of European Airlines (AEA) asked the European Association of Aerospace Industries (AECMA, now ASD www.asd-europe.org) to investigate the readability of maintenance documentation in the civil aviation industry and find a solution to simplify the language used to write such documentation.

AECMA asked the Aerospace Industries Association (AIA) of America to help with this project and two project groups from AECMA and AIA were formed. These two groups explored the existing controlled languages and researched texts in several maintenance manuals. The results confirmed that a simplified language was necessary.

On June 30, 1983, in Amsterdam, the AECMA Simplified English Working Group was founded and the AECMA Simplified English project started.

The product of this effort was the AECMA Simplified English Guide (first release in 1986) which, in 2005, became the ASD Simplified Technical English Specification, ASD-STE100.

STE was developed to help the readers of English-language documentation understand what they read, particularly when these readers are non-native English speakers. Today, the success of STE is such that other industries use it beyond its original intended purpose of aerospace maintenance documentation. Interest in STE has also increased dramatically in the areas of language services, professional translation and interpreting, as well as in the academic world.

What is the purpose of STE?

The purpose of STE is to give technical writers guidelines on how to write technical texts in a clear, simple and unambiguous manner that readers throughout the world will find easy to understand. The STE specification is not a treatise on the English language or technical writing. Thus, linguistic matters are not included in this specification because they are adequately explained in other language reference books and guidelines.

Summary of the rules

Which words can you use?

You can use words that are:

- Approved in the dictionary
- Technical names
- Technical verbs.

Part of speech

Use approved words from the dictionary only as the part of speech given.

Approved meaning

Use approved words only with their approved meanings.

Forms of verbs and adjectives

Use only the approved forms of verbs and adjectives.

Technical names

You can use words that you can include in a technical name category.

Use a word that is unapproved in the dictionary only when it is a technical name or part of a technical name.

Do not use words that are technical names as verbs.

Use technical names that agree with approved nomenclature.

When you must select a technical name, use one which is short and easy to understand.

Do not use slang or jargon words as technical names. Do not use different technical names for the same item.

Technical verbs

You can use verbs that you can include in a technical verb category. Do not use technical verbs as nouns.

Spelling

Use American English spelling.

The dictionary also gives a selection of unapproved words, with examples that show how to use alternative words.

In the dictionary, each approved word has a specified part of speech. When you use an approved word, make sure that you only use it as that part of speech.

Examples:

The word “test” is an approved noun, but not an approved verb.

STE: Test B is an alternative to test A.

Non-STE: Test the system for leaks.

STE: Do the leak test of the system. or Do a test for leaks in the system.

The word “acceptable” is an unapproved adjective. The dictionary gives an approved alternative that has the same part of speech. You can use that word to replace the unapproved word in the sentence (word-for-word replacement).

Non-STE: A value of 2 mm is acceptable.

STE: A value of 2 mm is permitted.

Each approved word in the dictionary has a specified approved meaning which can be more restricted than its meaning in standard English. Always use these words with their approved meanings.

Example:

The approved meaning of the word “follow” is “come after” and not “obey”.

Non-STE: Follow the safety instructions.

STE: Obey the safety instructions.

But you can write:

STE: Follow the green lights to the nearest staircase.

STE: Do the instructions that follow: