

## Citation metadata

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## Main content

Article Preview :

William S. Pfeiffer. 1998. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall. [ISBN 0-13-242157-7. 170 pages, including index. \$13.33 (softcover).]

Sandy Pfeiffer's new book presents an excellent overview of the field of technical communication. The text is well-written and succinct, and includes an effectively designed format to guide the reader through such areas as the writing process; order and design; and style, grammar, and spelling. Pfeiffer also includes a useful appendix of formats and sample letters for a variety of writing project contingencies.

Pocket guide gives the reader an immediate sense that the author is an experienced writer and editor who knows the field; he cleverly graces the inside front and rear jackets with a guide to common editing symbols. Another considerate touch is the use of a condensed as well as a detailed table of

contents labeled "Brief contents" and "Contents," respectively.

As a seasoned technical writer and editor, this reviewer naturally has a few minor points of contention with some of the generalizations made by the author, as well as some layout/design and stylistic suggestions for modifications to a second edition. The most substantive problems with the book are the author's generalizations and failure to acknowledge numerous style manuals. For instance, in Design Rule 1, the statement "Most readers prefer the visual break that paragraph indenting adds" might be open to debate. The author could have included sections of suggested reading or references to back up such claims. Also, some style manuals will refute Pfeiffer's adherence to the "Follow the 10-or-over Rule" (see Chapter 12, "Numerals,"...

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