Welcome Letter

What follows in this packet are the materials and information you will need to make your own version of this project in collaboration with the AI of your choosing. Specifically, this prompt was designed for ChaptGPT, but other AI models such as Claude and Google Gemini (formerly Google Bard) could work well.

First, you will find my prompt with fillable blanks to insert course, student, or mystery-specific information. The prompt, while lengthy, is a combination of multiple prompting strategies, frameworks, and best practices such as the RISEN framework and OpenAI's Basic Prompt Engineering Guide. There are many prompting techniques for AI and other formats would work well for this kind of output.

Second, I have included some notes on the process of working through/with AI to generate this content. These are mostly just issues I noticed in this work and things to think through as you manipulate the content therein.

Finally, the assignment overview includes an investigation letter to fill in and hand to students as well as a breakdown of the deliverables they are expected to create. On the final page, I have included a useful chart from Suzan Last's Technical Writing Essentials that my students and I use as a starting point for genre conventions. This is also an important piece of the reflective deliverable as currently written.

You can also find a filled-out example of the prompt and assignment overview (and the outputs from which I built my specific mystery) in the "Investigate the Institute for Nuclear Semiotics" document.

I hope you enjoy this project as much as I have and that you and your students have fun learning about technical writing through/with AI.

Happy Investigating!

Prompt

I am an educator planning a mystery-solving activity for my students, inspired by the Hunt A Killer board games. I want the main action to take place in a company devoted to _____. The company is a team of _____ whose job is to _____. The company should experience some mystery that my students will have to solve by analyzing and synthesizing technical documents. Your job is to create these fake documents, which should all incorporate some critical clue about the mystery and a red herring clue to test students' analysis skills.
Here are the details about the course to take into account while designing.

- My class has _____ students total and meets _____ per week for _____ each time.
- I have allotted _____ weeks for this project (that's _____ total meetings) and the majority of their analysis should be done during class time.
- You will be designing documents common to technical writing and writers with attention to the most typical genre conventions of each document.
- Please incorporate red herrings into the documents and keep an appropriate complexity level for _____-level college students who are interested in writing but come from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds.
- The main objective is to introduce students to technical writing genres and styles while practicing critical thinking and attention to detail.

I would like you to generate the following content, the most important of which are the full document examples:

- Setting, Plot, and Characters: Provide a detailed plot and setting for the mystery and explain all characters in the form of personnel files. I will use this information as an introduction to the students, so please leave out any critical clues or spoilers.
- Session Outline: Outline the _____ class sessions, specifying objectives, activities, and documents to be introduced. Emphasize interaction and immersion into the mystery.
- Full Document Examples: Create detailed examples of each document adhering to best practices in the field of Technical and Professional Communication. Each document should include critical clues and red herrings embedded within their content.
- Physical Items: Suggest physical items to enhance the activity mirroring the Hunt a Killer board game emphasis on physical items.

- Solution Document: Provide the solution to the mystery and explain the key clues students should focus on. Please format the content clearly, and make sure each document type is realistic and relevant to the new setting/theme.

Process Annotation

- Before you begin, I suggest creating an account with the AI of your choosing and signing into it so that your chat history is accessible to you. In my opinion, the best AI models to use for this are ChatGPT, Claude.AI, and Gemini.
- I suggest editing the description of the fictional company to meet the needs and interests of the class as you see them this early in the semester. My classes typically end up with high concentrations of both English/Communication majors and engineering majors, so something like nuclear semiotics was useful since it artfully combines language with engineering and science.
- After the initial response from the AI, you may have to ask it to actually generate the documents it suggests. Here's the response I used: "Thank you! Now actually create the documents you suggested. They should be full drafts of common technical documentation and should be in line with the best practices in the field of Technical and Professional Communication."
- After the initial drafts of each document are generated, you may have to ask for fuller documents because some of them will be stubs or small blurbs. This is likely due to the word limits in ChatGPT. Here is the response I used: "Thank you! Now, make fully fleshed versions of these documents. Go one at a time and wait for me to tell you to continue before moving on. Start with the personnel files."
    - Because you told it to wait for your permission to proceed, you will need to prompt it to do so after each document. It should be enough to simply type "Proceed." in order to move it along to the next deliverable. However, this is also the time when you can ask for refinements, elaborations, or revisions in each of these documents, so I suggest taking it slow and reading each one carefully.
- Once all deliverables are drafted, I recommend asking the AI for a logo representing the fictional company. Here's the response I used: "Please generate the logo for the company and professional headshots for all of the characters involved along with any other images that might be useful in this game."
    - It may ask you to verify whether you like the output. This is your chance to ask for any specifics you would like it to include as well as the style of artistry it should mimic. I asked it for photorealism.
- Finally, of course, there comes the editing stage. I suggest copying each document into its own space out of the AI and editing for continuity of timeline and characters at the very least. My biggest concern when editing was how well the deliverables created by

the AI represented genres common to Technical and Professional Communication and yet maintained a flexibility useful to the game.

Assignment Overview

Student Investigation Letter

Hello Investigator,

Today, we are embarking on an exciting and challenging mystery-solving activity inspired by the Hunt A Killer board games. The setting of our mystery is _____. They are dedicated to [**explanation of main goal of facility, institution, or corporation.**]

The main character in our story, [**name of main character/victim**], has [**explanation of what happened to the character**]. This incident coincides [**explanation of fictional timeline context**]. Your task, as investigators, is to determine [**concrete task**].

You will start by forming groups of four and analyzing the initial set of documents, which includes meeting minutes, a project plan, and a white paper. These documents will provide the background and context needed to begin your investigation.

As you progress through the sessions, you will receive additional documents such as [**brief list of additional documents**]. Pay close attention to the details, as some documents contain critical clues while others may serve as red herrings designed to mislead you.

Remember, communication and collaboration within your group are key. Share your findings, discuss your theories, and piece together the puzzle. By the end of this activity, you will not only have solved the mystery but also gained valuable experience in exploring, analyzing, and synthesizing technical documents.

Happy Investigating!

Deliverables Breakdown

You will submit two deliverables for this project: a solution to the mystery that answers our major questions and an informative reflection.

The Solution

- For this portion of the project, all I need from you is a paragraph answer for each of the big questions. You will be graded only partially on how accurate your deduction is but mostly on how well you support your answers with evidence and reasoning.
- Please answer the following questions:
  - [**Specific questions here**]

The Reflection

- Your job here is to reflect deeply on this game's impact on your learning. This is where most of your grade for this project will come from. Please answer all of the questions listed below. Stellar reflections do so by uniting answers under a common umbrella point instead of simply answering them in a row as they are listed.
- Please answer the following questions:
  - How did this game reinforce what you already knew about technical documents/writing before entering the course?
  - How did this game challenge your previous understanding of technical documents/writing?
  - What documents did you find most enjoyable to analyze? Why?
  - What documents did you find most challenging to analyze? Why?
  - What was your process for identifying critical clues and distinguishing them from the red herrings?
  - How did this mystery game enhance your understanding of the role of technical writing in real-world contexts? You may discuss high-stakes situations like our mystery, but you can also think about more everyday applications of technical writing.
- Return to one of the documents in the packet and explain how it specifically meets the definition of technical writing we have been working on. Use the chart below as a point of comparison.

Conventions of Technical Writing Chart

TABLE 1.1.2 Conventions of technical writing

Criteria	Technical Writing
Purpose	To communicate technical and specialized information in a clear, accessible, usable manner to people who need to use it to make decisions, perform processes, or support company goals.
Audience	Varied, but can include fellow employees such as subordinates, colleagues, managers, and executives, as well as clients and other stakeholders, the general public, and even readers within the legal system.
Writing Style	Concise, clear, plain, and direct language; may include specialized terminology; typically uses short sentences and paragraphs; uses active voice; makes purpose immediately clear.
Tone	Business/professional in tone, which falls between formal and informal; may use first person or second person if appropriate; courteous and constructive.
Structure	Highly structured; short paragraphs; clear transitions and structural cues (headings and sub-headings) to move the reader directly and logically through the document.
Format/Formatting	Can be in electronic, visual, or printed formats; may be long (reports) or short (emails, letters, memos); often uses style guides to describe required formatting features; uses headings, lists, figures and tables.
Other Features	Typically objective and neutral; ideas are evidence-based and data-driven; descriptors are precise and quantitative whenever possible.

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