

Writing Documentation
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WHAT WHEN WHERE WHY WHO HOW

What is Documentation?

A summary of the key points you uncovered during your research as well as the process you followed to recreate that research. It should be succinct and clear. It is NOT a research paper!

What to include:

- What, Where, When, Why, Who, How
- A picture is worth 1000 words
- References (no more than 60% should be from the internet)

When should I provide documentation?

- EVERY TIME you show your art and/or science
 - Demonstrations
 - Classes
 - Competitions

Where do I put my information?

Since you will always provide these Six Key Points, the variance will be in the amount of information provided in each section. For a small demonstration an index card with one sentence per Key Point is fine. For a local competition a 1-2 page offering is appropriate, while a multiple page packet for Ice Dragon is reasonable. Try to think of the people who will be looking over the information you are sharing and what questions they might have.

Why do we write documentation?

- This is an educational organization!
- Share new information with fellows
- Check learning progress with experts
- Raise questions within the community

Who will be using this?

- Demonstrations Purposes
 - Non SCAdians
 - SCAdians (Artisan's Playtime, etc.)
 - Supplemented with hands-on visuals and Q&A
- Classes
 - SCAdians new to the process at hand
 - Supplemented with hands-on visuals and Q&A
- Competition
 - SCAdians new to the process at hand
 - Expert judges on the process
 - NO Q&A!

OK, so How do I do this?

Documentation can be written before or after you research, but it can be a very helpful tool during your research. Whenever you end up doing it, the first step is to write out your Six Key Points and try to answer them. Some good places to look for information:

Internet sources

- Wikipedia (check resources @ bottom of page to follow)
- Google (or like) search
- Google Books
- Blogs of other A&S minded people
- Yahoo lists

Human sources

- Experts in that Art and/or Science
- Home libraries

Library

- Public Library
- College Library
- Inter Library Loans

WHAT item or process are we talking about? Provide visual.

WHEN was this item or process in use? Provide visual.

WHERE was this item or process in use? Provide visual.

WHY was this item or process in use? Was it successful in its use? Provide visual.

WHO would have used this item or process? Is it appropriate for your persona? Provide visual.

HOW did you recreate this item or process? Provide visuals.

This section should explain how you went about recreating your findings and should make up at least 50% of your documentation. In this section, make sure you include how you followed the process as done in period, what deviations from the process you made, and why. Many questions that readers might have in this section can be answered by visuals, so be sure to include them for each step of your process.

Some helpful tips:

- Include a visual for each key point and include reference info for the visual.

- DO NOT cut and paste from your sources!

- Quote appropriately.

- Whenever possible re-word your findings in your voice.

- Include your list of resources (60% or less should be internet based)

- Bear in mind the venue for your documentation and tailor the information you are providing appropriately. Please remember that the people reading your documentation, whatever level they might be, want to learn, not be bored.

- Have friends or mentors of varying levels read over your documentation and ask you questions. If they have questions, others will likely have the same questions and you should consider putting that information into your writing.

- In competition, remember to provide a succinct and clear summary of your findings. Often the judges only have 5 minutes per entry, so long-winded entries suffer since judges must skim to find the key points.

- A picture or visual can help dramatically to fill in holes in your writing.

- When possible, provide visuals of your art and/or science in action.

Questions? Need an editor? Contact me any time at: felicity@faerhaga.org