

# TECHNICAL JOURNALISM



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*By*

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(A revision of *Technical Journalism*, by Beckman, O'Brien, and BLAIR CONVERSE, formerly head of Department of Technical Journalism, Iowa State College, deceased, 1939)

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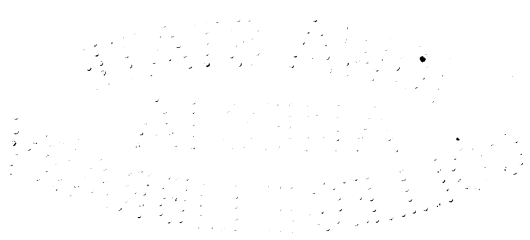


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## INTRODUCTION

In 1927, when the first edition of this textbook was published under the title of *Technical Writing of Farm and Home*, instruction in journalism in land-grant and other technological institutions was largely confined to students of agriculture and home economics. In the years since, there has developed an increasing interest in the subject on the part of other groups of students, particularly students of engineering, science, professions, and business.

Because of this widening in the scope of instruction in technical journalism, the second, revised edition of this book, published in 1937, was rechristened *Technical Journalism*, and attention was given throughout to the writing problems of engineering, science, and other students, as well as those in agriculture and home economics.

In this third edition, there has been still further enlargement of the material dealing with engineering, science, and other phases of technical publishing. This particularly applies to technical news in its various fields and many ramifications. However, the basic plan and method of the book and its general principles remain the same. Some additional assignments appear with chapters. The stories and articles used to illustrate different types of writing are mainly fresh selections and from a wider range of class publications than in former editions.

The three authors of this book were at various times associated with the Department of Technical Journalism at Iowa State College. The volume represents, therefore, not only their personal experiences in newspaper and technical magazine work, but also the teaching techniques and course content developed through the years at Iowa State. To this is added the experience of one of the authors in more than fifteen years at Ohio State University.

The accumulation of teaching experience in technical journalism classes at Iowa State College covers a period of about thirty-seven years, from the time in 1905 when the first class in agricultural journalism was inaugurated at the instigation of the late John

Clay, of Chicago, and C. F. Curtiss, then dean of agriculture at Iowa State.

In this more than a third of a century of teaching technical journalism at Iowa State College and more recently at many other institutions, marked changes have taken place in the technical journals and in the attitude of newspapers and general magazines toward technical material. There has also been a steadily increasing demand for men and women trained in journalism and with a thorough background of education in agriculture, in home economics, in engineering, in science, in professions, and business.

They serve as agricultural editors of daily and weekly newspapers, as home economics editors and writers for newspapers and magazines, as science writers for press agencies, as editorial and advertising workers with technical and trade magazines, as publicity and information writers for commercial organizations and institutions.

The authors hope that this book will serve two purposes: to provide a text for classroom instruction in colleges and universities which are giving work in technical journalism, and also as a guide for the many men and women whose duties require them to write for newspapers and other journals, but who have had little training or experience in the technique of preparing news and magazine articles.

It is the sad task to record here that Prof. Blair Converse, one of the original authors of this book, died in May, 1939. Much of this text, especially the 1937 revision, was his work. In preparing this third edition, we have had the generous advice and help of Prof. C. E. Rogers, who succeeded Professor Converse as head of the Department of Technical Journalism at Iowa State College, and of members of his present staff.

F. W. BECKMAN  
HARRY R. O'BRIEN

August, 1942

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