**Applied Communication**

**Technical glossary**

**Background**: Years ago, a major newspaper ran a story about how high-tech automotive jargon has become. This high-tech language is quite bewildering to the general public. The article stated that many shops and dealers use impressive sounding terms that mean nothing to the average Joe.

As proof, the newspaper interviewed several auto owners, asking them to define such terms as “rack and pinion steering” and “double wishbones.” Their responses were humorous to say the least. Not knowing the meaning behind these terms frustrated customers and created a feeling of irritation toward auto technicians and dealers; some wondered whether the language was meant to deliberately confuse consumers and manipulate them.

Many auto owners know very little about what goes on under the hood, let alone what components are named or what they do. In addition, autos have gotten more sophisticated in recent years, relying on computer systems and other advanced technologies. True, many of these technological advancements have proven very useful, but more components often mean more can go wrong; this, of course, brings average Joe into a dealership or shop, where he probably can’t understand the diagnosis of the problem or the proposed solution. It has become more and more important to clearly explain technical automotive terms to the general public so they can understand the work that auto professionals perform as well as feel comfortable communicating with them.

**Your task:** to create a glossary of technical automotive terms that the general public can understand. The creative twist is that many of these terms will contain creative comparisons to everyday objects or principles.

Targets:

* Determine and select what automotive terms are difficult for the general public to understand
* Create a professional looking glossary of automotive terms
* Clearly define automotive jargon in “layman’s terms”
* Create creative comparisons between technical terms and everyday objects or principles
* Write a helpful introduction to your glossary explaining its purpose and how it will benefit a general automobile user
* Use visuals to aid understanding of written language
* Use correct English conventions

There are two past student sample glossaries as models on the class web page. On the web page, you will also find other documents relevant to the project.

**Requirements**:

* The glossary must contain at least 20 terms.
* **Each term must be defined as two or more properly punctuated complete sentences**. You may define the term in one sentence, and then explain what it does in another. You could also provide information about what system the part belongs to, what symptoms are typical of the part’s failure, how complicated it is to replace the part (is it a DIY job, or will it require a specialty shop?), or any other information about the part you think would be good for the average automobile consumer to know.
* At least 12 of the terms must contain a common, “everyday” example of the term in the form of a simile or analogy. For example:

CYLINDER LINER: A cylinder liner is the circular housing that that serves as the inner wall of a cylinder and forms a sliding surface for the piston inside an engine. A cylinder liner is much like a shirt sleeve; it keeps the arm contained, but allows it to move back and forth on its own.

OR

TIMING BELT: A timing belt is a belt that connects the crankshaft to the camshaft, which controls the timing of the engine’s valves. The timing belt operates just like the chain on a bicycle; the pulley on the camshaft is twice as big as the pulley on the crankshaft, which makes the crankshaft turn twice as many times as the camshaft. A timing belt needs to replaced when the manufacturer specifies because a broken or failed belt can lead to irreparable engine damage.

* At least 12 of the terms must include some sort of visual guide; these do not have to be the same terms that include everyday examples. You may use:
  + Simple hand sketches
  + Clipart
  + Photos you take during shop time
  + Images from the internet (as long as you credit the source of the images)

You must use a variety of different kinds of images to earn an A for the visuals component of the glossary (don’t use only images from the internet). Visuals can be placed anywhere around a term in your glossary, but they must be on the same page as the terms they accompany, and it must be clear which images go with which terms.

* Like any glossary, your terms must be in alphabetical order to make finding them easy.
* Your glossary must include a cover page featuring:
  + A title (Joe’s Awesome Auto Terms for Everyone, etc.)
  + Some kind of appropriate automobile visual
  + Your name
* Your glossary needs an introduction page after the cover and before the terms begin. The introduction page should contain a paragraph explaining the purpose of your glossary – who it’s for, why it will benefit the intended reader, and why it’s important for auto consumers to be able to understand and trust those performing work on their expensive automobiles.

**Auto Consumer Survey**

How will you determine which terms to include in your glossary? You’re going to go directly to the source and communicate with at least five general automobile users. You will develop a survey to help you determine which auto terms are “too technical” for the common person. There is no magic number for how many questions it needs to have; the quality of the questions is more important than the number. If you make a good survey, you should be able to find more than 20 terms to use in your glossary. Below are suggestions for creating your survey.

* Think of common procedures/maintenance work (changing oil, replacing a headlight, changing brake pads, etc.); ask people what parts of these procedures they aren’t familiar with.
* Think of other processes that involve terms most people will not be familiar with (installing a new universal joint or CV boot, for example); ask what terms/parts they are/aren’t familiar with.
* Consider common problems that people have with cars – what problems are most common in garages? Ask people what they do/don’t know about these problems.
* Ask people how familiar they are with even the most basic auto terms/parts (muffler, oil filter, battery, etc.)
* Ask people to list what auto parts they can explain.
* Ask people to list what auto parts they have heard of but can’t explain.
* Ask people what auto parts they have paid to get fixed or replaced and whether they understood what they were paying for.
* Think of the parts involved in a particular system (suspension, exhaust); list the parts/terms involved in those systems and then have people identify what they do/don’t know.

Survey requirements:

1. No magic number of questions (see above); quality before quantity.
2. Include a space for people to both print and sign their names.
3. Create a draft of your survey. Submit it for feedback.
4. Print out five copies of your final survey. Administer the survey to five general auto users (not those with a good deal of auto knowledge).
5. Analyze the results of your surveys to help you create a list of 20 terms for your glossary.
6. You will turn in your five completed surveys along with your list of glossary terms.

Deadlines:

1. Draft of survey (10 points – assessment category): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Five completed surveys and a list of 20 terms (45 points – assessment category): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Final glossary (100 points – projects category):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_