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Technical Illustration

by Brian S. Elliott

Technical illustration is the representative language of engineering, science and technology. A technical illustration is intended to clearly communicate the necessary details of a piece of equipment, process or procedure. The most common technical illustrations are found in the instruction manuals that come with your home electronics and appliances. The drawings in these manuals are specifically designed to show you how to hook up things like your CD player, change the filter in your coffee maker or set the selection switches on your laundry washer. In these cases, the old adage is quite true; "a picture is worth a thousand words." From medical textbooks to plans for remodeling your kitchen, technical illustrations effectively communicate the details of the situation at hand.

As a matter of necessity, technical illustrations are very clear and precise. This practice is followed so that there is absolutely no ambiguity in the interpretation of the document. As technical drawings grow in complexity, they take on an "art-like" quality that is rather appealing to those of us who tend towards more analytical thought. When technical illustrations are pursued with the intent to produce display-quality artwork, the results can be quite stunning. This type of artwork can be rather appealing in a wide variety of environments, such as the workplace, offices and building lobbies.

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