Jargon Exercise

The following short report from a transportation research center is written for an audience of engineers, academics, and industry leaders. Because it is targeted at fairly specialized groups, it makes assumptions about what terms its audience will be familiar with. These kinds of field-specific words and phrases are known as "jargon."

Professional writers deal with jargon in a number of ways. Often, writers must try to employ jargon effectively in order to participate in a given field (i.e., talk the talk). Sometimes, the writer will need to translate these terms into simpler language more familiar to readers outside a given field. At other times, one field's jargon (say, that of mechanical engineering) must be translated into the jargon of another field (say, that of medical or legal professions).

In any of these cases, understanding jargon precisely is of great importance to the technical writer. Some jargon can be deciphered by context clues within the document alone, while other jargon must be researched in order to understand what it means and how this specific profession is using it.

Reading:

Read through the following document:

Regional Need: An Efficient Intermodal Freight Transportation System

Region V shares the nation's need for better mobility, safety, and infrastructure; however, these needs are amplified by the significant amount of freight transportation that takes place through this region. Last year alone, bottlenecks on American highways caused 240 million hours of delay and cost truckers $8 billion in lost time (INDOT). For this reason, our organization has identified an efficient intermodal freight transportation system as a major regional need.

Intermodal transportation systems, which use multiple means of transportation to move people and goods, often present a challenge due to infrastructure and funding limitations, one-dimensional thinking, and a lack of strategic and institutional coordination between the public and private sectors. There are several reasons why surmounting these challenges is important to Region V.

Agriculture

Region V contains 11.75% of US farmland, and produces 16% of our nation's agricultural products. This significant agricultural economy would benefit greatly from a stronger freight transportation system. Developing public-private partnerships to create this system would reduce costs while benefiting both sectors. For example, if private sector agricultural firms introduced RFID sensor technologies to track their products throughout the entire supply-chain, the public sector could provide an associated technology-enabled transportation infrastructure. Through strategic planning, the public sector could foster a seamless intermodal transportation system by motivating the development of other modes through infrastructure advancement, government policy and incentives, and the promotion of financing strategies that attract private investment. This infrastructure would not only advance mobility and safety for the public sector, but allow the private sector to move products more efficiently.

Biofuels

The United States needs both short-term and long-term energy security. As fossil fuels continue to fluctuate in price, the nation is investigating the wider use of

biofuels such as ethanol and biodiesel as one of the alternative solutions. Since these fuels are made from crops such as corn, soybean, and wheat —all major products of the Midwest—Region V has a potential economic opportunity, one that requires an efficient transportation system to be successful.

Auto Industry

The US auto industry is in need of major rejuvenation. Since Region V is home to a large section of auto production, it presents a golden opportunity for public-private partnerships. If the public and private sectors worked together to produce a more technologically advanced infrastructure, the private sector could manufacture complementary vehicles—cars and trucks with safety systems that are actually personalized to the driver and roads. This could reduce fatalities, further optimize Region V's freight transportation, and give the US auto industry a much-needed boost in revenue.

Watch the linked video

Assignment:

1. Define the following terms simply and succinctly for an audience outside of the field of transportation research: RFID sensor; biofuel; intermodal freight transportation system; bottleneck; supply chain; Region V.
2. Summarize the entire document in a single, clear sentence. The sentence may be fairly long, but should not be so long that it is difficult to read. The sentence should include all major points from the document. This sentence should also be free of jargon so that a non-technical audience can understand it.