

Simplified Technical English





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Services for technical documentation, including translations and content management solutions

- Established in 1974
- Offices in Europe, USA and China

 References: Boeing, Caterpillar, Eurocopter, Philips, BAe Systems, Hyster, Saab, Siemens, WatchGuard



Outline

Simplified Technical English – why? History ► Benefits Samples of writing rules ► How to implement HyperSTE checker tool Features Screen shots



Facts

English is the main language in technical documentation around the world

- However, English can be difficult to understand due to its many forms and complexity: English has over 700,000 words
- You must consider your audience



Technical documentation should always be clear and unambiguous. Confusion can be frustrating, time-consuming, costly and even dangerous.



What can go wrong

China Northern Airlines MD-82 crash, November 1993

Ground proximity warning system:

'Pull up, pull up...'

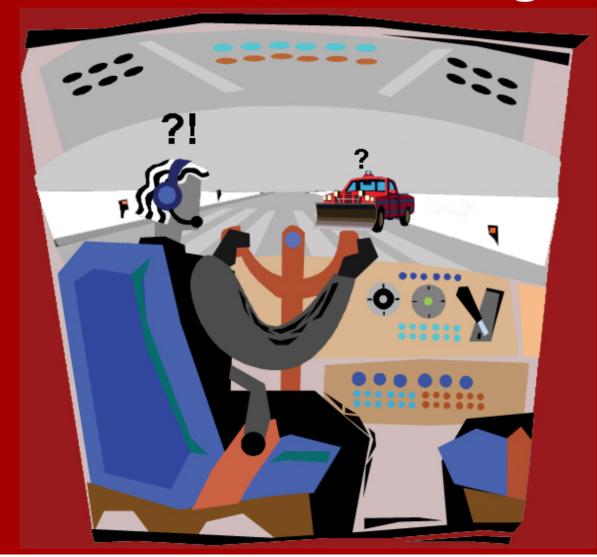
What means "pull up"??

..........

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What else can go wrong





On a nearby airport, an airplane made a disastrous attempt to abort the landing after the pilots realised there was a vehicle on the runway.

The vehicle was a snowplough, whose operator had been told to "clear the runway" for the arrival of the aircraft.

Avoid miscommunication

► Be unambiguous ► Be consistent Provide your customer with quality Consider your audience



Example (saw bench manual)

Written in Technical English ...

Gain access to blade. After removing old blade, new blade may be fitted by proceeding in reverse order, using gloves to avoid injuries by teeth of blade.

Before you attempt any of the above, the power should have been switched off.

... Written in Simplified Technical English

Make sure that the on/off switch is in the "off" position. Remove the blade cover from the machine. Warning: wear gloves when you touch the blade. Remove the old blade. Install the new blade. See figure A. Install the blade cover.

Keep it simple, be specific, be consistent

The Risks

After removing old bolt, new screw may be fitted by proceeding in reverse order, using gloves to avoid injuries by sharp edges of fan blades.



Confused and frustrated readers
Safety risk
Damage during operation or maintenance
Potential for product liability
High localization costs
Unsatisfactory translations
Higher training support costs
Ineffective customer service



Simplified Technical English

- STE makes technical English easy to understand
 - Writing rules for grammar and style
 Keep it simple, be specific, be consistent
 - STE generic dictionary (± 900 words)
 - One word = one meaning
 - Add company-specific terms to dictionary

Writing Rules (57) STE Dictionary • ASD approved words (900) • ASD non-approved words (2,000) linked to synonyms

Company Dictionary

 Technical names (approved)
 Technical verbs (approved)
 Non-approved custom words linked to synonyms

History

1932: BASIC English – Ch. K. Ogden

- 1970: US Federal Government encourages regulation writers to use Plain English1972: Caterpillar Fundamental English
 - (later Caterpillar Technical English)
- 1980: AECMA Simplified English, to improve
 - the readability of aircraft maintenance manuals: required by aerospace and defense industries

2004: AECMA becomes ASD

2005: AECMA SE renamed to Specification ASD-STE100 (Simplified Technical English)





Companies in various industries are discovering the benefits of Simplified Technical English: automotive, IT, medical equipment, etc.

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Benefits of STE

- Quality assurance and improvement
- Standardized way of writing
- Based on aerospace and defense standard (ASD-STE100, S1000D and ATA 2200)
- Improved safety
- Time saving for you and your customer:
 - Reduced time for maintenance operations
 - Reduced time to market
- Good customer service
- Burden on your customer reduced
- Facilitates Content Management
- Considerable cost savings
- Cheaper, faster and better translations



Quality Assurance

Quality = Safety Quality assurance on consistent terminology and style Standardize your way of writing Efficient authoring Easier to reuse (CMS), translate and maintain



Cost Savings

Time saving = cost saving Decreased word count (up to 20%): decreased volume of manuals Cheaper to translate (up to 40%), print and maintain Avoid costs resulting from poor communication: Confusion Recall Lost production time Liability claims



Some of the rules (1 of 5)

Use consistent vocabulary and terminology

Do not write 'to inspect', write 'do an inspection'.

Do not write: 'Fluorescent-penetrant inspect part X.'

Write:

'Do a fluorescent-penetrant inspection on part X'.



Some of the rules (2 of 5)

Technical Names

You can use your own Technical Names, specific to your company, product and project.

Technical names must be unambiguous and there may not be another approved word with the same meaning.

As a 'bolt' can be a screw or a pin, it is better to use either 'screw' or 'pin'.



Some of the rules (3 of 5)

Do not make long or complex sentences.
Be direct. Be as specific as possible.
Take the burden away from the user in the field.

Do not write:

Before attempting any of the above operations, the power should have been switched off.

Write:

Warning: before you remove the cover, make sure that the power switch is in the 'OFF' position.



Some of the rules (4 of 5)

Make people responsible

Do not write: When starting the No. 1 engine, the pressure must be OK.

Write:

When you start the No. 1 engine, the pressure must be in the green operating range.



Some of the rules (5 of 5)

Warnings and cautions

Do not write: Warning: the cowling flaps can be hot.

Write for instance: Do not touch the cowling flaps, because they can be hot. Wear gloves when you touch the cowling flaps. Wait 10 minutes before you touch the cowling flaps.



Implement Simplified Technical English?

Can you justify to implement Simplified Technical English?

- Standardization
- Quality assurance
- Reduced time for maintenance operations
- Efficient authoring

Can you justify *not* to implement Simplified Technical English?

- Quality issue
- Safety issue
- Risks caused by miscommunication
- Do your (global) customers understand your technical publications?



How to implement Simplified Technical English

Three steps:

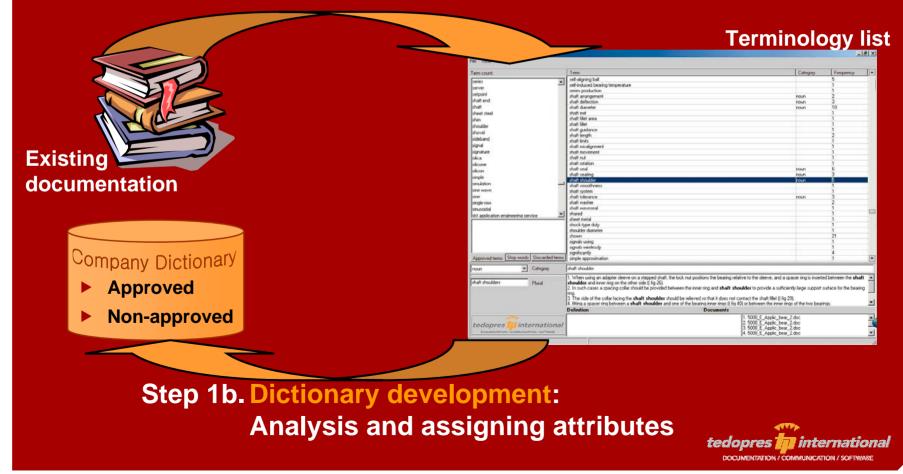
- 1. Create company-specific dictionary
- 2. Training of writers
- 3. Check your documentation with HyperSTE checker software
 - Quality Assurance / Quality Control
 - Faster product cycle time
 - Efficient authoring





Step 1. Create Company Dictionary

Step 1a. Text Mining: extract company-specific terminology



Dictionaries

STE Dictionary

 ASD approved words
 ASD non-approved words linked to synonyms

Company Dictionary

Technical names (approved)
Technical verbs (approved)
Non-approved custom words linked to synonyms HyperSTE Checker tool



Step 2. Training of writers

Training is necessary in order to teach technical writers how (and why) to write in Simplified Technical English

- ► 3 5 days, on-site
- Up to 10 technical writers per session



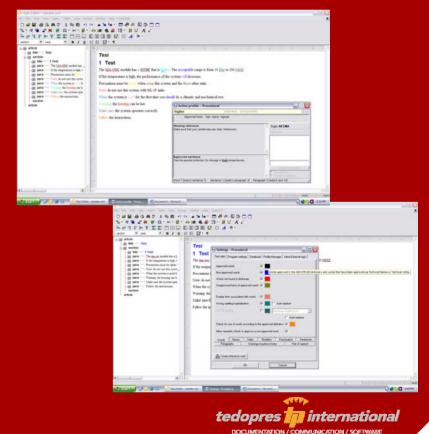


Step 3. Check your documentation

Tedopres offers HyperSTE, a checker tool that will

help writers check text for compliance with the rules of Simplified Technical English.

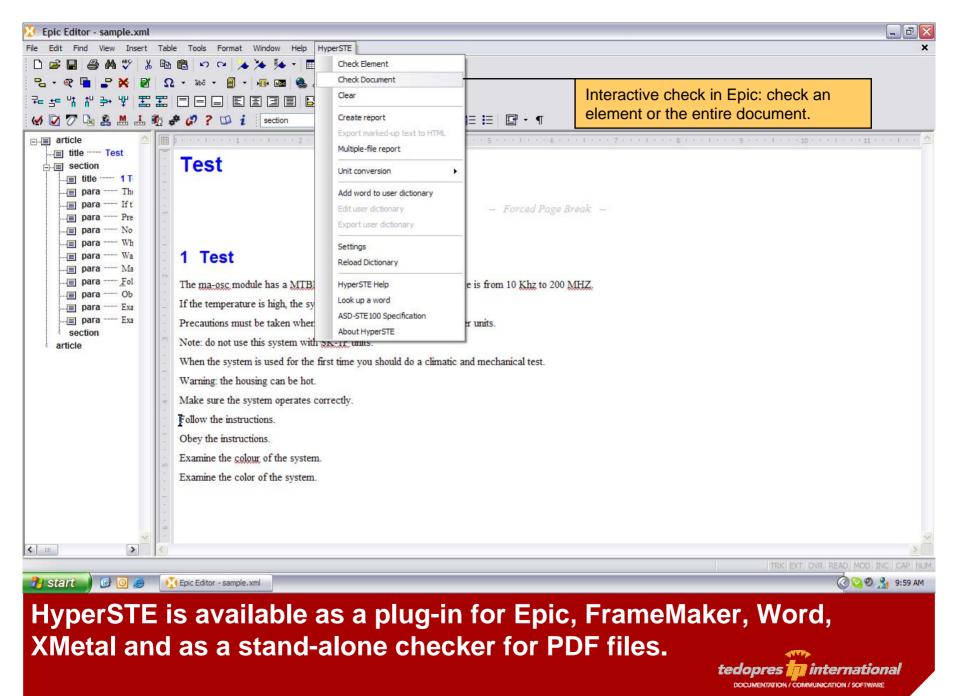
The key objective is to offer writers online guidance, synonyms, suggestions and technical writing tips.

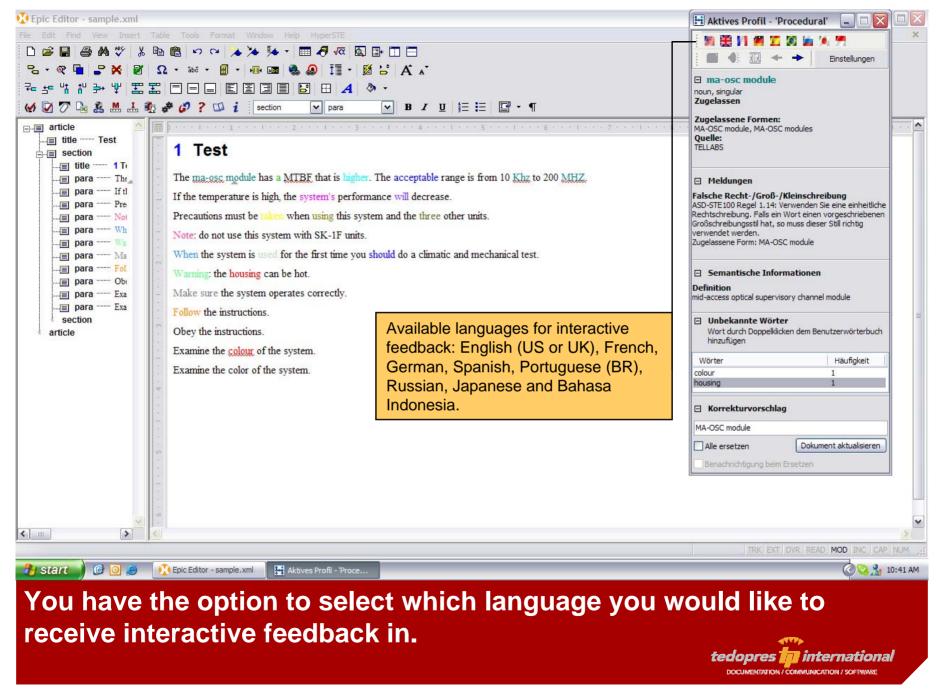


HyperSTE - features

Fully ASD-STE100 compliant (for aerospace and defense)	1
Customizable for all industries	√
Customizable and configurable to your technical documentation needs	√
Distinguishes procedural vs. descriptive text	√
Allows rules to be added or disabled (e.g. incorporate company style guides, check for correct use of terminology only, allow for step by step conversion of legacy data, etc.)	1
Profile management: apply different sets of rules to different parts or types of documents	
Supports semantic checking	√
Quality Assurance: create reports for validation purposes	1
Exports interactive feedback to HTML: allow suppliers and contractors to access HyperSTE feedback interactively	<
Converts units of measurement, US English to UK English and vice versa	1
Dictionary Maintenance Tool available: manage your dictionary	1
Available as a plug-in for Arbortext Epic Editor, Adobe FrameMaker, XMetaL, Microsoft Word and as a PDF checker	<
Supports the use of multiple dictionaries	√

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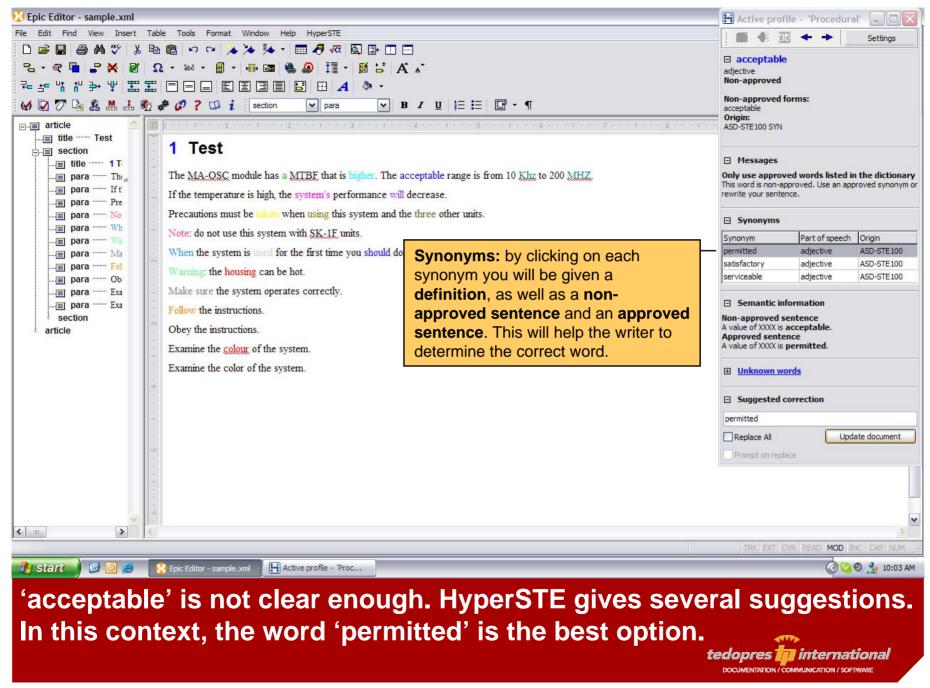
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Image: The section Image: The section Image: The sec	feedback on which error occurs, which rule applies and approved forms.	Messages Wrong spelling/capitalization ASD-STE100 rule 1.14: Use consistent spelling. If a word has a prescribed capitalization style, you must use this style correctly. Approved form: MA-OSC module
Image: Section article When the system is used for the first time you should do Warning: the housing can be hot. Image: When the system is used for the first time you should do Warning: the housing can be hot. Image: When the system is used for the first time you should do Warning: the housing can be hot. Image: When the system is used for the first time you should do Warning: the housing can be hot. Image: When the system operates correctly. Image: When the system operates correctly. Image: When the instructions. Image: When the instructions.	Semantic information: definition of the approved form. List of unknown words in the document.	Semantic information Definition mid-access optical supervisory channel module Unknown words Suggested correction
Examine the colour of the system.	Suggested correction: by clicking on 'update document' the incorrect word will be replaced with the suggested correction, and the sentence will automatically be rechecked.	MA-OSC module Replace All Update document Prompt on replace
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HyperSTE: in addition to writing rules, HyperSTE checks for the correct use of terminology. In this case, "ma-osc module"		

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is misspelled.

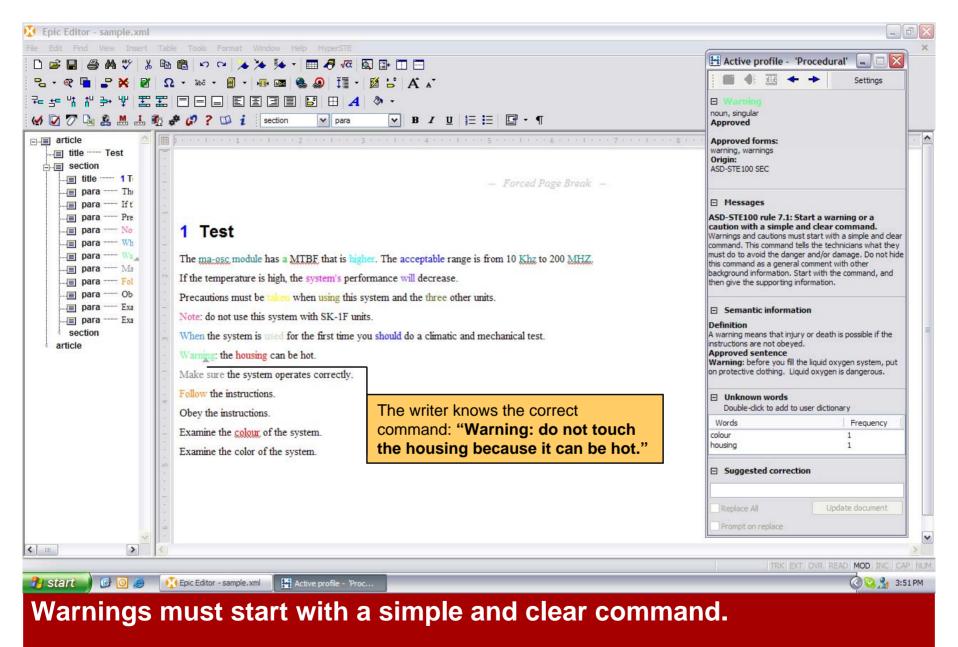
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	Approved forms: high, higher, highest Origin:
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If the temperature is high, the system's performance will decrease.	Make sure that your sentences use clear references.
Image: para intermediate Preclautions must be taken when using this system and the three other units.	Semantic information
The para with Note: do not use this system with SK-1F units.	Definition That is of large value
m = para Wa	Approved sentence Use the special protection for storage in high
Image: marging para Fol Image: Warning: the housing can be hot.	temperatures.
E para Exa A Make sure the system operates correctly.	Unknown words
Exa Follow the instructions.	
article Obey the instructions.	Suggested correction
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Although 'higher' is approved, it is not precise enough. informs the writer to use clear references.	

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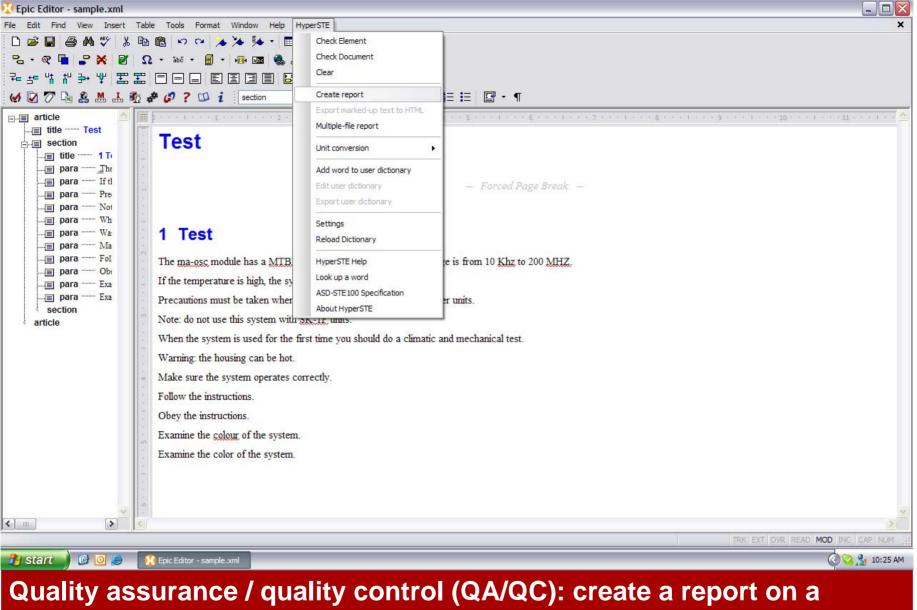
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para Wh	Note: do not use this system with <u>SK-1F</u> units.		<u>Unknown words</u>
E para Ma	When the system is used for the first time you sho	uld do a climatic and mechanical test.	
<u></u> para Fol <u></u> para Ob	Warning: the housing can be hot.		Suggested correction
<u>E</u> para Exa	- Make sure the system operates correctly.	Synonyms: either use the phrase	of the system Replace All Update document
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	Use the active voice. Use only the active voice in procedural writing, and as much as possible in descriptive writing.
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mile para mile Warning: the housing can be hot.	 Semantic information Definition
	To make something do its specified function Approved sentence
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article Examine the colour, of the system.	Suggested correction
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writing: 'when you use the system'.	
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article Examine the colour of the system. an approved word, it is not allowed	Definition To come "after"
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Statistics are provided in an Excel sheet. Click on a rule to see which sentences include the error.

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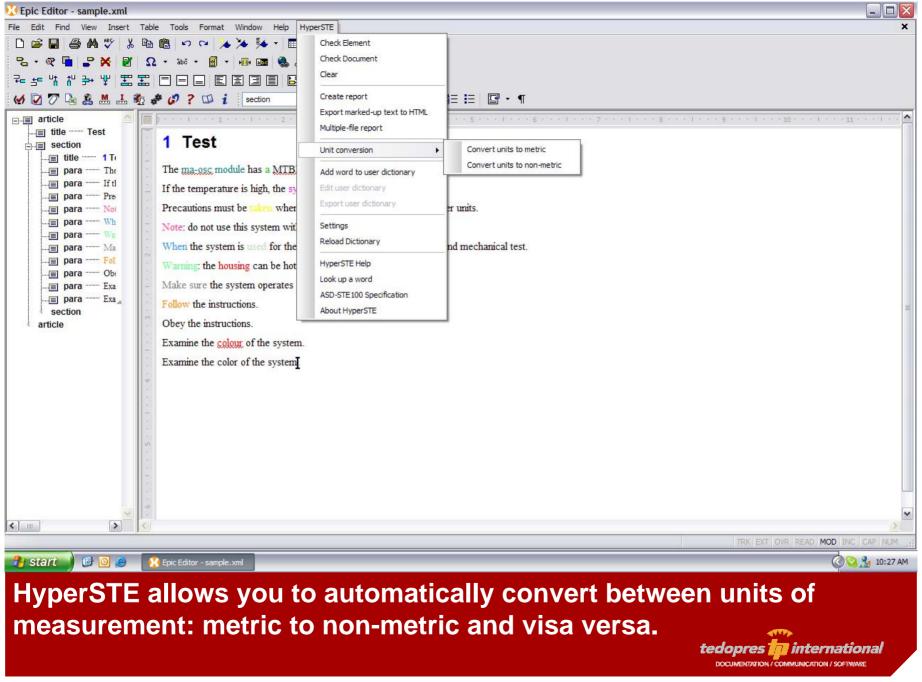
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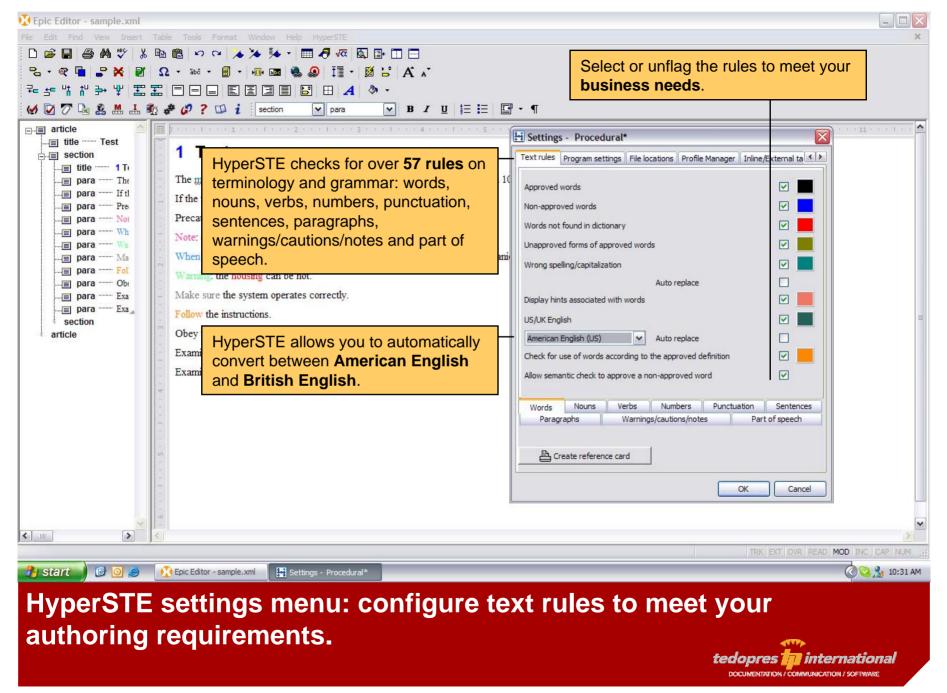
Unknown words and unapproved words can be identified quickly to help maintain the dictionary.

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Synonyms: must [verb], if [conjunction] Example 1: Personnel should wear protective clothing. Personnel must put on protective clothing.	⊒
Example 2: Should a failure occur, stop the test. If a failure occurs, stop the test.	
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Create profiles to apply different sets of rules to different parts or types of documents.

Thank you

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