Owner's Manual

1. **Purpose:** The purpose of the owner's manual is to provide the following:
   A. Description of a product.
   B. Information on safely using a product.
   C. Information on caring for and maintaining a product.
   D. Troubleshooting information.
   E. Customer service and support contact information.

2. **Writing Guidelines:**
   A. Exposure to new information, especially if it contains instructions, can create anxiety in some readers. To enhance readability, use simple, direct language and avoid the following:
      I. Long and complicated sentence structures.
      II. Grammatical, punctuation, or usage errors.
      III. Unnecessary adjectives or adverbs.
   B. Use coherent devices to organize the information and to allow for better understanding.
      I. List all materials that are needed.
      II. List components, illustrations of components, and functions of components before you begin the actual instructions.
      III. Number the steps—or actions that you are directing the reader to perform—sequentially and avoid having too many steps.
      IV. If possible, break up steps into sections of steps and begin each section with a clear heading. Headings and subheadings are crucial to the readers' understanding.
   C. Feedback statements describe a response to the step and must accompany the step. Do not number feedback statements; it will confuse the readers.
   D. Avoid using "you" statements—"You should connect part A to part B." Instead, use direct statements—"Connect part A to part B."
   E. Do not make any assumptions about the knowledge or experience of your audience—explain everything.
   F. Do not omit articles, such as "a," "an," and "the."
   G. Provide parenthetical definitions (definitions in parentheses) for any term that requires explanation.

3. **Components:**
   A. Front Matter:
      I. The front matter includes the following:
         a) Title page.
         b) Table of contents.
         c) Introduction or preface.
         d) Conventions section which explains typography and symbols.
         e) Support section (where to get help).
         f) Product information, such as trademarks.
      II. The front matter is always created last.

B. Body Material:
   I. Introduction: The introduction is the beginning of the body and should include the following:
      a) Provide a general description of the skill level necessary to complete the tasks in the instructions.
      b) Provide a rationale for certain tasks, like unplugging a disk drive before using a screwdriver on the drive.
      c) Provide timelines for certain tasks, such as when to perform routine maintenance tasks.
      d) Include safety precautions and any tips that could assist the reader.
      e) Provide a list of all of the materials or tools that the reader may need.
   II. Warnings, precautions, dangers, etc.: Include a separate section for safety concerns.
   III. The step-by-step instructions: Number the steps and organize the instructions into components for completing the task.
   IV. Conclusion: The conclusion will explain to the reader what he or she should do after the instructions have been completed.
   V. Reference material: Reference material provides information such as a list of options, tips for troubleshooting, frequently asked questions, etc.
   VI. Graphic images: Throughout the manual, graphic images should be used to enhance understanding.
C. Back Matter:
   I. Set of specifications: Specifications can provide a set of requirements, functional requirements, or design or product features.
   II. Safety regulations and industry standards: Safety regulations and industry standards provide a reassurance that guidelines have been followed.
   III. Tips on maintenance and servicing the product or parts of the product: Servicing and maintenance information is crucial, particularly if it affects the warranty.
   IV. Bibliographical page.
   V. Index and/or glossary.

4. **Writer's Checklist**:
   A. Have you defined the necessary terms?
   B. Have you clearly indicated the nature and scope of your manual?
   C. Have you included graphic images that are necessary to inform and aid the reader?
   D. Have you used headers, titles, numbers and different typefaces to guide your reader through the process?