CONTENTS

Preface		xi
Author Note		xv
Introduction		xvii
PART 1	Plan	1
Chapter 1	Learning to Run	3
Chapter 2	What Is an Explanation?	7
	What Is Not An Explanation	8
	Defining Explanation	9
	Explanations Require Empathy	10
	Act and Art	11
	Look at Your Fish	12
	Explanation Lowers the Cost of Understanding	13
	An Explanation Is a Way to Package Ideas	14
	Explanations Answer the Question "Why?"	16
	Explanations Make People Care	16
Chapter 3	Why Explanations Fail	23
	All About Confidence	24
	Assumptions Cause Failure	24
	Words Can Hurt	26
	We Lack Understanding	27
	We Want to Appear Smart	28

	The Direct Approach—No Context	30
	Summary	32
Chapter 4	Planning Your Explanations	33
	Identifying Explanation Problems	34
PART 2	Package	43
Chapter 5	Packaging Ideas	45
_	Stepping Outside the Bubble	46
	What Goes into the Packaging?	48
Chapter 6	Context	51
_	Forest then Trees	53
	Solving the Context Problem	56
	Context in Explanation—We Can All Agree	61
	Context and Pain	63
	Example: Google Docs	63
	On the Explanation Scale	65
	Summary	66
Chapter 7	Story	67
-	Stories Versus Facts	68
	But I'm Not a Storyteller	69
	Common Craft and Stories	71
	The Simple Ingredient: People	73
	Using Stories in Explanation	74
	Basic Story Format	75
	When Does Storytelling Not Work?	. 77
	Personification and Story	<i>79</i>
	On the Explanation Scale	81
	Summary	81
Chapter 8	Connections	83
	Connecting Your Long Lost Uncle—Old Versus New	84
	Building-on Versus Establishing	87

	Analogy	89
	Common Craft Videos	90
	On the Explanation Scale	92
	Summary	92
Chapter 9	Description	93
	Explaining Web Browsers	95
	Explanation Is Not a Recipe	97
	On The Explanation Scale	99
	Summary	99
Chapter 10	Simplification	103
Chapter 11	Constraints	113
	Common Craft and Constraints	115
	Constraints and Your Explanations	117
	Summary	119
Chapter 12	Preparing for and Writing an Explanation	121
	The Common Craft Writing Process	122
	Big Ideas	123
	Research and Discovery	123
	Script Writing	125
	The Real Thing	128
Chapter 13	Bringing an Explanation Together	131
PART 3	Present	147
Chapter 14	Common Craft's Lessons Learned	149
-	Common Craft Gets Started	149
	Ten Lessons Learned from Common Craft Explanations	151
Chapter 15	Right Medium for the Message	157
	A Transformation	158
	Media Options	159
	Presentation Modes	161

Recording and Distribution Options	
Constraints Come to the Rescue	165
Summary	171
Chapter 16 Visuals	173
You Can Use Visuals	178
Dan Roam's 6×6 Rule	178
Common Craft Visual Metaphors	186
Noise and Simplicity in Visuals	188
Infographics	191
Creating Digital Visuals	193
Summary	193
Chapter 17 Emma and Carlos	195
Epilogue	202
Chapter 18 Explanation Culture and Your Life as an Explainer	203
Your Life as An Explainer	206
Acknowledgments	209
Links to Common Craft Videos	211
About the Author	215
Bibliography	217
Index	219