



Instructions: Basics

- Own understanding (crucial)
- CMAPP analysis
- Numbering system
- Imperative mood
- Short and clear sentences
- Precise terminology
- Testing and repetition



Instructions: Issues

- Audience ID
- Language type
- **ALL** steps
- Starting point
- Safe, logical order
- Unintentional misinterpretation



Instructions: Visuals

- Purpose?
- Location?
- Number (vs.how many words)?
- Size?
- Scale?
- Level of detail?



Instructions: Reminders

- Average duration of process?
- Warnings, cautions?
- Equipment & materials?



In Short ...

- Prefix the instructions with a clear heading that summarises the task.
- Show clearly who does what.
- If a process involves more than one person, write a different set of instructions for each person.
- Start each instruction with a verb that instructs the reader to do something.
Examples: "Open the valve...", "Press the emergency button...", "Tell your supervisor..."



And then ...

- Use a numbered list when the order is important.
- Use a bulleted list (like this one) when the order is not important (for example, when the reader can choose between different options).
- Put notes and warnings at the start of the instructions, or before the list item to which they refer.
- Ensure that any pre-requisite conditions are specified before the main body of the instructions.



And finally ...

- Don't mix instructions with conceptual information.
- Present any necessary background information before the instructions.
- Write for your audience and use a level of detail that is appropriate to their skill level.
- Break down long lists into two or more sub-tasks.
- Specify what the reader should do when the task is complete.
- The reader should not be asking, "Now what?"