

ENG300: Instructions for a Process

As professionals, you'll often find yourselves asked to give detailed instructions as part of your job, and often you'll need to write out those instructions formally. Written work-related instructions range from product instruction manuals for customers, to directions for patients, to training documents for new hires in your company, to safety protocols. While writing instruction manuals (such as for a computer or automobile) is a task companies assign specifically to professional technical writers, other types of instruction-writing are more wide-spread, ones you may be expected to write regardless of whether or not your career is writing-focused.

Task

For this project, you will choose a process and create written instructions for completing a task. The instructions should have at least 24 distinct steps and include some visuals (for example, pictures, tables, flowcharts).

Topic

Choose a topic you are either familiar with or can educate yourself about relatively quickly. Choose a process (how to complete a particular task or how to use a specific device for a certain purpose) that requires *at least 24 steps*. Cover the entire process in your written instructions. The choice of topic is up to you, but here are some ideas to get you thinking:

- Using a special feature of publishing or spreadsheet software
- Correctly using a piece of equipment related to your major or career
- Changing a car stereo
- Starting an aquarium
- Restringing a guitar

Audience and Purpose

Who are you composing for, and why? You might immediately think of writing for clients/customers, but on the job you will likely find yourself writing much more for your co-workers. Your boss might ask you to contribute to a training manual for new hires. If you are the only one who knows how to complete a specific task (e.g. all the steps for adding and updating employee profiles in the company website and payroll database), you may need to write instructions to guide others in case someone else has to take over the task while you are on vacation or in case of illness or emergency (in this case, the document is often called a *process*).

Length, Tone, and Design

The written instructions should include *at least 24 steps*. Include *at least one relevant image or graphic* (for many instructions, more are better) and provide the proper attribution for it (if using your own original image, none is needed). Maintain a formal tone. Remember, these instructions represent your company or organization. For the same reason, you'll want them to look professional—employ reader-friendly fonts and page layouts.

Important Dates

- Tuesday March 1: Rough draft of instruction steps. Workshop image attribution.
- Thursday March 3: Full draft of instructions for review; prepare for usability test.
- Thursday March 10: Final draft due.