

Forms of writing: Procedures

What is a procedure?

A procedure is a sequence of steps or actions in a particular order; procedures can also be referred to as instructions or directions. The purpose is to tell how to make or do something and it can be written or oral.

Types of procedures

Procedural texts are used for a variety of purposes. They can:

- tell how to do a particular activity (e.g. recipes, science experiments, games)
- tell how to use or operate things (e.g. manuals for appliances and machines)
- give instructions relating to human behaviour (e.g. advice about 'how to live happily', 'how to be sun safe', 'how to succeed').

The most common example of procedural text is a recipe.

Structure of a procedure

A procedure usually has:

- a **goal** or **aim** that clearly states what is to be done; this is often in the heading or title
- a **list of materials** or requirements, often in order of use
- a **method** – a series of chronological steps that may be numbered or presented as connected sentences or paragraphs
- an **evaluation** (if applicable) that makes a generalised statement about the activity and may include comments on dangers, usefulness, fun, etc.
- a **format** that can vary for different contexts:
 - recipes usually have the information presented in two sections: 'what is needed' and 'what to do'
 - game instructions usually have information about how to win, number of players, equipment, rules and how to score
 - scientific experiments usually include a stated purpose, aim or research question, a list of equipment, and a description of the procedure, observations and conclusion
 - manuals often include information about the operation(s) to be completed, safety information, steps and troubleshooting advice.

Procedures may contain headings, subheadings, numbers, photos and diagrams to make the instructions clearer for the user.

Language features

The language used in a procedure:

- focuses on generalised nouns (e.g. utensils) and specific nouns (e.g. sultanas)
- refers to the reader in a generalised way (e.g. 'you') or not at all (e.g. 'cut the bread')
- may include time words (e.g. 'first', 'next') to link the text

- includes action verbs and simple present tense (e.g. 'cut', 'fold')
- can include adverbs to provide detailed information about how something should be done (e.g. 'slowly')
- can include detailed descriptive information about size, shape, colour etc.

Supporting the development of procedural writing

- **Oral sharing** – encourage the student to explain what they have made and how they have made it when everyday opportunities arise. This may require some modelling or questioning to support the student.
- **Direct modelling** – present examples of procedural texts, for immersion and exploration:
 - discuss the information in or purpose of each part/paragraph
 - attach labels to the parts/paragraphs, e.g. 'What you need' and 'What to do'
 - talk about language features.
- **Draw and label** the steps involved in simple procedures, e.g. planting a seed. The student can then use the labelled drawings to follow the procedure.
- **Reconstruct text** by reforming a text from jumbled sentences or paragraphs.
- **Read selected procedures** during directed or shared reading, focusing on the structure and language features.
- **Jointly construct** a procedure, working together and encouraging the student to contribute information and ideas and make suggestions about the structure and language used to create the procedural text.
- **Independently construct** a procedure – guide the student to choose a topic, write a draft referring to models, review/proofread and make any necessary changes.
- **Evaluate** the effectiveness of the writing – check that the structure and language features of a procedural text have been used and try out the instructions or ask others to follow the instructions and give feedback.