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ENGL 365 – Technical Writing

Secs. 007, 008, 011, 012

16 January 2024 (updated 16 January 2025)

Recipe/Instructions (RCP/INS)

Choose one (1) of the following tasks:

**Write a set of instructions for the linear task of creating a food dish. Your recipe should be within the range of 5-10 steps.**

or

**Write a set of instructions (or a procedure) for completing a linear task. Your instructions should be within the range of 5-10 steps. For purposes of this assignment instructions and procedures are to be considered the same except for audience considerations.**

Recipe (RCP)

Audience considerations

The audience for online recipes is roughly just as generalized as that of the audience of instruction manuals. The audience of print cookbooks can usually imply a higher level of culinary competence on the part of the reader. In way, the audience of print cookbooks is comparable to the audience of procedures, while the audience of online recipes is comparable to the audience of instruction manuals.

Selling the dish

A recipe is an informational, instructional, and persuasive genre of writing. Before the reader agrees to follow your instructions for completing the dish they must be persuaded into wanting to make it in the first place. Some methods for persuading an audience to try a recipe are health, low cost, ease of preparation, culture, fit within a dietary regime (ex. keto or vegan), history, etc.

It may also be beneficial to choose a recipe from your family history or culture as you can link the dish to markers of your identity that go beyond mere sustenance.

Visuals

Visuals for this assignment are of two types: graphics and photographs. Graphics include things like arrows as well as more specific symbols that convey danger (such as⚠️) while photographs for this assignment should be those of your own composition. The website Emojipedia (<https://emojipedia.org/>) has emojis you can copy and paste into the text of your document when you need to convey that your recipe has dangerous steps. Recipes typically deal with the environmental hazard of fire so the judicious use of emojis can alert readers to potential danger.

Ideally you should include photos for every meaningful step. These photos should be your own compositions. It is up to you to determine what steps are meaningful so you may find it useful to complete the recipe first to note which steps are most important and then replicate the processes a second time, this time taking photos of the most important steps to use in your draft.

Make sure that, when you reference a photo, it is directly next to the step in your draft. You don’t want the reader to have to scroll to the end of the document to see the relevant image for the step they are working on.

Style

Use simple sentences with a parallel structure (the same grammatical format for each step) and active tense verbs.

You may find it helpful to use an encouraging tone in the introduction as a means of enticing the reader to want to learn how to prepare the dish.

Transition words are also essential for recipes. Transition words mark the reader’s progress by connecting one step to another (“next,” “meanwhile,” “then,” “finally,” etc.).

It is better to have more small steps than fewer big steps. Recipe readers are usually not proficient at completing the task and distracted (sometimes both) so making it easy for the audience to pick up where they left off if they take a break is essential. You don’t want the reader to pause halfway through a given step so make the steps short.

Usability

Your draft should have usability features that make the document easy to read for the reader. In addition to the required use of images you should also use color, different size font for the titles of sections (see table below) and spacing between each step and between each section.

Length requirement

The RCP should be approximately 250-500 words total (about 1-2 pages). Since you have flexibility in terms of line spacing and use of images, focus on the word count instead of the page count.

Citation

You do not need to cite outside knowledge if you ask a family member for information about a family recipe but you do need to cite any references to outside sources concerning the history of your chosen dish. Recipes of your own invention also do not need to be cited.

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| SECTION | DESCRIPTION |
| Title | Describe how to make this particular dish |
| Introduction/Overview | Discuss the history of the dish (including your family history if necessary), alternative names or foreign language names for the dish, the inventor and place of invention,[[1]](#footnote-1) and symbolism or cultural relevance of the dish to an ethnic group and or nationality, list all necessary ingredients and utensils needed to make the dish, include portion size information (“for 4 servings” etc.), and provide an estimate on the amount of time needed from preparation to cooking to serving |
| Body | List all steps in numerical order (using Arabic numerals) from preparation to cooking to garnishing, including the ideal serving temperature and beverage pairing (if necessary) and include images of your own composition  |
| Conclusion | Reaffirm the promise implied in the title and provide an encouraging end note of congratulations to the reader while referencing the culture in which the dish is situated and consider using select phrases from the “language” of the dish (such as “bon appétit” for French dishes) |

Instructions (INS)

Audience considerations

The main difference between instructions and procedures is that instructions are for a generalized audience of consumers. There is little that a company can assume about an audience of consumers. This is particularly true for print instruction manuals as compared to web-based instruction manuals, as the latter can presuppose that the audience can use the internet.

The audience of procedures are people who already know how to complete a task but want to streamline their efficiency or stay up to date on the most efficient method for completing the task. An example of a procedure is the CPR process, which people generally learn through a certification course that requires in-person training with dummies as well as hands-on instruction from qualified teachers.

Concreteness

Instructions and procedures should deal with concrete goals, not abstract ones. In other words, what you promise in the title and introduction to the document should be delivered once the reader follows the steps.

The steps should be linear in the sense that completing one step leads to the next step.

Do not promise something abstract in the title of your instructions or procedure (“how to be a successful American,” “how to get a girlfriend or boyfriend”).

Visuals

Visuals for this assignment are of two types: graphics and photographs. Graphics include things like arrows as well as more specific symbols that convey danger (such as⚠️) while photographs for this assignment should be those of your own composition.

For the instructions or procedure, you should anticipate the likelihood of danger for the audience and include symbols and logos connoting danger whenever possible. The website Emojipedia (<https://emojipedia.org/>) has emojis you can copy and paste into the text of your document when you need to convey that the instructions or procedure has dangerous steps. Remember that, since you can’t assume much about the audience of instructions, you also can’t assume that the audience is already aware of potential dangers, therefore emojis are a means of doing your best to ensure that the reader can complete the process safely. Procedures have a more specialized audience, but it may still be beneficial to use emojis to alert readers to potential dangers.

Ideally you should include photos for every meaningful step. These photos should be your own compositions. It is up to you to determine what steps are meaningful so you may find it useful to complete instruction or procedure process first to note which steps are most important and then replicate the processes a second time, this time taking photos of the most important steps to use in your draft.

Make sure that, when you reference a photo, it is directly next to the step in your draft. You don’t want the reader to have to scroll to the end of the document to see the relevant image for the step they are working on.

Style

Use simple sentences with a parallel structure (the same grammatical format for each step) and active tense verbs.

You may find it helpful to use an encouraging tone in the introduction as a means of enticing the reader to want to complete this process.

Transition words are also essential to this genre. Transition words mark the reader’s progress by connecting one step to another (“next,” “meanwhile,” “then,” “finally,” etc.).

It is better to have more small steps than fewer big steps. Readers of these sorts of documents are usually not proficient at completing the task and distracted (sometimes both) so making it easy for the audience to pick up where they left off if they take a break is essential. You don’t want the reader to pause halfway through a given step so make the steps short.

Usability

Your draft should have usability features that make the document easy to read for the reader. In addition to the required use of images you should also use color, different size font for the titles of sections (see table below) and spacing between each step and between each section.

Length requirement

The INS should be approximately 250-500 words total (about 1-2 pages). Since you have flexibility in terms of line spacing and use of images, focus on the word count instead of the page count.

Citation

All references to an outside source for the instructions or procedure should be cited but you will probably not need to cite anything for the instructions or procedure. If you’re writing about a procedure you have already learned in a class you do not have to cite that knowledge since you’re talking about your previous experiences.

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| SECTION | DESCRIPTION |
| Title | Describe how to perform this specific task or function or process |
| Introduction/Overview | Provide some justification for why this process or function is important or useful and for whom (which types of consumers or, for procedures, which types of specialists?) |
| Body | List all steps in numerical order (using Arabic numerals) required to complete the process or assemble the object as promised in the title and include images of your own composition |
| Conclusion | Reaffirm the promise implied in the title and provide an encouraging end note of congratulations to the reader |

Due dates

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| --- | --- | --- |
| SECTION  | ROUGH DRAFT | FINAL DRAFT |
| 007 | 2 April 2025 | 9 April 2025 |
| 008 | 2 April 2025 | 9 April 2025 |
| 011 | 27 March 2025 | 3 April 2025 |
| 012 | 27 March 2025 | 3 April 2025 |

Students should bring print or digital copies of their work to class for peer review, as stated in the syllabus. The final draft should be submitted to Moodle as a .pdf (ideal), .doc or .docx file.

1. Note: the inventor and place of invention is often unknown or contested. Particularly if it is contested you should discuss some of the theories behind the dish’s origin. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)