



Following and writing instructions

Instructions that are on signs or in recipes or DIY manuals are usually written using the **imperative** verb. The imperative is formed by using the verb (the 'action' or 'doing' word) but without 'to' or any noun or pronoun in front of it. For example:

'You need to turn left at the post office' becomes '**Turn** left at the post office.'

This type of instruction doesn't say **who** has to follow it.

Here are some examples of instructions written using the imperative:

Sentence		Imperative instruction
You should not smoke here.	=	Don't smoke here.
You must fix this with glue.	=	Fix this with glue.
You must not run.	=	Don't run.
You will need 300 g of flour.	=	Take 300 g of flour.

Imperative instructions:

- Are often written as a **list**, starting at the top and working down. The list may be numbered, or may have bullet points.
- Should **never** be used when writing formally - in a letter to the bank, for example.
- Are used to tell you **how** to do something (eg '**Cook** for 5 minutes.'). If you see the imperative then you know you're looking at a set of instructions.
- Are found **everywhere**: eg on a microwave meal, a jar of medicine or on a tin of paint. Look out for them especially on signs and notices.
- Are often **proper sentences**.