

# 10 top tips for writing clear instructions

## 1. Know what to do

If you don't understand a process, you won't be able to explain it clearly.

## 2. Write in small steps

Each step should be one small job. Don't include lots of different things to do in the same sentence.

## 3. Write in chronological order

Steps should be written in the order in which they need to be done. Think about what needs to be done to prepare for a task and include this first.

## 4. Use 'bossy' verbs

Start every step with an imperative or 'bossy' verb. For recipes these might be words such as *add*, *mix* and *put*.

## 5. Use numbers, bullets and headings

Use numbers or bullets to guide the reader through the steps. For a complex task with lots of different stages, break up the text with headings.

## 6. Keep it simple

Don't use fancy and descriptive language in instructions. Keep sentences short.

## 7. Include diagrams

Include diagrams if these help. Diagrams are often useful in instructions for craft activities, for example.

## 8. Include a list of equipment

If lots of things are needed for the task, you might want to include a 'What you need' list at the beginning.

## 9. Edit and revise

As with all types of writing, it is important to check and edit your work. Is everything clear? Do the diagrams match the text? Are all items mentioned in the instructions listed under 'What you need'?

## 10. Test it out

Ask someone who doesn't know how to carry out the task to test your instructions. Did they find them easy to follow? If not, work out why and edit your writing again.

# Keep it simple!

Recipes and other instructions should be written in clear, plain English so that they can be read quickly and easily. Can the children edit the 'Tasty lemon drizzle cake' recipe so that it includes only essential words and information? Ask them to put a line through the words that they don't need. Some of the adjectives do provide useful information, so they will need think carefully about what they cross out. Here are some suggested edits.

Springboard Stories Issue 3: Food 3/4

## Tasty Lemon drizzle cake

**What you need:**

**Ingredients:**


- 3 eggs
- 175g caster sugar
- 175g self-raising flour
- 1 level tsp baking powder
- 100g butter
- 1 tsp butter for greasing
- Finely grated zest of two lemons

**Equipment:**

- Whisk
- Large mixing bowl
- Metal spoon
- 1kg loaf tin, greased and lined with greaseproof paper
- Cooling tray
- Two saucepans


**For the syrup:**

- Juice of two lemons, strained
- 115g caster sugar



**What to do:**

- Preheat the ~~large~~ oven to 180°C/gas mark 4, ~~which is extremely hot~~.
- Put the ~~oval, smooth, brown~~ eggs and ~~white, glistening~~ sugar into a ~~beautiful~~ large bowl then whisk together ~~until smooth~~.
- Sift the ~~dusty, white~~ flour and baking powder into the ~~gloopy~~ mixture and fold in with a ~~shiny~~ metal spoon.
- Stir in the ~~zingy, bitter~~ lemon zest.
- Put the ~~sunshine-yellow~~ butter into a ~~hard, metallic~~ saucepan and melt ~~gently~~ on the hob. Stir the ~~melted~~ butter into the ~~creamy~~ cake mixture.
- Add the ~~smooth~~ mixture to the ~~greased and lined~~ loaf tin.
- Bake ~~in the large oven~~ for one hour.
- Turn out onto a ~~shiny~~ cooling tray.
- Put the ~~yellow~~ lemon juice and ~~glistening~~ sugar in a saucepan and heat gently until the ~~powdery~~ sugar has dissolved.
- While the ~~delicious-looking~~ cake is still warm, pour on the ~~scrummy~~ lemon and sugar drizzle.



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'metal' - Keep this as it shows what type of spoon is needed (not wooden)

'until smooth' - Keep this as it provides useful information

'gently' - useful information; another way to say this would be 'on a low heat'

'melted' - Keep this as it makes the instruction clear

'greased and lined' - useful; checks that the preparation has been done

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### For the syrup:

- Juice of two lemons, strained
- 115g caster sugar

### Equipment:

- Whisk
- Large mixing bowl
- Metal spoon
- 1kg loaf tin, greased and lined with greaseproof paper
- Cooling tray
- Two saucepans



## What to do:

1. Preheat the large oven to 180°C/gas mark 4, which is extremely hot.
2. Put the oval, smooth, brown eggs and white, glistening sugar into a beautiful large bowl then whisk together until smooth.
3. Sift the dusty, white flour and baking powder into the gloopy mixture and fold in with a shiny metal spoon.
4. Stir in the zingy, bitter lemon zest.
5. Put the sunshine-yellow butter into a hard, metallic saucepan and melt gently on the hob. Stir the melted butter into the creamy cake mixture.
6. Add the smooth mixture to the greased and lined loaf tin.
7. Bake in the large oven for one hour.
8. Turn out onto a shiny cooling tray.
9. Put the yellow lemon juice and glistening sugar in a saucepan and heat gently until the powdery sugar has dissolved.
10. While the delicious-looking cake is still warm, pour on the scrummy lemon and sugar drizzle.



Name

Class

Date

# Improving writing

The instructions below for making lemon drizzle cake are not very clear. Can you think of at least five things that are wrong with the text, or five ways in which it could be improved? Jot down your ideas below.

Making lemon cake is easy. Get everything you need together. Mix a couple of eggs with some sugar, flour and baking powder in a bowl. You need to sift the flour first. Grate the rind of some lemons with a fine grater and put the lemon zest into the mixture with the other ingredients. Once you have done that you might want to add a bit of butter to make your cake extra tasty. You will need to melt the butter first and you can do this either in a pan or in the microwave. Take a loaf tin and cover the sides with some butter (this will make sure that the cake doesn't stick when it's cooking). You might want to add some greaseproof paper too to make sure that the cake doesn't stick. Bake the cake in oven until it's cooked. The oven will need to set to about 180°C/gas mark 4. When the cake is cooked squeeze two lemons and mix the juice with some sugar and pour it on to the cake. There you go. Easy as 1, 2, 3!

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