



Giving Instructions & Doing Concept Checks

I. Giving Good Instructions

What you should NOT do:

- Start without warning.
- Include extraneous information.
- Use complicated language.
- Use long sentences.
- Get the steps out of order.
- Repeat instructions unless necessary.
- Explain second stage before the first one.

What you SHOULD do:

Plan your instructions:

- Plan step-by-step on paper or...
- Go over steps in your head.
- Write steps on board, if necessary.

Let students know you are giving instructions:

- Start with something like “Okay, now...” or “Here are the instructions for...”
- Make sure all students are listening before continuing.
- Wait silently, if necessary.
-

Use simple vocab and structures:

- Aim is to get students to do activities correctly.
- Use language that they know.
- Include other types of teacher talk for acquisition or listening comprehension in other parts of lessons.

Include only essential information:

- Weed out non-essential info.
- Don't comment on what you are doing.
- Just say what students need to do.
- Avoid repeating instructions.
- Don't repeat written instructions.

Use short sentences each with a step:

- Emphasize the beginning of each step.
 - numerically
 - with pauses
 - with words such as “next”



Keep the steps in order:

- Don't miss out steps.
- Retain materials to be distributed until preceding steps are explained.
- Write down steps (on board or in a notebook) if necessary.

Use gestures or visuals to help students understand:

- Use exaggerated gestures.
- Gestures can clarify accompanying language which may not be understood on its own.
- Use gestures with materials to help students understand what to do with them.
- Use board or other visuals to help clarify your instructions.

Use pauses for emphasis and to separate info:

- Pause after each step.
- Pause to give students time to process info.
- Pause before and/or after important info.

Use one of these demos, if possible:

- Demonstrate all of an activity.
- Only demonstrate an important and/or difficult part of an activity.
- Demonstrate alone.
- Demonstrate with a student.
- Get two students to demonstrate.

Explain one stage at a time:

- If the task has two stages, students do the first before you explain the second.
- Keep information given at one time to a minimum.

Check to make sure students have understood:

- Don't ask "Do you understand?"
 - unless you have high-level learners who you trust.
- Get one or more students to repeat instructions.
 - comprehension check to see if they understood
 - the reiteration in simple language will help other students
- ALWAYS watch facial expressions of students!
 - Looks of bewilderment will be your cue to repeat/reiterate.



II. Checking Understanding of Target Language

Clarify vocabulary and grammar in terms of...

- Form
- Meaning
- Function/Usage
- Pronunciation

Clarify grammar in terms of... (example with Present Perfect)

- **Form**
 - I have eaten caviar. I've eaten caviar.
 - Subj. + have + past participle (+object).
- **Meaning**
 - Something done at undefined past time which is important now.
- **Function/Usage**
 - To talk about our experiences.
- **Pronunciation**
 - "I haveeaten" "I'veeeaten"

Clarify vocabulary in terms of... (example with "misunderstand")

- **Form**
 - misunderstand (verb) misunderstood (past/pp)
 - mis (prefix) + understand (verb)
- **Meaning**
 - to interpret wrongly
- **Function/Usage**
 - To misunderstand someone/something
 - "I may have misunderstood."
- **Pronunciation**
 - misunDERstand



III. Concept check questions

- Use after teaching TL to check understanding.
- Use for checking meaning and function/usage.
- Helps students understand essence of TL.
- Forces teachers to understand essence of TL.
- Gives teachers practice in grading language.

Creating concept check questions

- Keep the questions simple.
- Aim for simple answers e.g., one word.
- Keep the language simple.
- Try not to use the TL in your question.
- Try to get at the essence of meaning.
- Establish what it isn't.
- Try to get to the particulars of usage.
- Use a variety of questions.

“He works in an office.”

Keep the questions simple.

- “Does he have a job?”

Aim for simple answers e.g., one word.

- “Yes.”

Keep the language simple.

- “~~What line of work do you think he is in?~~”
- “What kind of job?”

Try not to use the TL in your question.

- “~~Does he work in an office?~~”
- “Does he do his job in an office building?”

Try to get at the essence of meaning.

- “Does he work there every day?”

Establish what it isn't.

- “Is he working right now?”

Try to get to the particulars of usage.

- “Does this give us information about his life?”



Use a variety of questions.

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| ▪ “Does he have a job?” | Yes |
| ▪ “What kind of a job?” | Office |
| ▪ “Does he work their every day?” | Yes |
| ▪ “Is he working now?” | Maybe |
| ▪ “Did he work there in the past?” | Yes |
| ▪ “Will he work there in the future?” | Yes, probably |
| ▪ “Does this give us information about his life?” | Yes |
| ▪ “Are we interested most in past, present or future?” | Present |

Types of Questions

Types of questions.

- Yes/No questions
- 50/50 chance questions
- Information questions
- Discrimination questions
- Shared experience questions
- Life experience/culture questions

Types of questions: *Bachelor Apartment*

Yes/No questions

- Is a bachelor apartment a room?
- Are there other rooms in the apartment?
- Is there a washroom?

50/50 chance questions

- Is it cheap or expensive?
- Do you buy it or rent it?

Information questions

- Who lives in it?
- How many people live in it?

Discrimination questions

- Do you only sleep in it?
- Can you cook in it?

Shared experience questions

- Is there a bachelor apartment in this building?

Life experience/culture questions

- Have you ever lived in a bachelor apartment?
- Are there bachelor apartments in your city/country?
- Creating concept check questions



IV. Activities (included here because they are difficult to explain)

Universal Auction Game

Preparation

1. Decide how many teams you will have. You will need at least three teams made up of two to four students.
2. Choose or prepare one grammar/vocabulary gap-fill or multiple choice exercise for each team in your class. You can use separate exercises or split a long exercise into parts so there is one part for each team. However, each exercise must consist of at least 5 questions.
3. Make two copies of each exercise for each team, one extra copy of each exercise and one copy of each set of answers. So, if you have chosen three teams, you will need to make two photocopies of each exercise (nine all together), one extra copy of each (three all together) and one photocopy of each set of answers.

Procedure

1. Give each team a different exercise to complete. When they finish, give them the answers so they can check.
2. Explain that each group will be auctioning off their exercise. You may need to explain what an auction is. One team will be auctioning and the others will be bidding. Each group will start a set amount of money based on \$100 for each exercise they will be bidding on. For example, with three groups, each group will be bidding on two exercises so they will start with \$200 each. The value of their exercises will be determined by the chart below. The idea is to get good value on the exercise they bid on and purchase. For example, if there is one mistake, the actual worth of the exercise is \$80 but if a group gets it for \$60, they've come out ahead by \$20. Conversely, the selling team will be down \$20 as they sold something that was worth \$80 for only \$60.

| | |
|------------------|-------|
| Perfect Exercise | \$100 |
| One mistake | \$ 80 |
| Two mistakes | \$60 |
| Three mistakes | \$40 |
| Four mistakes | \$20 |
| Five or more | \$0 |

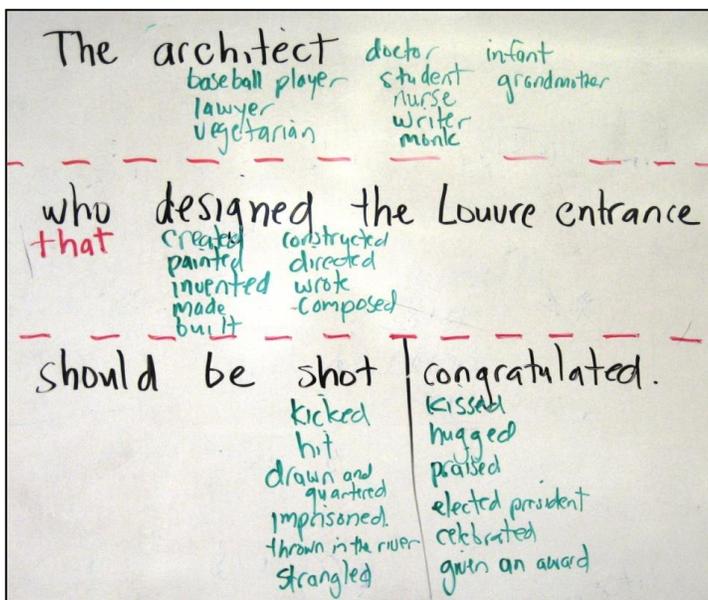
3. Get the groups to complete their exercises.
4. Give each group their answer sheet to check their answers.
5. Tell the students that they are to insert some mistakes into their exercise. The whole idea is to insert mistakes that the other team will not detect. For example, if a team cleverly chooses two mistakes that go undetected, other teams may bid on it as if it was perfect. This means they may bid as much as 100. If the team manages to sell it for that price, they will have made a profit of 40, as its worth (with 2 mistakes) is only 60. Give them the extra exercise sheet to complete with correct answers or errors.
6. Choose one team to reveal their answers. Hand out their exercise to the other teams. One member of the auctioning team goes to the board and another member calls out the answers for him/her to write on the board. Other teams decide if the answers are correct.
7. Start the auctioning at \$10 until the exercise is sold.
8. After the exercise has been auctioned, the auctioning team reveals the mistakes that they inserted. Establish the actual value of the exercise according to the above chart. Establish how much each team gained and lost. If a team sold something for 100 that was worth 80, give them +20. If a team paid 60 for something that was worth 20, give them -40.
9. Continue in the same way with the other teams' exercises.
10. Total up the final dollar amounts to determine the winners.

Folded Paper (Relative Clauses)

This activity can be used to practice all sorts of lexical or grammatical structures. In addition, it will often involve specific vocabulary. Students are required to write a structure in stages on a sheet of paper, but each time they write a section of the structure, they have to fold the paper over so what they have written is not visible. After folding the paper, they pass it on to another student, who then continues to add to the structure. Students enjoy this activity because, when they unfold the papers at the end, it often produces humorous results.

This activity can be used with many grammar points. As indicated above, it could also involve focusing on specific vocabulary depending on what is needed to fill the variable slots in the structure (see example below). Brainstorming some ideas for filling those slots is a good idea and students should be encouraged to use their creativity and provide their own ideas. Drawing attention to the variable slots in the structure not only raises awareness of the form but it gives students an idea of the type of items that can fill the slots and the overall generative value of the structure. Below is a sample for relative clause practice featuring the Louvre entrance.

1. Write this line on the board: "The architect"
2. Leave some space below it, draw a dotted line and below it write this line: "who designed the Louvre entrance".
3. Leave some space, draw another dotted line on the board and write the following below it: "should be..."
4. Ask students who dislike the pyramid to finish the line "should be..." (e.g. "shot."). Write it on the board.
5. Ask students who like the pyramid to finish the line (e.g. "congratulated."). Write it on the board.
6. Clarify the structure as a relative clause and make sure the students understand why it is identifying and that "who" can be replaced with "that".
7. Elicit other general names for people besides architect and write them on the board around "architect", e.g. doctor, teacher, student, vegetarian, teenager (you could limit it to just professions).
8. Elicit other verbs for creating things and write them on the board under "designed", e.g. wrote, directed, painted, invented, sculpted, constructed, assembled, etc.
9. Elicit other rewards and write them on the board under "congratulated", e.g. kissed, hugged, praised, etc.
10. Elicit other punishments and write them on the board under "shot", e.g. punished, imprisoned, hit, etc.
11. Give each S a half-sheet of paper
12. Explain that the dotted lines on the board represent folds in the paper.
13. Tell the students to hold the paper vertically and write "The" + a general name for a person (e.g. "doctor") across the very top.
14. Tell students to fold the very top of the paper over towards them so the line they wrote is no longer visible.
15. Tell students to pass the paper to the right and not to unfold the top.
16. Tell Ss to write "who" or "that" + verb for creating + thing that was created (e.g. "who invented the flush toilet") and fold it over in the same way and pass it to the right.
17. Tell students to write "should be" + reward or punishment (e.g. "should be hugged") and fold it over again and pass it to the right.
18. Tell students they may unfold the paper and read the complete sentence.
19. Get some students to read them aloud and make corrections if needed.





Spoken instructions for *Folded Paper*

1. Here are the instructions for the next activity.
2. You are going to write a sentence but first I'm going to give you an example.
3. [Show slide of ROM extension]. **Some people like this building, some people don't. People who don't like it say the architect** [write "The architect" on the board] **who designed the ROM addition** [write "who designed the ROM addition" below the first line] **should be...** [write "should be..." below the second line] **What can we say here?** [Point to the space after "should be" to elicit an example]
4. **What other punishments can you think of?** [Write them on the board under the first one]
5. [Draw a vertical line to the right of the punishments] **What rewards can you think of?** [Elicit them and write them in a list to the right of the line].
6. [Point to "architect"] **Can you think of other professions?** [Elicit them and write them next to "architect"]
7. **How about this verb, *designed*?** [Point to it] **Can you think of another verb for creating something – anything, it doesn't have to be a building? I just said one - *creating*.** [Write it on the board next to "designing" Elicit and add more verbs for creating]
8. **Now what about this word here?** [Point to "who"] **Can we use any other words here?** [Elicit "that" and write it next to "who"]
9. [Draw a dotted line under each line on the board. Then hand out the papers]. **Take your paper and write just *the* and a profession across the top** [point to the top of a paper]. **For example, write *The doctor, The hockey player*.**
10. [Wait until they are finished] **When you have finished, fold the top of the paper towards you like this** [show how to fold] **so that what you wrote is not visible.** [Wait for everyone to finish]
11. **Now you pass your paper to the right** [motion to their right]. **When you get the new paper DO NOT LOOK at what the other person wrote. The person at the end of the row** [move to the right end of the first row], **you give your paper to the person at the beginning** [Take the paper from the right end of the first row and take it to the person at the beginning to demonstrate].
12. **Now write here** [point to the space under the fold on a piece of paper] ***who or that*** [point to the 2nd line on the board] **and a verb for creating** [point to the verbs] **in the past tense and the thing that was created** [give some examples of the whole line] **like *who wrote the Bible, who invented the toilet...***
13. [Wait until they are finished] **When you have finished, fold the top of the paper towards you like this** [show how to fold] **so that what you wrote is not visible.** [Wait for everyone to finish] **Then pass your paper to the right again. Make sure you don't look at what was written.**
14. **Now write here** [point to the space under the fold on a piece of paper] ***should be* and a punishment or reward** [point to the line on the board and then give examples] **like *should be beaten, should be hugged and kissed...***
15. [Wait until they are finished] **When you have finished, fold the top of the paper towards you like this** [show how to fold] **so that what you wrote is not visible.** [Wait for everyone to finish] **Then pass your paper to the right again. Now you can open them** [show unfolding paper] **and read them.**
16. [Wait until someone laughs and then ask them to read theirs]



TEST: Can you follow instructions?

This is a test to see how well you can follow a set of instructions. You have only 5 minutes in which to complete the test so you will have to work very quickly. You must not talk to anyone else in the class or let them see your paper. Good luck!

1. Read through all the instructions carefully first.
2. Write your last name in the left-hand box above.
3. Write your first name in the right-hand box above.
4. Underline all the articles in the paragraph above the boxes.
5. Circle all the indefinite articles in the paragraph above the boxes.
6. Draw two small triangles in the middle box.
7. Put an 'X' inside each triangle.
8. Draw a circle around each triangle.
9. Count the definite articles in the paragraph above the boxes.
10. Write the number of definite articles here _____.
11. When you reach this sentence, stand up, turn around and sit down again.
12. Draw a tree in the box in the bottom right hand corner of the page.
13. Draw a picture of the sun above the tree you have just drawn.
14. Write your teacher's first name here _____.
15. When you reach this sentence, say out loud "Hello everyone. I have reached sentence 15."
16. Circle one of these letters: A B C D
17. Stand up and say out loud, "Hey look at me! I'm almost finished."
18. Write the name of a famous person here _____.
19. Write your name on the board.
20. Now that you have read through all the sentences, just write your name here: _____



TEST: Can you follow instructions?

This is a test to see how well you can follow a set of instructions. You have only 5 minutes in which to complete the test so you will have to work very quickly. You must not talk to anyone else in the class or let them see your paper. Good luck!

1. Follow each instruction carefully.
2. Complete this sentence with a nationality: _____ are really nice people.
3. Look at the sentence you just wrote. Should it start with an article?
4. Stand up and say the sentence you wrote in #2.
5. Circle all the indefinite articles in the paragraph above the boxes.
6. Write the number of indefinite articles in the middle box.
7. Write the name of the falls near Toronto in the first box.
8. Finish this with the name of those falls: Hey everyone, I've been to _____.
9. Stand up and say the sentence you just wrote in number 8.
10. Stand up, turn around and say the sentence in number 2 with a different nationality.
11. When you reach this sentence, stand up, walk around the class and sit down again.
12. Write the name of an ocean in the third box.
13. Write the name of your ocean on the board.
14. Finish this sentence with a superlative: Ken is _____.
15. When you reach this sentence, say out loud "Hello everyone. I have reached sentence 15."
16. Circle the article used with rivers: A An The
17. Stand up and say out loud, "Hey look at me! I'm almost finished."
18. Write Barack Obama's full title here: _____
19. Say your sentence from 14 out loud.
20. Write this sentence with your first name on the board: _____ is finished!