

*Guidelines for a Process Analysis Paper**

A process analysis paper can be either *directive* or *informative*. A *directive* process analysis paper explains how to do something, whereas an *informative* one explains how something occurs or did occur. For example, if you want to explain how to build a birdhouse, your paper would be directive (think of it as "directing" someone to do something). If you want to explain how a tornado occurs or how a battle was won, your paper would be informative.

When you are writing a process paper, keep the following points in mind:

- You must provide some type of preparation or background information. For instance, a directive paper should list the necessary equipment or materials and discuss the setup. An informative paper, however, should begin with background information or should provide a context.
- In a directive process analysis paper, use the second person, addressing the reader as "you." Sometimes the "you" will be understood. However, in an informative analysis process paper, use either the first person or the third person.
- Consider the steps in a process or the sequence of events. Be sure to include every step--don't skip any. When you are organizing your ideas, you might find it helpful to make two lists, one headed "Preparation" or "Background" and the other "Steps" or "Sequence."
- Assume that your reader does not have any knowledge of the process you are describing--explain each step clearly. You might also provide explanations about certain procedures.
- Usually, you will write a process paper in chronological order. Words that show the passage of time and that provide coherence: *first, second, third, then, next, soon, now, next, finally, at last, therefore, consequently.*

(Always check with your instructor for specific requirements regarding your assignment.)