

Project 3: The Set of Instructions – Individual (20 points)

Purpose: To compose a set of user-centered instructions that class mates can follow *in the classroom*.

Audience: Your instructor and your peers.

The Assignment

One of the most common, yet most difficult, tasks you may perform when writing in the workplace is creating a set of instructions. You must compose the instructions from your readers' point of view since they will be *using* your directions to do something: put together a printer, install and boot up new software, recreate an assignment for a class of students. In addition, you must integrate text with visuals in a logical, easy-to-follow format so your readers do not get lost or build your item incorrectly.

To help develop these skills, we will create a set of instructions for building something using Mega Bloks (they are like Legos) in our classroom. For this project, we will be using a 450-piece set of Mega Bloks divided eleven ways, so each of you will have about 40 pieces with which to build something. During our in-class workdays, you will have the opportunity to build something and record your process, so that you may compose a set of illustrated instructions that mix text and visuals.

You will then test your instructions in class with your peers as they try to create your item. Your peers will provide feedback to help you revise your instructions before you submit them for a grade. Your final grade will be based on my evaluation of the instructions and my ability to build your item—don't worry, I grew up playing with Legos, so my skills in that area are at least above average! This project will also help you learn about usability testing and empirical measures. Please use chapter 28 in the Anderson to help you design your instructions.

Goals of the Assignment

The goals of Project 3 are to work as a group to accomplish the following:

- Writing Process – Develop and understand various strategies for planning, researching, drafting, testing, and revising a reader-centered set of instructions
- Research – Understand and use secondary and empirical research methods to produce a set of instruction and collect feedback from your test participants
- Technology – Use mobile technology (the camera on your or a class mate's phone or your digital camera) to help you develop your instructions; use desktop publishing (Word, PowerPoint, Photoshop, InDesign) to help you develop your instructions
- Document Design – Learn to communicate with visual information, understanding and implementing various principles of format, layout, and design of a set of instructions

Format for the Set of Instruction

Your instructions should include all necessary information for your peers and me to be able to construct the item you design without too much difficulty. The instructions should include an introduction paragraph, any necessary warnings, a description and list of required equipment (which should just be the Mega Bloks), the illustrated directions themselves, and troubleshooting information. The instructions should be printed in color and modeled after the sample in the Anderson text in chapter 28 beginning on page 587. For five points of extra credit, you may create a video of your instructions in addition to the printed document.

Online Help

The Purdue OWL contains good information on professional writing. You may also use examples on the WR305, Writing for the Web course website. Remember that examples on the course website are merely models; your proposal may look/read differently from those models. Use models as a guide rather than an exercise in cut and paste skills.

Instruction Usability Checklist/Feedback Form

On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest score, rate the following:

Introduction paragraph:

Description of the equipment:

List of materials and equipment needed:

Overall directions:

Text:

Visuals:

Troubleshooting information:

Grammar and mechanics (syntax, word choice, punctuation):

Please answer these questions about the set of instructions:

Were you able to successfully build the item?

Were the instructions clear and easy to use?

What did you like about the instructions?

What did you not like about the instructions?

Do you have any suggestions about the instructions to make them more effective?

Revision

You will be able to revise this document during the composition and testing process; however, you will not be able to revise this document for an improved grade after submission.