Instructions find an important place in technical writing. Instructions are made for various purposes such as installing software packages, assembling a piece of equipment, using a new device, trouble shooting and so on. In general, instructions should be clear, precise, understandable,complete and above all user- friendly.

To give instructions the root forms of verbs should be used. (root: the part of a word on which the other words are formed)

Guidelines to be followed

- Use the imperative form - close the lid
- Prefix the instructions with a clear heading that summarises the task.
- Begin each step with an action verb
- Frame each step in such a way that it focuses on a single task.
- Use a numbered list when the order is important.
- Use a bulleted list when the order is not important.
- Use simple and direct language free from jargon and ambiguity.

Use : Don't touch, Shut down, Open only, Wear apron, Handle, Rinse, Get ready, Never board, Move away, Form a queue, etc.,

Examples:-

Write a set of eight instructions that must be followed in a chemical engineering lab.

1. Do not work in the laboratory barefoot; wear shoes to protect your feet.
2. Do not handle the apparatus and instruments roughly.
3. Do not wear gold ornaments, wrist watch, while working in the lab.
4. Do not allow chemicals to come into contact with your skin.
5. Keep all the doors and windows open.
6. Keep your working place neat and tidy.
7. Switch off the power supply immediately after completing the experiment.
8. Prepare solutions and dilute acids under the guidance of the staff.
9. Wear apron and gloves while handling chemicals.
10. Take care not to spill the chemicals on the floor.
11. Rinse the apparatus well both before and after use.
12. Handle all glass ware items carefully.

Eight instructions to maintain a computer in good condition:

1. Don't touch the cables.
2. Avoid touching the open sockets.
3. Switch off the main supply and open all the doors and windows, in case of sparks or short circuits.
4. Avoid touching the monitor.
5. Shut down the system when it is not in use.
6. Shut down the system properly.
7. Open only minimum number of required sites, while working on the net, for quick access.
8. Don't rest your legs anywhere on the stabilizer or UPS.

Eight instructions to save petrol:

1. Don't keep the engine running while the vehicle is not in motion.
2. Keep the engine in good condition.
3. Fit the vehicle with an engine that gives high mileage.
4. Service the vehicle regularly; an ill-maintained vehicle consumes more petrol.
5. Avoid clutch driving. Resting one's foot on the clutch pedal leads to more fuel consumption.

6. Avoid frequent change of gear to save petrol.
7. Inflate the tyres at an optimum level of air pressure.
8. Use the correct engine oil for the proper functioning of the engine.