Use Command Verbs

1. Focus

Explain Using Command Verbs

Say: Procedural text writers have to choose their words carefully to help readers understand what to do and how to do it. That’s why they often use short, direct commands at the beginning of a sentence. Instead of writing, “Begin by pouring the flour in the bowl,” procedural writers might say, “Pour the flour in the bowl.” They tell you very directly what to do. Today I’m going to show you how to use clear command verbs in your procedural texts to create clear, direct sentences.

Model Using Clear Command Verbs

Display the modeling text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Read each text aloud.

Modeling Text

Ask: Which text was easier to follow? Which text would best help you make chocolate-dipped strawberries? Allow responses.

Say: Both texts tell about making chocolate-dipped strawberries. The first text, however, is very hard to follow. You have to really look for the instructions in each sentence, because the sentences don’t start with clear commands, and they include the author’s thoughts and feelings such as strawberries taste really good. This is extra information that is not needed. The second text is very clear. Notice that each sentence begins with a verb. (Point to each verb.) Some sentences include more than one command, like this one, “Unwrap the chocolate bar and break it up.” The verbs in these steps are clear and direct. They tell me exactly what I need to do to make chocolate-dipped strawberries. Also, I notice there are no extra words. This makes the directions really easy to follow. I’m going to underline the verbs and label them command verbs. Underline and label the identified verbs.

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:

• Learn the importance of using command verbs in procedural text.
• Practice using command verbs in procedural text.
• Discuss how using command verbs was helpful.

Preparation

Materials Needed

• Chart paper and markers
• Interactive whiteboard resources

Advanced Preparation

If you will not be using the interactive whiteboard resources, copy the modeling and practice texts onto chart paper prior to the mini-lesson.
2. Rehearse

**Practice Using Clear Command Verbs**

Display the practice text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

After you have washed the carrots, you can start to peel them. After you have peeled them you can finish by cutting the carrots in half.

**Practice Text**

Ask students to work with a partner to rewrite the sentences so that each sentence begins with a clear command verb. Each pair of students should write down its sentences and be prepared to read them to the class.

**Share Practice Sentences**

Bring students together and invite them to read their sentences aloud and explain the word choices they made. Record students’ sentences and post these as models for students to use as they draft or revise their own procedural texts.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

**Say:** We learned that using clear command verbs makes the steps in a procedural text short, direct, and easy to follow. A good procedural text helps the reader understand exactly what to do and how to do it. As you write your procedural text, remember to use command verbs at the beginning of your sentences.

Encourage students to think about using command verbs in their procedural texts during independent writing time. During student conferences, reinforce students’ use of this and other strategies using the prompts on your conferring flip chart.

**4. Share**

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to share examples of command verbs they used in their procedural texts.

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**Strategies to Support ELs**

**Beginning**

While other students complete the partner practice activity, work with beginning ELs to practice orally using simple command verbs. Take a pen and write your name. Say: *I write my name.* (Now hand the pen to the student.) Write your name. Practice with other simple verbs. For example:

- I put the pen down. Put the pen down.
- I take the pen. Take the pen.

Encourage students to use the command verbs to give you instructions, too.

**Intermediate and Advanced**

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the partner activity.

**All Levels**

If you have ELs whose first language is Spanish, share these English/Spanish cognates: *instructions/las instrucciones; verb/el verbo.*