# Introduction

Most jobs follow a natural flow from beginning to end. The goal is to write doable tasks as procedure steps that follow this flow.

Procedures should only describe doable tasks. Use regular sentences and bullets to describe text that are not doable tasks. You can use warnings, cautions and notes to make short explanations related to one specific doable task.

# Information Types

Many documents have a combination of descriptive text and doable tasks. The first job is to separate this. Here are some examples of typical information types with non-doable tasks:

• Job descriptions

• System descriptions

• Requirements

Information Identification Procedure

Procedure designers use this to write and identify information types and decide how best to present it.

1. Read through the document
2. Look for doable actions
3. Choose one:
   * + - Few or no doable actions:
         * **Go to** Prose Washing Procedures
       - Many doable actions:
         * **Go to** Procedure for Making Procedures

Procedure for Making Procedures

Procedure designers use this to write tasks in a logic order.

1. Read the document you will wash
   1. Sort and reorganize the text into a logical order
2. If unable to sort tasks in a logical order, go to prose washing procedure
3. Read the document again and mark or write down:
   1. Actors
   2. Long breaks
   3. Hot spots with high risk
4. Chunk into several procedures when you have:
   1. Different actors
   2. Long breaks
   3. Hot spots where you need to read a checklist before proceeding
5. Make each phase into a separate procedure
   1. Find a name describing each phase (procedure)
   2. Use List Header Style
   3. Avoid headings inside the procedure
   4. Write who does the procedure
6. Wash the procedure steps
   1. Write in a “You style”
   2. Identify the action
   3. Have one action in each step
   4. Start with a verb or “If”
7. Write warnings, cautions or notes
   1. Use warnings or caution for what not to do
   2. Use notes to explain something about one specific step

**Note:** A common mistake is to use too many warning or cautions to emphasize important steps. Avoid this by always writing what to do as a procedure step. If high risk, add a warning about what not to do and why.

1. Make warnings, cautions, notes and introductions active:
   1. Look for versions of the verb “to be”
   2. Identify actors and actions
   3. Write in “You style” or place the actor as early as possible in the sentence
   4. Place the verb as early as possible in the sentence and close to the actor
2. Proof read to make sure:
   1. Procedures steps start with a verb or “If”
   2. Warnings, cautions and notes use active text

Prose Washing Procedure

Procedure designers use this to write descriptive prose text such as job descriptions, requirements, systems descriptions and policy documents.

1. Read the document you will wash
   1. Sort and reorganize the text into a logical order such as:
      * Proceed from the known to the unknown
      * Proceed from the easy to the more difficult
      * Proceed from the abstract to concrete
      * Follow the systems layout
2. Read the document again and mark or write down:
   1. Actors
   2. Actions
3. Rewrite the main body
   1. One thing at the time
   2. Remove double talk
   3. Use active voice
      * If possible, avoid any form of the helping verb “to be”
      * Keep actors and actions at the beginning of a sentence
      * Keep actors and actions close together
   4. Use an informal style
      * Try to use “you style”
      * Try to use “we and us”
      * If possible, avoid third person
4. Wash the text
   1. Look for filler words in:
      * Adverbs
      * Adjectives
      * Prepositions
   2. Remove unnecessary words
   3. Replace complex word with:
      * Short simple words
      * Old well known words
   4. Try to keep sentences to less than 12 words
   5. Try to limit paragraphs to five sentences
5. Format with styles:
   1. Use Heading 1, 2 or 3
   2. Avoid using List Header
   3. Use Warnings, Cautions and Notes
   4. Use plenty of horizontal lines to chunk information
6. Run spell and grammar check
   1. Rewrite passive text
   2. Rewrite long sentences