

How to Give Instructions

1. Be Direct

- a. Do not use question words
- b. Do not use an upward voice tone inflection
- c. Use clear (sensory-specific) and simple language
- d. Example; "Sit down behind the desk" (emphasis and low pitch can be used for underlined words)

2. Be Personal

- a. Do not yell from a distance
- b. Maintain eye contact, and elicit their cooperation
- c. Use age and context appropriate language

3. Give One Instruction at a Time

- a. Do not give run-on sentences or explanations *as if* they are instructions; they *are not*.
- b. Wait at least 3 seconds after giving an instruction before saying/doing anything else
- c. If they don't make a visible attempt to begin to follow the instruction in 3 seconds, calmly repeat the instruction and wait another 3+ seconds



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Back story;

I was once a behavioral coder for a psychological research study involving young children. The researchers handed out a single page to all of us, just like the one above I am presenting here. I recreated that document using memory and a quick use of online search.

I was really excited to read that handout; I know how rare it is to meet a leader/parent/teacher/etc. who follows these instruction guidelines perfectly all the time. But if you do, it WILL work! These are designed for young children, but it should be plain to see that the military also follows these guidelines.

Disclaimer;

It is not enough to give perfect instructions. The party giving the instructions must be qualified to do so. The party giving the instructions must be directing these instructions only towards those who are qualified to receive and follow the instructions.

Every person with the ability to speak and communicate also has the inherent responsibility to do that correctly, or excellently, or at least not to communicate in a way that harms others.

We instruct others to *serve* them, not to dominate or exploit them.