



How to Give Instructions and Tell People What to Do

KS3

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Ages 11-14



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What Are Instructions?

Instructions are words we use to tell someone what to do. They're different from asking a question or having a normal conversation. When you give an instruction, you're asking or commanding someone to perform an action. In **Modern Foreign Languages** lessons, learning how to give instructions is a crucial skill because you need to understand what teachers and people around you want you to do.

Instructions are everywhere in real life. A teacher might say "Open your textbook to page 5." A parent might say "Please tidy your room." A friend might ask "Can you pass me the salt?" Each of these is a different way of giving an instruction.

Think of it like traffic signs. A red traffic light doesn't ask cars to stop—it commands them to. Instructions work the same way: they tell people what action to take.

Different Ways to Give Instructions

Instructions come in different levels of politeness and formality. **Direct commands** are the strongest: "Sit down!" or "Be quiet!" These are used when you need someone to act immediately, like in emergencies or when a teacher needs the classroom to settle down.

Polite requests are gentler and more respectful. You might say "Could you please open the window?" or "Would you mind helping me with this?" These are used in normal, friendly situations where you want to keep a good relationship with the person.

Questions as instructions are the most indirect. "Can you turn off the light?" sounds like a question, but it's really asking someone to do something. This is very common in everyday speech because it's friendly and doesn't sound bossy.

Think of it like volume on a speaker. Direct commands are turned up loud. Polite requests are at medium volume. Questions as instructions are quieter and more gentle.

Giving Instructions in Different Languages

When learning a new language, you'll discover that different languages have special **command forms** called **imperatives**. In **Spanish**, you might say "¡Abre la puerta!" (Open the door!) In **French**, "Ouvre la porte!" means the same thing. In **German**, "Öffne die Tür!" is how you'd command someone to open the door.

The interesting thing is that many languages have **formal** and **informal** ways of giving instructions. If you're speaking to a friend, you use one form. If you're speaking to a teacher or someone older, you use a more respectful form. This shows that language isn't just about the words—it's about showing respect and understanding the relationship between people.

Why Instructions Matter

Being able to give clear, polite instructions is a **life skill** that helps in school, at home, and at work. When you can give instructions well, people understand what you want and are more likely to help you. When learning languages, mastering instructions means you can communicate your needs, understand what others want from you, and navigate the world more confidently.