

2.4 Writing Procedure Overviews

The purpose of an introduction is to let the reader know exactly what he or she will learn from following the steps of a task. After you write the steps, you can reference them to create your introduction. Although it may seem to write the introduction second, it is often helpful. Write out the following guidelines in short paragraphs or lists before each section.

1. **Explain the task briefly.** Along with proper headings, short descriptions can help guide readers quickly to the content they need.
2. **Explain when to perform the task.** Your tasks each are organized into their own sections. By explaining when a task is used, your reader understands the work flow and that specific task's relation to other tasks.
3. **Explain how often to perform the task.** Readers may need to perform some tasks more often than others. For example, one task may be needed "each time a student is hired" and another may be needed "every four months."
4. **Write about who should perform this task.** If the task must be performed, for example, by an administrative assistant, make sure to note this in the introduction.
5. **Avoid including essential information in your introductions.** If you begin to write information necessary to complete the task, move it down into the steps. Include additional information as a note. This is because readers may skip the introduction and begin reading at the first numbered step.