

# Creating Really *Fabulous* Step-by-Step Instructions

(or All You Really Didn't Want To Know About Creating Step-By-Step Instructions  
But Were Afraid Some Technical Writer Would Tell You Anyway!)

## This mini-session covers:

- Time-saving shortcuts in MS Word to create and format documents.
- Writing clear, consistent step-by-step instructions.

## Use these time-saving functions:

- Turn on Show/Hide (the button with the paragraph symbol – ¶).
- Use AutoText liberally and frequently!
  1. Select text or characters (for example, Happy Valley Community College)
  2. Insert – AutoText – New
  3. Type a short (very short!) name for your AutoText entry (for example, **HV**)
  4. Whenever you want to enter that piece of AutoText, simply type **HV** and press the F3 key.
- Use the Highlight function (Tools – Options – View – Show Highlight checkbox)

## Use the following quick and easy keyboard shortcuts:

To obtain this result:	Use this shortcut:
Save	Ctrl/S
Copy	Ctrl/C
Paste	Ctrl/V
Cut (deletes – or with Paste, moves)	Ctrl/X
Indent entire paragraph one tab stop	Ctrl/M Undo: Ctrl/Shift/M
Outdent first line of paragraph, indent remainder of paragraph one tab stop (known as hanging indent; use with numbered and bulleted list items)	Ctrl/T Undo: Ctrl/Shift/T
Undo all indents and hanging indents (sets text back to left margin)	Ctrl/Q
Undo previous action	Ctrl/Z
Line break (with Show/Hide on, looks like this: ↵)	Shift/Enter
Repeat last action	F4
Check spelling	F7
Thesaurus look-up	Shift/F7
Bold	Ctrl/B
Italics	Ctrl/I
To change case of selected text (alternates among UPPERCASE, Upper and Lower case, and lower case)	Shift/F3
Go to beginning of document	Ctrl/Page Up
Go to end of document	Ctrl/Page Down

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For practice, you can type the text in the left-hand column. Use some of the shortcuts previously discussed. The comments in the right-hand column explain the word usage and format options that are demonstrated.

Practice Text	Comments
<p>1. Run DataExpress procedure XX9999R.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For Group, type <b>INFORM</b>; for Account, type <b>PLIB</b></li> <li>• At the Output File Format Options menu, type <b>29</b> (Dbase dbf format)</li> </ul> <p>DataExpress launches the procedure and extracts the data.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use an <i>imperative verb</i> to tell users what to do (for example, run, type, select, choose, press, click, save, and so forth).</li> <li>• Place all text that users will type in <b>boldface</b>.</li> <li>• Place any additional information that users need for a step in <i>feedback</i> statements. Begin feedback statements on a line below the step; indent to align with the text in step instruction.</li> <li>• Place information about what results from the action in the step (for example, processing information) in feedback statements.</li> </ul>
<p>2. At the Download/Save prompt, press the Enter key to accept the default (D to download).</p>	<p>Give the users <i>location</i> information (<i>where</i> they should be or <i>what</i> they should see) before telling them what to do (the imperative verb!).</p>
<p>3. At the PC File Name prompt, type the file path and file name, for example, C:/mydocs/XX9999</p>	<p>Include examples. Examples help give meaning to otherwise abstract information.</p>
<p>4. Press the Enter key to start the download process.</p> <p>When the download process has finished, the message “Download complete” is displayed.</p>	<p>Use a feedback statement to describe the results of an action, for example, a screen is displayed, a message is displayed, and so forth.</p>
<p>5. Minimize your Reflection window.</p> <p>The extracted data in the minimized window can be reused if necessary.</p>	<p>Another feedback statement.</p>

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Practice Text	Comments
6. Open MS Access.	
7. If the KITKAT database is saved on your hard drive, open it now. -OR- If you opened and minimized the KITKAT database, open it now.  The KITKAT database window is displayed on your screen. Tabs for Tables, Queries, and Reports are displayed at the top of the window.  Now you're ready to import the XX9999 extract file.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give users <i>conditional</i> information (for example, “if” statements) before telling them what to do (the imperative verb!)</li> <li>• Separate two option statements by placing them on new lines separated by <b>-OR-</b></li> <li>• A feedback statement</li> <li>• Another feedback statement!</li> </ul>
8. From the File menu, click Get External Data and then Import.  The Import window is displayed.	Give users <i>location</i> information before telling them what to do.
9. Click the Queries tab.	Keep GUI (graphical user interface) information simple; avoid fancy formatting. Capitalize menu and button labels; spell them exactly as they appear on the screen.
10. Click the Design button.	
11. To print, click the printer icon. -OR- From the File menu, click Print.	Tell users what the resulting action will be <i>before</i> telling them what to do, for example, To eat, open mouth and insert food.

### Summary: Writing Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Use imperative verbs to tell users what to do.
2. Give location (*where* users should be) and conditional information (*if* statements) before telling users what to do.
3. If appropriate, tell users what the result of the action will be before telling them what to do (for example, *to print*, select the blue button).
4. Write a feedback statement for a step to give users additional information about the step or to describe what will happen after the step (for example, the data entry screen is displayed).