

Break the Code for Precise Directions

The graphic organizer on pages 82–83 contains information from this chapter about designing and using precise directions. It seems like a lot, but it really isn't when you get used to it. Using the notes and examples, plan several sets of precise directions and write them in the second column. Remember to be as brief as possible. Once completed, practice saying your precise directions in front of the mirror and then in the car on your way to work. Perfect practice promotes perfect delivery, and far more of your students will be on task and engaged!

Type	Directions	Example	Notes
Tell students what to do and how to do it using a strong teacher voice and an attention-getting signal (AGS).		Ring a bell.	The AGS is a code for precise directions. You will need to explicitly teach this to students, as you will use it often to get their attention.
Identify movement.		"Turn to your partner."	What are students doing with their bodies?
Identify voice level.		"In voice-level one . . ."	What are students doing with their mouths?
Identify participation.		"Discuss two character traits for the main character and how you anticipate they will affect the plot."	What are students doing with their brains?

<p>Provide a time frame.</p>		<p>"You have four minutes."</p>	<p>Think about how much time is necessary for students to complete this task.</p>
<p>Explain what students should do when they are done.</p>		<p>"Silently log your and your partner's ideas in your character journal."</p>	<p>Depending on how much time there is, you may want students to sit silently but be cognizant of wasting time.</p>
<p>Check for understanding.</p>		<p>"What is the voice level, student A? What are we discussing, student B? How much time do we have, student C?"</p>	<p>Once the check for understanding is complete, say <i>go</i> to get students started, and immediately narrate about students getting to work.</p>
<p>Cue students to start.</p>		<p>"When I say go . . ." "When I welcome you in . . ."</p>	<p>This is important so students don't start moving until all your directions are completed.</p>