

MANUALS WRITING

Graphics for 'What is a procedure?' blog

Professional Word Services website, www.profwordservices.com.au

Step-action table (plain)

Action steps tell readers exactly what actions to perform, rather than having to make decisions. Use brief, direct language and state specifically what action is to be performed.

Step	Action
1	Put on sterile latex gloves.
2	Carefully remove the bandage from the wound using ...
3	Use X and Y to gently clean the wound using Z. (etc.)

Step-action table (with decision steps)

Decision steps are steps within a procedure where readers must take different actions depending on specific conditions.

Step	Action
1	Put on sterile latex gloves.
2	Carefully remove the bandage from the wound using ... IF the wound shows signs of infection, THEN you must ... If there is no infection, move to step 3.
3	Use X and Y to gently clean the wound using Z. (etc.)

If/then table (decision table)

Two columns, 'If' (the condition) and 'Then' (the action) define how to carry out the procedure.

If ... (conditions column)	Then ... (actions column)
The bandage is unsoiled ...	You do not need to change it
If the wound is weeping ...	[take this action]
If the wound is infected ...	[take this action]

Step-action-result

The step-action-result table is a good option for a more complex procedure where successful completion of a step may not always be obvious and more guidance is needed.

Step	Action	Result
1		(Result of action taken; shows procedure is on track)
2		
3		

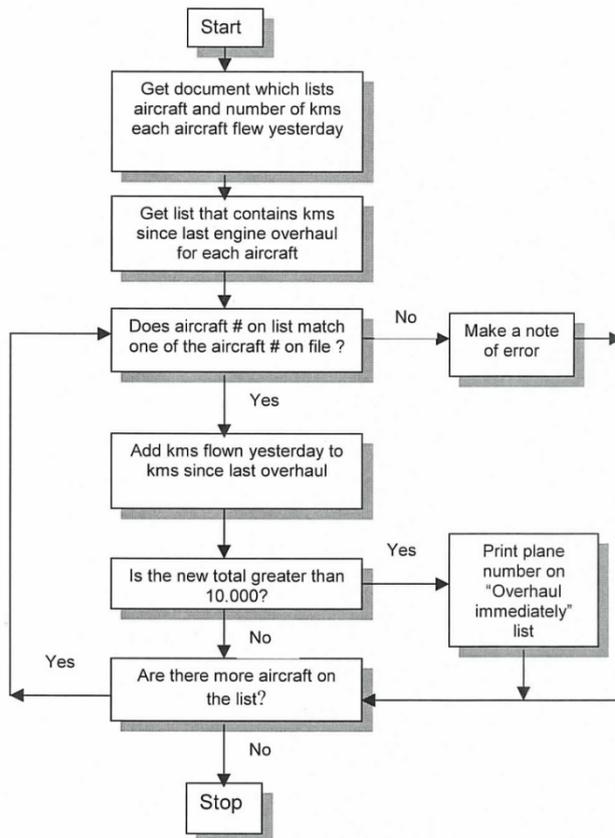
Specialised procedure tables

A specialised procedure table could be a checklist for an activity, a worksheet, or an expanded procedure table that organises a larger task by using a task/description table as an overview followed by several procedure tables associated with each task.

A **flow chart** can be used for a graphic presentation of a procedure.

Example

Procedure Use this flow chart as your procedure for checking aeroplane mileage.



Example of a procedure table

Step	Action
1	<p>Key in RF, followed by a comma, followed by a 7-digit file number and press ENTER.</p> <p>Example: RF,7034265</p> <p>Result: Name and file number will appear on the screen.</p>
2	<p>Do the name and number on the screen match the name and number on the list?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If yes, go to step 3 • If no, mark the incorrect record for your supervisors attention and repeat step 1 for the next record.
3	<p>Key in PRT and press ENTER.</p> <p>Result: File begins printing and the words FILE PRINTING appear on the screen.</p>
4	<p>Key in DFC and press ENTER.</p>
5	<p>Key in the following message directly under the employee name:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Printed copy of file at regional office.</p>
6	<p>Key in UF and press ENTER.</p>
7	<p>Repeat steps 1 through 6 until all names have been processed.</p>
8	<p>Retrieve printouts of file contents from printer.</p>
9	<p>Store all printed copies in locked file cabinet.</p>