

# Memo

To: All Technical Communication Students  
From: Alison Witte  
Date: February 8, 2017  
Re: How to complete the Dots project

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The purpose of this memo is to provide you with instructions on how to complete the “Dots” project.

## Summary

In groups, you will write, evaluate, and revise clear and precise instructions for assembling an interesting structure that you create. You will observe other students assembling your structure. You will then add images to your instructions and revise the text using what you’ve learned during your observation. Finally, you will write an individual memo reflecting on what you’ve learned.

## Materials Needed

1. A digital camera (phones are acceptable)
2. Building materials provided by your instructor.

## How to Complete the Assembly Instructions Project

- *Task I: Assembly*
  1. Assemble an interesting, three dimensional structure out of the materials provided by your instructor. You must use **at least 40 dots** in your structure. Note: simplistic structures such as “cubes” or “houses” are not allowed.
  2. Take photographs or make drawings of each step of the assembly of your structure and of the completed structure. You may want to take photographs from several different angles and perspectives.
  3. When you are finished, count out the number of dots and toothpicks that another group will need to assemble your structure. Put these in a box your instructor will provide for you. Then, give the materials and your completed structure to your instructor.
- *Task II: Drafting*
  1. Compose a title for your instructions, using either the gerund or how-to form.
  2. Compose numbered step-by-step instructions for assembling your structure. Steps should be written in the imperative mood and should be in strict chronological order.
  3. Bring **FOUR** copies of your completed instructions to class **Monday, February 13**, when we will be conducting usability testing.

- *Task III: Testing*
  - SILENTLY observe another group attempting to follow your instructions.
  - Make detailed notes on effective and ineffective elements of your instructions and on where graphics would make your instructions more understandable.
- *Task IV: Revision*
  1. Review your notes from Step III, identifying any areas where the other group was confused or had difficulty carrying out the steps.
  2. Revise your step-by-step instructions so that they are clear, unambiguous, chronological, and written in the imperative mood.
  3. Identify places where images would make your instructions clearer and add images. Make sure that your images are **titled** (figure 1, figure 2, etc.) and that you reference them by title in your instructions. For example, say “see figure 2,” rather than “see the picture below.”
  4. If necessary, revise your title so that it is simple, clear, and in the how-to or gerund form.
  5. Draft an introduction that includes (1) a clear purpose, (2) a graphic of the completed project, and (3) a list of necessary components.

### **Due Dates and Submission Notes**

- Four copies of draft instructions (no images) for usability testing class period on **Monday February 13.**
  - **Note: If you do not bring four copies of your test version (with NO images) on the due date, you can only receive up to ½ credit for your project.**
- Final Draft (with images): **One digital copy per group is due at the beginning of class period on Monday February 20.**