Quiz

1) Which sentence has the correct imperative form?
   a) Put a minimum of four eggs per omelette.
   b) Use a minimum of four eggs per omelette.
   c) Pour a minimum of four eggs per omelette.

2) Which is the correct use of a linking word?
   a) Lightly beat the eggs; put them into the pan.
   b) Lightly beat the eggs; and pour them into the pan.
   c) Lightly beat the eggs; then pour them into the pan.

3) Which process is best described here?
   a) I heat the oil.
   b) You heat the oil.
   c) Just heat the oil.
Answers

1) b) **Use** a minimum of four eggs per omelette.

2) c) Lightly beat the eggs; **then** pour them into the pan.

3) b) **You** heat the oil.
Transcript

Callum
Hello. I'm Callum Robertson and today's How To is all about describing a process: describing a series of instructions that, when completed, create a finished thing.

There are many situations where you might want to do this, but a simple example is a recipe: describing how to make a particular kind of dish – a particular kind of food.

Anita Cormac was one of our guests on our 2007 webcast about cooking. Listen to part of her instructions on how to make the perfect omelette. How many different instructions are there? How many different things are you told to do?

EXAMPLE
Anita
Use a minimum of four eggs per omelette. You need a little bit of oil in the bottom of a non-stick omelette pan, and just heat the oil – not too much heat – just heat it, and then put just one tablespoon of water in with the egg and just mix the eggs up: just lightly beat them with the fork and then pour that into the hot pan, all of it.

Callum: There were 5 different instructions. Did you get them all? Let's listen one by one. As you listen this time pay attention to the verb form that she uses. What is it? Here's the first one:

EXAMPLE
Anita
Use a minimum of four eggs.

Callum
‘Use a minimum of four eggs.’ This is the first instruction. The verb is ‘use’. Here's the next:

EXAMPLE
Anita
Heat the oil – not too much heat – just heat it.

Callum
‘Heat the oil – not too much heat – just heat it.’ The same instruction is repeated here with the verb – heat. Here’s the third instruction:

**EXAMPLE**
Anita
Put just one tablespoon of water in with the egg.

**Callum**
‘Put just one tablespoon of water in with the egg.’ The verb is ‘put’. Coming now is the fourth instruction. There are actually two different verbs here, but they refer to the same action.

**EXAMPLE**
Anita
Mix the eggs up: just lightly beat them with a fork.

**Callum**
‘Mix the eggs – beat them with a fork.’ The verbs are ‘mix’ and ‘beat’. And now the final instruction:

**EXAMPLE**
Anita
Pour that into the hot pan.

**Callum**
‘Pour that into the pan.’ The verb is ‘pour’.

In each of these examples the verb form is the same. It’s what we call the imperative and it’s very simple to make: it’s just the infinitive of the verb without ‘to’. You’ll also notice another feature of these examples of the imperative is that there is no subject. She doesn’t say ‘you’ or ‘we’; she just uses the imperative. This is very, very common when describing how to do or make something. Let’s listen again to Anita:

**EXAMPLE**
Anita
Use a minimum of four eggs per omelette. You need a little bit of oil in the bottom of a non-stick omelette pan, and just heat the oil – not too much heat – just heat it, and then put just one tablespoon of water in with the egg and just
mix the eggs up: just lightly beat them with the fork and then pour that into the hot pan, all of it.

**Callum**
Now, we’ve seen that when describing a process or giving instructions, as in a recipe, the imperative is used. But when giving these kinds of instructions we usually say more than just a list of imperative sentences. It makes instructions easier to follow if we link the instructions together and give some information as to the order that they should happen. Listen again to part of the instructions again. This time, don’t concentrate on the verbs but focus on what Anita says when moving from one instruction to another. She uses two different linking words; what are they?

**EXAMPLE**
Anita
And just heat the oil, and then put just one tablespoon of water – not milk – in with the egg and just mix the eggs up, and then pour that into the hot pan – all of it.

**Callum**
Did you catch them? They’re very quick and not stressed at all, so it’s easy to miss them. Here they are by themselves.

**EXAMPLE**
Anita
And –
And then –
And –
And then –

**Callum**
She uses ‘and’ and also ‘and then’. Listen again to them by themselves and then in the flow of what she says.

**EXAMPLES**
Anita
And –
And then –
And –
And then –

And just heat the oil, and then put just one tablespoon of water – not milk – in with the egg and just mix the eggs up, and then pour that into the hot pan – all of it.

Callum
‘And’ and ‘then’ are two very simple, but very common and natural linking words: particularly useful when giving a series of instructions. As you’ve heard, they are not stressed; that helps to maintain the natural flow and rhythm of speech.

Now there are many other different linking words that we can use when we are describing processes and giving instructions, but we’ll look at some more of those in another programme.

That’s all we have time for in this edition of How To and if you want to learn how to make the perfect omelette you can download Anita’s full instructions from the website.