

# The Brida Journal

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**Ideas and Conversations, for and by learners of English.**

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## Giving Instructions

*Julia, from Mannheim, Germany, describes her rather unusual job.*

I write manuals, instruction manuals, explaining to operators how to use a machine or any other equipment. Currently I am writing about a conveyor belt vehicle. You will have seen them. This is a vehicle which is used to load or unload suitcases and luggage from planes.

Usually, a manual has a structure which is defined according to industrial standards. It always starts with a chapter on safety instructions. There are many references to the dangerous parts of the vehicle. The person who uses it should not find himself in danger.

You are informed about the clothing you should wear, special shoes, special glasses, the kind of safety equipment that is on the vehicle, the fire extinguisher, the signal lamps and noises you hear in dangerous situations.

This is followed by chapters on the vehicle's construction and how it operates. You learn how to use different parts of the vehicle.

Then, there are different sections for different people. For example, the driver has his set of instructions but the person doing the maintenance will have another set of instructions. By the time it is all finished, the manual will have about 100 pages in total.

Before writing, I need familiarize myself with the device or machine I am going to write about. This is usually done by going to the client's company. With the conveyor belt vehicle, we needed to have a strict plan because we only had 2-3 hours to use the vehicle. So, preparation was of the essence.

One thing on our list was that we needed information about the display in the driver's cab. The preceding model did not have a display. But there were also other things: the movable barriers which you can fold down for bulky luggage. We did not know how to do this. We made a video to look at again when we were back in the office. We also take photos and use these to help us write the manual. But before anything happens, we need to obtain a declaration of consent from our customer.

What I find interesting is that you have to explain something in an understandable manner but still use the correct terminology. Sometimes, this can be a contradiction. You have to find an acceptable way to apply all the rules and still keep it understandable.

Here is an example of a discussion we had about which word to use. The word was the German word for “indicator”, the blinking light to show when the vehicle changes direction. Should we say “blinker” or “Fahrtrichtungsanzeiger”. This was quite important because in the field of technical documentation you have to use the correct terms. But you also want to write an understandable manual. If the user cannot understand what the operator has to do, then the manual is not a good manual. The easy option would be to use the word “blinker”, because this is a commonly used word. But actually, it is technically incorrect. We had a long discussion in the office, and finally we reached a compromise. We used “Fahrtrichtungsanzeiger” followed by the word “blinker” in brackets.

To help us, we use a library of correct terminology which we constantly update. It is integrated into our technical writing software and works like a spellchecker. If I use an incorrect word, it will give me a correction. But the library has to be used with care, as our “blinker” example showed.

But, to understand how the equipment works you also have to talk to the constructors and ask many questions. Over time, we generate long lists of questions and we send them to the constructors. We have meetings over the phone or face to face, which is important because an answer can often lead to another question and so on.

You really have to be like a detective and find out how things work. You have to be curious and this can be challenging because with this particular client, they have different departments which specialize in different parts of the vehicle. We have many research sources. Often, we get unfinished documents, we get lots of information at different levels of completion. Sometimes you have to go into an unstructured world. It is like a big jigsaw puzzle, finding all the right pieces. And hoping that there are not more pieces than originally expected. When a 500-piece puzzle suddenly has 501 pieces, then that is not good!

Because manuals are so important and can have far reaching consequences, I had to reacquaint myself with the language and the grammar of my native language (German). There are certain rules and grammatical standards in technical writing. For example, if there are warnings, you want to address the user directly, so you have to use the imperative form. You should not use reflexive verbs because it should be really clear and easy to understand. Before I started this job, my knowledge of grammar was a little rusty. We also have to proofread each other’s texts. You cannot just say when you think something should be changed. You have to give a clear grammatical reason.

I can say, it is an interesting job. I learn a lot which gives me enormous satisfaction.

# Tour de France, Stage 8

## Charente Maritime 3, Île de Ré

Before we leave Charente Maritime, it is worth stopping to explore the Il de Ré.

To get a bird's eye view of the whole island, why not climb up the lighthouse, "Le Phare des Baleines". Probably the nicest way to get around the island at a leisurely pace is to rent a bicycle. And on the way, you can stop off at some of the more fascinating things on offer.

The Atelier Quillet ([www.quillet.fr](http://www.quillet.fr)) is a small company which restores old documents, manuscripts and books, often using gold leaf. Next, visit the soap makers. They make soap from donkey's or goat's milk. <https://www.savonneriedere.fr/>

By now, you will probably be thirsty. Time to stop for a beer. The local craft brewery was established in 1996. Being rather innovative, they developed new products such as the "Blonde au Miel de l'Abeille de Ré à Loix" (The blond honey from the Ré at Loix).

It was awarded the gold medal at the Agricultural Trade Fair in Paris in 2018. Cheers!  
<https://www.bieresdere.fr/home/>

Now that your thirst has been quenched why not go to the salt marshes, visit the eco museum and learn about how the salt workers produce salt. <http://marais-salant.com/html/home.html>.

Another interesting place to visit is the old **apothecary**. In a splendid room, you can see a large selection of curious pots and jars. Among them, are different types of jars such as small jars for preserving liquid preparations and cannon jars for ointments. All the pieces are from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

This is only a small selection of curious and unusual things to discover. Naturally, there are many other activities and historical buildings for you to explore and enjoy. Don't forget to taste the local oysters and fruits de mer.

In Châtaillon-Plage you can admire the beach and the belle epoch architecture of some of the houses. The activities include sailing, cycling and spa treatments not to mention the many festivals as well. It is a typical beach resort.

I leave Charente Maritime now and start cycling east. Next stop Poitiers. See you then.



## Chicken breast wrapped in bacon

Ingredients (for 2)	Method
<p>2 chicken breast fillets            10 slices of bacon            1 sprig of rosemary            1 garlic clove            a little olive oil            a little salt and pepper</p> <p>Preparation time approx. 10 minutes            Cooking/baking time approx. 20 minutes            Total time approx. 30 minutes</p>	<p>First wash the chicken breasts, pat them dry with some kitchen paper and lightly pepper them. Place 5 slices of bacon per chicken breast on the work surface and wrap the chicken breast in it.</p> <p>Now heat the oil in the pan, add the crushed garlic cloves and the sprigs of rosemary and fry the chicken breasts for about 4 minutes on all sides.</p> <p>In the meantime, preheat the oven to 160 °C top/bottom heat. Now put the fillets in the oven to finish cooking for about 10 to 12 minutes.</p> <p>Serve with a crisp salad or seasonal vegetables.</p>



Keeping fit during the winter is a little hard especially during these times.

I like to hike to keep in shape for my tennis game in the spring and summer. So, if there is a similar person out there interested in going on hikes once a week during early afternoon on Thursdays or Fridays.

I like hiking in all areas if the rain doesn't get the trails too muddy. Fit middle age.

Phone / Text me: 07.xx.15.96.63

Email: [hiker@brida.eu](mailto:hiker@brida.eu)



## Our special offers for this week. Start the year looking good

Men's white invisible socks  
Size 7 - 11  
5 Pack €6.59

Pure cashmere  
crew neck jumper, green  
€22.50

Cotton Trunks, Black  
3 per pack €14.40

Cool & fresh  
striped socks.  
7 per pack €8.00

Super soft dressing gown  
Navy, €22.12

Pure cotton  
Striped pyjama set  
€18.75

Maternity Fitted Scoop  
Two per pack, black mix  
€11.25

Disney villains  
Sleep mask €4.66

Soft knit scarves  
One size, black €8.75

Pink face covering  
S/M 3 per pack €8.49

Harry Potter Hogwarts  
Colour Change Umbrella €9.99

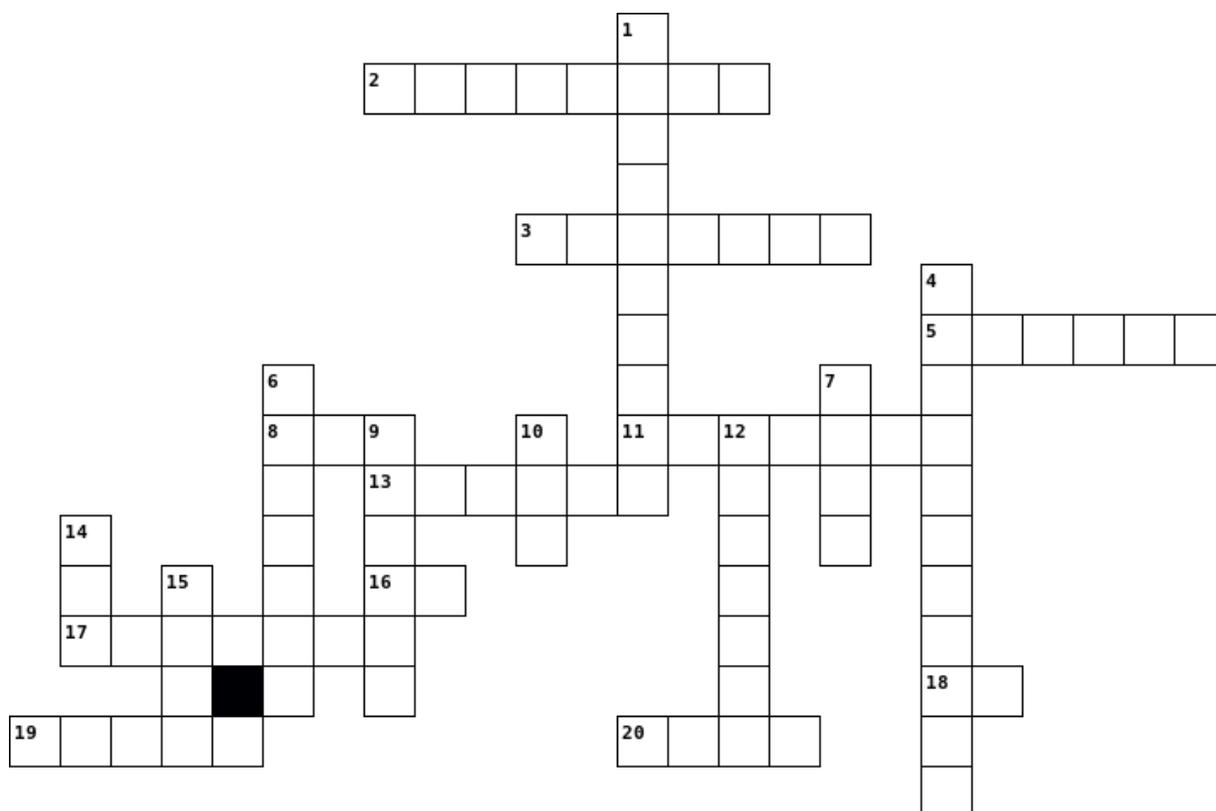
Girls Cotton Rich  
Bunny Print Joggers  
€5.33

Baby boy's body suit  
0 – 24 months, €9.96

Cotton Printed  
dribble bibs.  
5 per Pack €4.00

Baby girls cotton dress  
0 – 3 years €8.00

# The Crossword



**Across**

2. Vegetables which are in season are .....
3. The river flows .... the deep valley.
5. Sorry, but I ..... the information yesterday.
8. I .... to learn new skills in 2020.
11. Travelling is a great way to ..... the world.
13. To remove things from a truck.
16. The best restaurants are .... Paris.
17. The article was ..... by Thomas.
18. You are ... danger.
19. putting words to paper.
20. Serve ..... a salad.

**Down**

1. I am ..... technology.
4. I find technology very .....
6. I am .....! Do you have a glass of water?
7. You ..... paper in origami.
9. Keep fit ..... the winter months
10. .... does it work?
12. Before starting to cook ..... the oven to 180°C.
14. Yesterday, I ..... Thomas.
15. Organised people have a to do ....

**Solution 52.20****Across**

7. partnership.
9. Craftmanship.
11. Internship.
12. Championship.
13. Penmanship.
14. Kinship.
15. Apprenticeship.
16. Membership.
19. Ownership.
20. Mastership.

**Down**

1. Workmanship.
2. Horsemanship.
3. Relationship.
4. Dictatorship.
5. Friendship.
6. Citizenship.
8. Sportsmanship.
10. Leadership.
17. Scholarship.
18. Readership.

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## Improve your English with the Brida Journal

All the texts come with lessons. Whilst the Journal is free of charge, the lessons do come with a low fee to cover the cost of my time and work.

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**The Brida Journal** is an educational tool with the purpose of helping learners to improve their knowledge of English. Educators wishing to participate in the programme should contact me via email.

### Third Party Inspirational Sources

classifieds: gumtree.ie or gumtree.co.uk,  
the supermarket: various supermarket websites in the United Kingdom