

(Or use a synonym for *procuring*, such as *attaining*, *landing*, or *getting*.) Write to an audience of college students similar to yourself. Incorporate at least three numbered steps, as does Franklin, and, if your instructor requires it, also make a point using both a comparison (such as Franklin's comparison using the Black Hole of Calcutta) and made-up or actual dialogue (such as Franklin's dialogue between the angel and Methuselah).

(NOTE: Suggestions for topics requiring development by PROCESS ANALYSIS are on pp. 249–250 at the end of this chapter.)

IAN FRAZIER

IAN FRAZIER was born in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1951. He graduated from Harvard University in 1973 and soon after joined the staff of *The New Yorker*, where he wrote for the "Talk of the Town" section and published a variety of feature stories and humorous articles. He is known both for his success as a humorist and for employing a matter-of-fact, first-person narrative style when discussing topics that range from personal hobbies to history and life in the American West. Some of his other notable works include *Dating Your Mom* (1986), *Nobody Better, Better than Nobody* (1987), *Great Plains* (1989), *Family* (1994), *Coyote vs. Acme* (1996), *On the Rez* (2000), *The Fish's Eye* (2002), *Lamentations of the Father* (2008), and *Travels in Siberia* (2010).

How to Operate the Shower Curtain

One technique of humorous writing is to take a simple activity and explain it in such extensive, often irrelevant detail, that the explanation becomes ridiculous and funny. This technique pokes fun at the kinds of silly or pompous instructions and similar forms of writing we often encounter as well as the kinds of foolish situations we often find ourselves in. Sometimes writing of this sort includes parody, taking the form of serious writing but with exaggerated or outlandish content. That is the case with this essay from *The New Yorker*. It takes the form of a set of instructions but overstates them and includes loosely related details that poke fun at contemporary habits and customs while pointing out that we sometimes rely on written instructions when simple common sense might provide better guidance.

Dear Guest: The shower curtain in this bathroom has been purchased with care at a reputable "big box" store in order to provide maximum convenience in showering. After you have read these instructions, you will find with a little practice that our shower curtain is as easy to use as the one you have at home. 1

You'll note that the shower curtain consists of several parts. The top hem, closest to the ceiling, contains a series of regularly spaced holes designed for the insertion of shower-curtain rings. As this part receives much of the everyday strain of usage, it must be handled correctly. Grasp the shower curtain by its leading edge and gently pull until it is flush with the wall. Step into the tub, if you have not already done so. Then take the other edge of shower curtain and cautiously pull it in opposite direction until it, too, adjoins the wall. A little moisture between shower curtain and wall tiles will help curtain to stick. 2

Keep in mind that normal bathing will cause you unavoidably to bump against shower curtain, which may cling to you for a moment owing to the natural adhesiveness of water. Some guests find the sensation of wet plastic on their naked flesh upsetting, and overreact to it. Instead, pinch the shower curtain between your thumb and forefinger near where it is adhering to you and simply move away from it until it is disengaged. Then, with the ends of your fingers, push it back to where it is supposed to be.

If shower curtain reattaches itself to you, repeat process above. Under certain atmospheric conditions, a convection effect creates air currents outside shower curtain which will press it against you on all sides no matter what you do. If this happens, stand directly under showerhead until bathroom microclimate stabilizes.

Many guests are surprised to learn that all water pipes in our system run off a single riser. This means that the opening of any hot or cold tap, or the flushing of a toilet, interrupts flow to shower. If you find water becoming extremely hot (or cold), exit tub promptly while using a sweeping motion with one arm to push shower curtain aside.

REMEMBER TO KEEP SHOWER CURTAIN *INSIDE* TUB AT ALL TIMES! Failure to do this may result in baseboard rot, wallpaper mildew, destruction of living-room ceiling below, and possible dripping onto catered refreshments at social event in your honor that you are about to attend. So be careful!

This shower curtain comes equipped with small magnets in the shape of disks which have been sewn into the bottom hem at intervals. These serve no purpose whatsoever and may be ignored. Please do not tamper with them. The vertical lines, or pleats, which you may have wondered about, are there for a simple reason: user safety. If you have to move from the tub fast, as outlined above, the easy accordion-type folding motion of the pleats makes that possible. The gray substance in some of the inner pleat folds is a kind of insignificant mildew, less toxic than what is found on some foreign cheeses.

When detaching shower curtain from clinging to you or when exiting tub during a change in water temperature, bear in mind that there are seventeen mostly empty plastic bottles of shampoo on tub edge next to wall. These bottles have accumulated in this area over time. Many have been set upside down in order to concentrate the last amounts of fluid in their cap mechanisms, and are balanced lightly. Inadvertent contact with a thigh or knee can cause all the bottles to be knocked over and to tumble into the tub or behind it. If this should somehow happen, we ask that you kindly pick the bottles up and put them back in the same order in which you found them. Thank you.

While picking up the bottles, a guest occasionally will lose his or her balance temporarily, and, in even rarer cases, fall. If you find this occurring, remember that panic is the enemy here. Let your body go limp, while reminding yourself that the shower curtain is not designed to bear your weight. Grabbing onto it will only complicate the situation.

If, in a "worst case" scenario, you do take hold of the shower curtain, and the curtain rings tear through the holes in the upper hem as you were warned they might, remain motionless and relaxed in the position in which you come to rest. If subsequently you hear a knock on the bathroom door, respond to any questions by saying either "Fine" or "No, I'm fine." When the questioner goes away, stand up, turn off shower, and lay shower curtain flat on floor and up against tub so you can see the extent of the damage. With a sharp object—a nail file, a pen, or your teeth—make new holes in top hem next to the ones that tore through.

Now lift shower curtain with both hands and reattach it to shower-curtain rings by unclipping, inserting, and reclipping them. If during this process the shower curtain slides down and again goes onto you, reach behind you to shelf under medicine cabinet, take nail file or curved fingernail scissors, and perform short, brisk slashing jabs on shower curtain to cut it back. It can always be repaired later with safety pins or adhesive tape from your toiletries kit.

At this point, you may prefer to get the shower curtain out of your way entirely by gathering it up with both arms and ripping it down with a sharp yank. Now place it in the waste receptacle next to the john. In order that anyone who might be overhearing you will know that you are still all right, sing "Fat Bottomed Girls," by Queen, as loudly as necessary. While waiting for tub to fill, wedge shower curtain into waste receptacle more firmly by treading it underfoot with a regular high-knee action as if marching in place.

We are happy to have you as our guest. There are many choices you could have made, but you are here, and we appreciate that. Operating the shower curtain is kind of tricky. Nobody is denying that. If you do not wish to deal with it, or if you would rather skip the whole subject for reasons you do not care to reveal, we accept your decision. You did not ask to be born. There is no need ever to touch the shower curtain again. If you would like to receive assistance, pound on the door, weep inconsolably, and someone will be along.

MEANINGS AND VALUES

1. At what point in this essay did you first become aware that it is not to be taken seriously, that it is, in fact, a parody? What specifically made you doubt the seriousness of the selection?
2. Choose two passages from the essay that can be considered examples of irony, and explain what makes them ironic. (See "Guide to Terms": *Irony*.)
3. This essay pokes fun at more than one subject. Review Paragraphs 3–6 carefully and identify as many targets of the humor as you can (including the "speaker" or persona in the essay, who seems to take simple things far too seriously). (Guide: *Persona*.)

EXPOSITORY TECHNIQUES

1. One important technique in this essay is the creation of a persona, the person in the essay appears to be addressing the reader ("Dear Guest:" Par. 1) but who is in fact separate from the actual writer of the essay. Make a list of the apparent character traits and values of this persona. Indicate those which the essay appears to make fun of or criticize. (Guide: *Persona*.)
2. To what extent do the techniques in this essay move beyond simple humor into satire? Be ready to explain your answer by referring to specific sections of the text. For a definition of satire, see Guide: *Satire*.
3. Exaggeration is a frequent technique in humor and satire. Identify the exaggerations in Paragraphs 8–10 and tell for what purpose the writer seems to be using them. (Guide: *Purpose*.)

DICTION AND VOCABULARY

1. The vocabulary in this selection often seems to be more formal and technical than the subject requires. Identify any such terms in Paragraph 2. (Guide: *Diction*.) Explain how the writer uses these terms to poke fun at the speaker (persona), readers who take the piece seriously, or both. (Guide: *Persona*.)
2. The last sentence in Paragraph 6 uses several words and phrases to poke fun at people who take cleanliness to extremes and at people who may fail to see a contrast between their cultural sophistication and their other values. What are these passages? State their meaning in your own words.
3. If you do not know the meaning of some of the following words, look them up in a dictionary: *reputable* (Par. 1); *hem* (2); *adhering* (3); *atmospheric, microclimate* (4); *riser* (5); *inconsolably* (13).

READ TO WRITE

1. **Collaborating:** Many of the experiences described in this essay are likely to have happened to readers, though few readers are likely to have experienced them all. Working with a group, identify those things that have happened to one or more members. Then decide if the essay can be considered somewhat realistic despite its exaggerations and humor.
2. **Considering Audience:** This essay takes experiences that most of us have encountered and looks at them humorously. Make a list of similar common experiences and explain why they are worth treating with humor or satire.
3. **Developing an Essay:** Following Frazier's example, create an essay using process analysis and a speaker, or persona, whose explanations are worth criticizing, or at least not worth taking seriously.

(NOTE: Suggestions for topics requiring development by PROCESS ANALYSIS are on pp. 249–250 at the end of this chapter.)

ERNEST HEMINGWAY

ERNEST HEMINGWAY (1889–1961) was an author and journalist whose fiction influenced other writers because of its understated style. His first novel, *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), was greeted as gripping, lean, hard, and athletic. Born in Oak Park, Illinois, to a physician father and musician mother, he served as an ambulance driver in World War I, wrote fiction in Paris in the 1920s, and was a war-news correspondent in the 1930s during the Spanish Civil War. In the 1940s, he lived in Cuba and went on safari in Africa. Hemingway received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1954. His other major works include *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940), and *The Old Man and the Sea* (1951).

Camping Out

Ernest Hemingway was proud of his reputation as an outdoorsman and athlete, and he cultivated a virile persona. In this selection, originally published in *The Toronto Daily Star* on June 26, 1920, he offers some succinct advice on how to camp like a man.

Thousands of people will go into the bush this summer to cut the high cost of living. A man who gets his two weeks' salary while he is on vacation should be able to put those two weeks in fishing and camping and be able to save one week's salary clear. He ought to be able to sleep comfortably every night, to eat well every day and to return to the city rested and in good condition.

But if he goes into the woods with a frying pan, an ignorance of black flies and mosquitoes, and a great and abiding lack of knowledge about cookery, the chances are that his return will be very different. He will come back with enough mosquito bites to make the back of his neck look like a relief map of the Caucasus. His digestion will be wrecked after a valiant battle to assimilate half-cooked or charred grub. And he won't have had a decent night's sleep while he has been gone.

He will solemnly raise his right hand and inform you that he has joined the grand army of never-agains. The call of the wild may be all right, but it's a dog's life. He's heard the call of the tame with both ears. Waiter, bring him an order of milk toast.

In the first place he overlooked the insects. Black flies, no-see-ums, deer flies, gnats and mosquitoes were instituted by the devil to force people to live in cities where he could get at them better. If it

weren't for them everybody would live in the bush and he would be out of work. It was a rather successful invention.

But there are lots of dopes that will counteract the pests. The simplest perhaps is oil of citronella. Two bits' worth of this purchased at any pharmacist's will be enough to last for two weeks in the worst fly and mosquito-ridden country.

Rub a little on the back of your neck, your forehead and your wrists before you start fishing, and the blacks and skeeters will shun you. The odor of citronella is not offensive to people. It smells like gun oil. But the bugs do hate it.

Oil of pennyroyal and eucalyptol are also much hated by mosquitoes, and with citronella they form the basis for many proprietary preparations. But it is cheaper and better to buy the straight citronella. Put a little on the mosquito netting that covers the front of your pup tent or canoe tent at night, and you won't be bothered.

To be really rested and get any benefit out of a vacation a man must get a good night's sleep every night. The first requisite for this is to have plenty of cover. It is twice as cold as you expect it will be in the bush four nights out of five, and a good plan is to take just double the bedding that you think you will need. An old quilt that you can wrap up in is as warm as two blankets.

Nearly all outdoor writers rhapsodize over the browse bed. It is all right for the man who knows how to make one and has plenty of time. But in a succession of one-night camps on a canoe trip all you need is level ground for your tent floor and you will sleep all right if you have plenty of covers under you. Take twice as much cover as you think that you will need, and then put two-thirds of it under you. You will sleep warm and get your rest.

When it is clear weather you don't need to pitch your tent if you are only stopping for the night. Drive four stakes at the head of your made-up bed and drape your mosquito bar over that, then you can sleep like a log and laugh at the mosquitoes.

Outside of insects and bum sleeping the rock that wrecks most camping trips is cooking. The average tyro's idea of cooking is to fry everything and fry it good and plenty. Now, a frying pan is a most necessary thing to any trip, but you also need the old stew kettle and the folding reflector baker.

A pan of fried trout can't be bettered and they don't cost any more than ever. But there is a good and bad way of frying them.

The beginner puts his trout and his bacon in and over a brightly burning fire; the bacon curls up and dries into a dry tasteless cinder

and the trout is burned outside while it is still raw inside. He eats them and it is all right if he is only out for the day and going home to a good meal at night. But if he is going to face more trout and bacon the next morning and other equally well-cooked dishes for the remainder of two weeks he is on the pathway to nervous dyspepsia.

The proper way is to cook over coals. Have several cans of Crisco or Cotosuet or one of the vegetable shortenings along that are as good as lard and excellent for all kinds of shortening. Put the bacon in and when it is about half cooked lay the trout in the hot grease, dipping them in corn meal first. Then put the bacon on top of the trout and it will baste them as it slowly cooks.

The coffee can be boiling at the same time and in a smaller skillet pancakes being made that are satisfying the other campers while they are waiting for the trout.

With the prepared pancake flours you take a cupful of pancake flour and add a cup of water. Mix the water and flour and as soon as the lumps are out it is ready for cooking. Have the skillet hot and keep it well greased. Drop the batter in and as soon as it is done on one side loosen it in the skillet and flip it over. Apple butter, syrup or cinnamon and sugar go well with the cakes.

While the crowd have taken the edge from their appetites with flapjacks the trout have been cooked and they and the bacon are ready to serve. The trout are crisp outside and firm and pink inside and the bacon is well done—but not too done. If there is anything better than that combination the writer has yet to taste it in a lifetime devoted largely and studiously to eating.

The stew kettle will cook your dried apricots when they have resumed their predried plumpness after a night of soaking, it will serve to concoct a mulligan in, and it will cook macaroni. When you are not using it, it should be boiling water for the dishes.

In the baker, mere man comes into his own, for he can make a pie that to his bush appetite will have it all over the product that mother used to make, like a tent. Men have always believed that there was something mysterious and difficult about making a pie. Here is a great secret. There is nothing to it. We've been kidded for years. Any man of average office intelligence can make at least as good a pie as his wife.

All there is to a pie is a cup and a half of flour, one-half teaspoonful of salt, one-half cup of lard and cold water. That will make pie crust that will bring tears of joy into your camping partner's eyes.

Mix the salt with the flour, work the lard into the flour, make it up into a good workmanlike dough with cold water. Spread some flour on the back of a box or something flat, and pat the dough around a while. Then roll it out with whatever kind of round bottle you prefer. Put a little more lard on the surface of the sheet of dough and then slosh a little flour on and roll it up and then roll it out again with the bottle.

Cut out a piece of the rolled out dough big enough to line a pie tin. I like the kind with holes in the bottom. Then put in your dried apples that have soaked all night and been sweetened, or your apricots, or your blueberries, and then take another sheet of the dough and drape it gracefully over the top, soldering it down at the edges with your fingers. Cut a couple of slits in the top dough sheet and prick it a few times with a fork in an artistic manner.

Put it in the baker with a good slow fire for forty-five minutes and then take it out and if your pals are Frenchmen they will kiss you. The penalty for knowing how to cook is that the others will make you do all the cooking.

It is all right to talk about roughing it in the woods. But the real woodsman is the man who can be really comfortable in the bush.

MEANINGS AND VALUES

1. What does the writer say are the advantages of camping out his way?
2. What is the significance of the sentence, "Waiter, bring him an order of milk toast" (Par. 3)?
3. What is the difference, according to the writer, between merely "roughing it" and being "really comfortable" on a camping trip?

EXPOSITORY TECHNIQUES

1. What process is the author describing when he uses the step-by-step method of process analysis?
2. In your opinion, why does the writer think his process analysis is worth sharing? What is he trying to communicate, in your opinion, aside from the practical steps of camping comfortably and efficiently?
3. Hemingway describes in detail the process of making a pie. Do you think the steps are thorough enough that you could make a good pie yourself if you had the right equipment and followed them to the letter?

DICTION AND VOCABULARY

1. Hemingway frequently refers to the camping experience as "the bush," a phrase suggesting an uncivilized wilderness. Why do you think he chooses to use this term?
2. The writer seems sincerely interested in conveying helpful pointers about camping out, yet he uses a humorous tone throughout. Does this humorous tone help your understanding of the process he is analyzing, or does it get in the way? Explain.
3. If you do not know the meaning of some of the following words, consult a dictionary: *grub* (Par. 2); *proprietary* (7); *rhapsodize* (9); *tyro* (11); *dyspepsia* (13); *soldering* (22).

READ TO WRITE

1. **Collaborating:** In a group of writers, interview members about their experiences with camping. What was the process like? What do people in your group know now that they wish they had known then? As a group, write an anecdote based on one of the group members' stories that could be used as an introduction to an essay like the selection you have just read.
2. **Considering Audience:** Who is Hemingway's intended audience in this essay? How can you tell? What does he want this audience to learn from his process analysis? Do you think he reaches his intended audience successfully? How so?
3. **Developing an Essay:** Think of processes that in the past (or even today) have been considered typically masculine or typically feminine. Examples: changing a tire, painting a house, sewing, putting on makeup, mowing the lawn. Write an encouraging step-by-step process analysis that urges the nontraditional gender to try this activity.

(NOTE: Suggestions for topics requiring development by PROCESS ANALYSIS follow.)



Writing Suggestions for Chapter 7

ANALOGY

From one of the following topics, develop a central theme into an informational process analysis, showing:

1. How you selected a college
2. How you selected your future career or major field of study
3. How your family selected a home
4. How an unusual sport is played
5. How religious faith is achieved
6. How gasoline is made
7. How the air (or water) in _____ becomes polluted
8. How lightning kills
9. How foreign policy is made
10. How political campaigns are financed
11. How _____ was rebuilt
12. How fruit blossoms are pollinated
13. How a computer chip is designed or made

EVERYDAY USES

1. Choose a useful everyday activity that you can do well but that others often do poorly (or are unable to accomplish), and create an essay that uses process analysis to share your skills with readers.
2. Choose an activity at which you excel but others don't. Share your pleasure at this skill through an essay that uses process analysis to explain your ability and suggests ways that others might develop a similar skill.

COLLABORATIVE EXERCISES

1. As a group, write an informative paper on the process of completing a collaborative project. Consider how you plan team meetings, team tasks, team evaluations, and so on.