

Explanation Text

1. Use a question title.

Explanation texts usually explain how or why something happens. A question title works well to tell the reader what will be explained so they know what to expect.

2. Write an introduction.

A short introduction helps to tell the reader what the explanation is going to be about. Your child can summarise what they are writing about, include some fun facts about the topic and finish the paragraph with a sentence to encourage the reader to read on and find out more.

3. Use chronological order.

An explanation is usually in time order to explain the steps from start to finish so that it makes sense to the reader. Often, explanation texts will use subheadings for each section to break it into steps.

How is chocolate made?

It's no secret that most people love chocolate! **Did you know that every year we eat 7.2 million metric tons of chocolate?** To get into our mouths in the UK, chocolate **has** a long way to travel and there **are** lots of steps involved to **turn** it from a **cacao bean** into a delicious sweet treat. **Read on to find out what processes are involved in making chocolate.**

Raw Ingredients

Cacao pods grow on trees called **cacao trees**. Cacao trees grow near the **equator because** they **need** hot weather to survive. **As a result**, about 70% of the world's cacao pods are grown in Africa. **First**, the **cocoa farmers** must find and pick the pods from the trees. Cacao pods can grow high up in the tree **therefore** the farmers often **use ladders and machetes** (a type of knife) to **cut** them out of the trees. Did you know cacao pods are shaped like a rugby ball and often look green/yellow/orange/red while they are growing?



A cacao bean travels all the way from Africa.

4. Use time conjunctions.

This helps the reader to understand the order of the steps and show that the explanation is in chronological (time) order. Encourage your child to use words like 'before', 'after' and 'finally'.

5. Include a diagram and caption to support the explanation.

Pictures are often used to show steps of the process or to help the reader understand the explanation better. Ask your child to think about what picture might be useful - would you use more than one? Captions are a short phrase or sentence used to explain what is shown in the picture.

6. Use technical vocabulary.

This is vocabulary linked to the topic that you are talking about. Make sure your child is using the actual words for certain objects or processes. This can also help to ensure that your child is using sophisticated language.

Preparing the Beans

Cacao pods contain cacao beans which is the part that we **use** to make chocolate. **After** being removed from the trees, the **cacao farmers** carefully open the pods. If you **eat** the beans at this point, they **are** very **bitter since** they **need** to **ferment** and they **have** no sugar added yet.

Next, the beans **are** set aside and left for about a week to **ferment**. **Fermenting** the beans in the heat **takes** away the **bitterness** and **consequently** **makes** them taste sweeter. After the beans have **fermented**, they have to be left to **dry out**. They **are** laid out on a flat surface in **direct sunlight thus** the heat can dry them out. This takes approximately another week.

Cacao beans are laid out in the sun to ferment and dry out.



Finding the Nibs

Subsequently, the beans must **be roasted**. Once they are dry, they can be **transported** to the factory. **Roasting** the **cacao beans** can be done in a few ways, but usually the beans are roasted in a huge oven. This can take anywhere from 30 minutes to a few hours, depending on the oven and how much chocolate **needs** to be made!

Consequently, the beans **are** dry and roasted so they **are** ready for the next step. The **chocolate nibs** must be taken from the inside of the bean. To do this, the beans are **crushed** gently so that the **outer shell cracks** and **reveals** the **nibs** inside.

7. Use cause and effect conjunctions.

These will not only help your child to add more detail to their explanation, but it also ensures that they are writing an explanation (how and why) rather than instructions (how). Ask your child to include words such as 'because', 'so', 'therefore', 'thus' and 'consequently'.

8. Write in present tense.

Explanations are usually written in present tense, unless you are describing something historical. Make sure your child is using present tense verbs throughout their explanation.

8. Include a short conclusion.

A conclusion goes at the end of a piece of writing and is there to summarise what you have written about in the explanation. Your child only needs to write a short paragraph and see if they can link it back to the introduction.

Mixing the Ingredients

Next, the **cocoa nibs** must be **ground up**. This process can **take** a long time. A machine will **grind** the nibs to release the **cocoa butter**. **Cocoa butter** is like a **chocolate paste** and is what is mixed with other ingredients to **make** the chocolate.

At this point, the **cocoa butter** mixture **is** still **bitter** and **grainy so** it needs to be made sweeter. Factories add ingredients such as sugar and milk to **make** it sweet and creamy. **Then**, the mixture must be **pressed** repeatedly to turn it into **smooth**, liquid chocolate.



Once the mixture has been pressed, it starts to look like chocolate.

The Final Steps

Finally, the chocolate can be placed into a **mould**. **Before this happens**, factories **add flavourings** or other ingredients to turn it into a specific chocolate bar. The liquid chocolate is **then poured** into the moulds **therefore** taking its specific shape. This might be a bar or individual chocolates. Once the chocolate is set, it can then be wrapped up and sent to shops where we **buy it** and **eat it!**

So that is the journey of chocolate all the way from a cacao tree into our homes in the UK! Did you know there were so many complicated steps? This process is repeated over and over again to feed our chocolate desires.