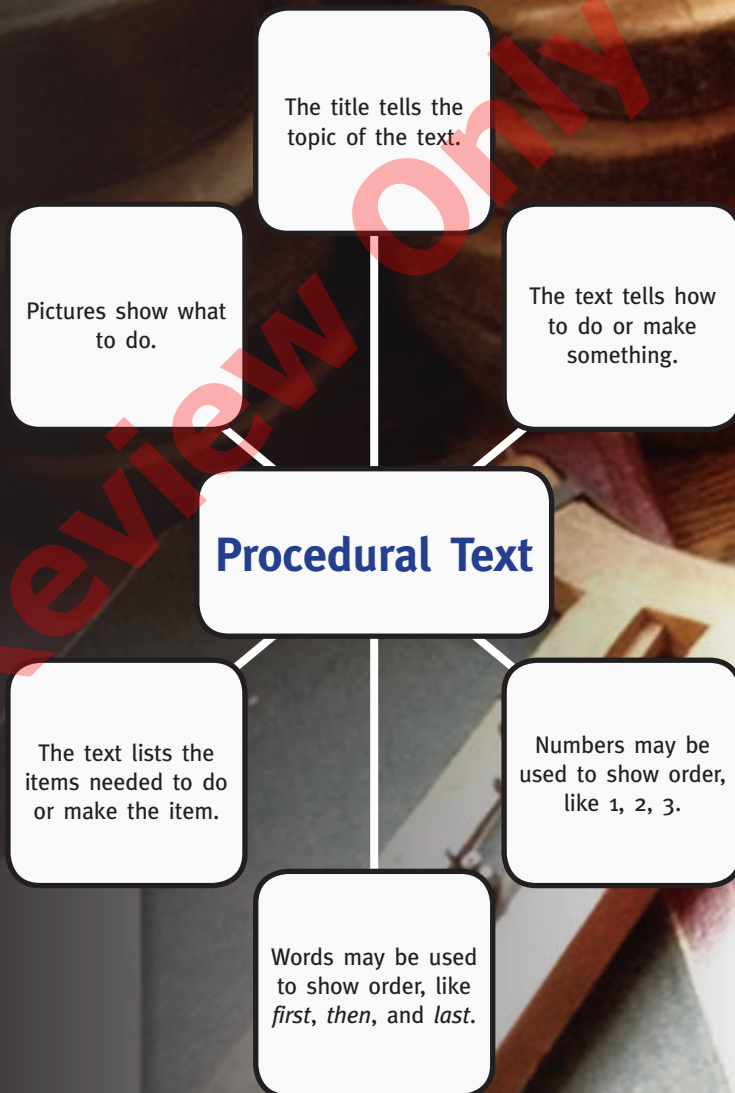


Yujie Ding: Hatmaker



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Meet the Hatmaker

My name is Yujie Ding. I am a **milliner**. I make hats. I was born in a city called Nanjing, in China. When I was 19 years old, I moved to Italy, where I live and work today.

During the day, I sell watches at a fancy store in Rome. At night, I go home and do what I enjoy most—I make hats!



Yujie Ding was born in China.
She now lives in Italy.





▲ Yujie makes hats at a workstation like this.

In college, I studied fashion design. There, I took a class on hatmaking. I really enjoyed learning how to make hats. That is why I became a hatmaker.

When I make a hat, I spend most of my time standing or sitting in front of my workstation, drawing and planning. I enjoy this quiet time alone. This is when I design a new hat.

I make many different kinds of hats. Each hat looks and feels different because each is used for a different purpose.

For example, a cloche hat is a stylish hat worn by women. A beret is a soft wool hat worn by men and women. A baseball hat can be used to block the sun.



A person may wear a beret on one side of the head to be stylish.

I make these and many other types of hats, such as a bowler hat, gentry hat, floppy hat, and panama hat.



cloche hat



gentry hat



bowler hat



floppy hat



panama hat



beret

Hatmaking Materials

I use many different materials to make my hats. Materials that I use include silk, wool, grass, paper, and iron wire. Each material has a different **texture**. Some are smooth, and some are rough. Some are easy to fold, and some are more difficult. Some are easy to cut, and others are not.

▼ Yujie uses materials like these to make hats.





▲ Some textures are more difficult to work with than others.

Silk, for example, is smooth and very easy to fold. I can fold silk into many different shapes. Wool felt is thicker than silk and not so easy to fold. But it's very easy to cut compared with hard iron wire. I use this thin metal wire to frame the hat. It is easy to bend but very difficult to cut.

Most people would not think of grass as a very strong material to make a hat. However, panama grass, also called *toquilla*, is very strong and **flexible**. For this reason, it is used to make some of the most expensive grass hats in the world. Panama grass hats are very light. They can be folded, so they can be packed in a bag easily.



▼ Many people take panama grass hats with them when they travel because they are easy to fold.

The materials in each hat are chosen to achieve a certain purpose. For example, baseball players stand in the hot sun for hours. Their heads can get very hot. This is why their hats are made of cloth. Cloth allows air to pass through the hat so the head can stay cool. The bill, or visor, is supported by a stiff material to shield the player's eyes from the sun.

