

Plain English Assessment Checklist

Plain Englishのルール

1. PRINCIPLE OF COHESIVENESS.

a. Conform to Context.

- (1) Use context to determine best word choice (W)**
- (4) Use present tense, active voice, first person sing. (S)**
- (13) Know the intended audience, and write to it (P)**
- (14) Choose a design and stick to it (P)
- (15) Use the correct articles (*a, an, the*) (P)

b. Be Consistent.

- (2) Choose words from same level of formality (W)
- (3) Avoid mixing common words with technical ones (W)
- (8) Keep tense the same in parallel structures (S)
- (9) Keep types of words the same (S)
- (10) Keep degrees of adjectives the same (S)
- (26) Avoid shifts in person (P)
- (27) Avoid shifts in number (P)
- (28) Avoid shifts in voice (P)
- (29) Avoid shifts in tense (P)
- (30) Avoid shifts in subject. (P)
- (31) Keep references, labels, units of measurement consistent (P)

c. Avoid Distractions.

- (11) Avoid overly simple structures (S)
- (12) Avoid Perfect and Subjunctive tenses (S)
- (32) Avoid needless repetition of words (P)

d. Use a Logical Order.

- (5) Use basic Subject-Verb-Object word order (S)
- (6) Avoid Passive, Causative and Conditional structures (S)
- (7) Place prepositions correctly in parallel structures (S)
- (16) Organize material logically by linking paragraphs (P)
- (17) Begin a paragraph with a good topic sentence (P)
- (18) Using facts and statistics in supporting statements (P)
- (19) Using examples and lists as supporting statements (P)
- (20) Using opinions as supporting statements (P)
- (21) Making statements of comparison and contrast (P)
- (22) Using the cause and effect sequence (P)
- (23) Making clear transitions within a paragraph (P)
- (24) Summarizing your points (P)
- (25) Emphasizing your points (P)

2. PRINCIPLE OF DIRECTNESS.

a. State what things are, not what they seem to be.

- (33) Use concrete terms (W)
- (34) Avoid lexical ambiguity (W)
- (36) State what things are, not what they seem to be (S)
- (37) Avoid syntactic ambiguity (S)
- (43) Avoid overstatement and exaggeration (P)
- (44) Separate fact from opinion (P)

b. State the subject clearly.

- (35) Avoid indirect and unclear subject/object (W)
- (38) Replace adverbial and adjectival phrases (S)
- (39) Using scope to avoid misplaced adverbs (S)
- (40) Avoid subject ambiguity: Use correct pronouns (S)
- (41) Avoid ambiguity: Use correct reflexive pronouns (S)
- (45) Avoid mixing subjects and objects up (P)

- (46) Focus on the message: Place writer in background (P)

c. Avoid negatives whenever possible.

- (42) Avoid negative expressions and double negatives (S)
- (48) Avoid spite and sarcasm (P)
- (49) Be direct, but not too direct (P)

d. State the "bottom line" succinctly.

- (47) Avoid developing ideas that you intend to dismiss later (P)

3. PRINCIPLE OF ECONOMY.

a. Common words are preferred over uncommon words.

- (51) Use common instead of uncommon words (W)
- (52) Define/Gloss new expressions (W)
- (53) Avoid coining new words and phrases (W)

b. Avoid subordinate clauses.

- (61) Avoid reported speech (S)
- (62) Subordinate conjunctions (*who, which & that*) (S)
- (63) Using when and while as conjunctions (S)

c. Discuss one point per statement.

- (64) Avoid run-on sentences (S)
- (65) Avoid unrelated ideas in the same sentence (S)
- (68) Develop your discussion one step at a time (P)

d. Brief is best.

- (50) Use words you know (W)
- (54) Restrict length of sentences (S)
- (55) Keep sentences separate in ambiguous situations (S)
- (56) Avoid restatement and redundancy (S)
- (57) Avoid wordiness (S)
- (58) Use mainly nouns and verbs (S)
- (59) Avoid overuse and misuse of adjectives (S)
- (60) Avoid overuse and misuse of adverbs (S)
- (66) Underwrite, rather than overwrite (P)
- (67) Be brief and concise: Break writing up (P)

4. PRINCIPLE OF APPROPRIATENESS.

a. Avoid idioms and slang, especially the more obscure regional variations.

- (71) Avoid colloquialisms, clichés & slang (W)

b. Avoid contractions and casual speech rules.

- (72) Avoid uncommon contractions (W)

c. Use grammatically correct sentences.

- (76) Keep tense and number in agreement (S)
- (77) Choosing prepositions (S)
- (78) Avoid dangling modifiers (S)
- (79) Avoid incomplete sentences (S)

d. Be truthful and show politeness and respect for others.

- (69) Use appropriate gender references (W)
- (70) Use neutral words (W)
- (73) Tell the truth (S)
- (74) Avoid sweeping generalizations and stereotyping (S)
- (75) Avoid sexist, racist and prejudiced comments (S)
- (80) Use neutral tone: Avoid inference & implication (P)

5. Spelling.

- (5.a) Spell words correctly.
- (5.b) Spell words using one dialect (British or American).
- (5.c) Format text appropriately for selected medium.

* Checked areas (✓) need work. (See Plain Written English for Business and Technical Applications for a complete explanation of these rules.)

** (P) = paragraph level rule, (S) = sentence level rule, (W) = word level rule