

CHECKLIST FOR PLAIN LANGUAGE WRITING

The target audience is:

The purpose/main message is:

GUIDELINE	Yes	No	N/A
The tone is friendly and personal (I, you, we).			
The tone is active and positive (you may contact us if... rather than do not contact us unless...)			
The vocabulary is common, not technical (cancer rather than oncology)			
Plain language definitions of any technical vocabulary the audience must know are included in the document.			
Acronyms or abbreviations are spelled out in the document. A glossary is provided if there are many acronyms or abbreviations the audience must learn.			
Concepts are defined (for example, patient-centred).			
Category words are defined (for example, carbohydrates).			
Judgment words are defined (for example, plenty, appropriate).			
The sentences are short (20 words or less) and each sentence has only one idea.			
The paragraphs are short (one idea per paragraph) and few in number.			
The readability level is grade six for the general public, or at a level appropriate for the audience.			
The most important information is at the beginning of the document and at the beginning of each section.			
The document includes only essential information, not unnecessary detail.			
Information is organized logically or chronologically, most important to least important, step-by-step, etc.			

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Adapted from: Checklist for Writing Patient Education Material

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