

PLAIN LANGUAGE

Communication your audience understands the first time

Organize to serve the audience

- ✓ Know your audience and purpose before you begin
- ✓ Put the most important message first
- ✓ Present other information in order of importance to the audience
- ✓ Break text into logical chunks and use headings

Choose words carefully

- ✓ Write in the active voice
- ✓ Choose words and numbers your audience knows
- ✓ Keep sentences and paragraphs short
- ✓ Include “you” and other pronouns

Make information easy to find

- ✓ Use headings and text boxes
- ✓ Delete unnecessary words, sentences, and paragraphs
- ✓ Create lists and tables



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry