



# Clear Writing Assessment

Your document might not be as clear and helpful as you think. Use this 12-question assessment tool to test if your materials are clear.

## How to Use This Tool

Use it to assess entire documents or to test sections in long documents. Simply answer the questions and give yourself 1 point every time you answer “yes.” Then calculate your score as instructed on page 2. Skip questions that don’t apply to your material; it won’t affect your score.

**Read the Clear Writing Assessment User Guide before you use this tool the first time.**

The guide explains the questions in the tool and offers tips to make testing easier. The guide also provides practical writing tips to improve the overall writing quality of your document.

## Health Literacy Considerations

- 1) If your document includes a necessary term your target audience might be unfamiliar with, did you explain the term in plain language?  Yes = 1  No = 0
- 2) If your document uses a Q&A format, did you use questions your target audience would ask?  Yes = 1  No = 0
- 3) Did you avoid using ALL CAPS (unless you highlighted a word like FREE or STOP)?  Yes = 1  No = 0
- 4) Did you use pronouns like “you” and “we” to connect with the reader and make the tone more conversational?  Yes = 1  No = 0

## Formatting

- 5) Does the document use left justification?  Yes = 1  No = 0
- 6) Did you use more space before and less space after each heading so it’s clear how your content is chunked?  Yes = 1  No = 0
- 7) Did you use bold fonts for emphasis if you had words or sentences that needed to be emphasized (instead of using italics or underlines)?  Yes = 1  No = 0

## Writing Principles

- 8) Do the sentences in your document have about 25 words or fewer?  Yes = 1  No = 0
- 9) Do the paragraphs in your document have 5 sentences or fewer?  Yes = 1  No = 0
- 10) Does the document contain a clearly visible heading or subheading for every 1-3 paragraphs? Headings should stand out visually (bold, larger font, or other formatting).  Yes = 1  No = 0
- 11) Do all bulleted lists contain 7 items or fewer? Numbered lists may be longer if they present steps or actions or if they are written as a “top 10” style list or article.  Yes = 1  No = 0
- 12) Are the bulleted items written in parallel structure?  Yes = 1  No = 0
- 13) Did you set the bulleted list up with a lead-in sentence? The bullets should logically follow the content of the lead-in sentence.  Yes = 1  No = 0
- 14) Is the document written mostly in active voice (except for “methods” sections or other special circumstances described in the user guide)?  Yes = 1  No = 0
- 15) Are the subject and verb placed next to or near each other (within 1-4 words) in all sentences?  Yes = 1  No = 0
- 16) Does the document contain a limited number of hidden verbs (nominalizations)? If you included nominalizations, make sure you did so for a deliberate reason and not accidentally because of bad writing habits.  Yes = 1  No = 0

## Calculate Your Score

Divide the number of points you earned by the number of questions you answered and multiply that number by 100.

$$\frac{\text{Points earned}}{\text{Questions answered}} \div \frac{\text{Questions answered}}{\text{Questions answered}} \times 100 = \frac{\text{Points earned}}{\text{Questions answered}} \times 100 = \text{Your total score}$$

**EXAMPLE:** 10 (points earned) ÷ 12 (questions answered) x 100 = 83.3 total score



If your score is **80 or above**, excellent! You used many of the most important clear writing practices. If you also scored 90 or above on CDC’s Clear Communication Index (Index), you likely have a clear, effective document.



If your score is **79 or below**, you need to revise. Look at the score sheet to see what you need to improve. Use the User Guide for help too. And don’t forget to test your document with CDC’s Index; it can provide additional information about how to improve your document.

# Clear Writing Assessment User Guide

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This user guide provides practical tips to improve the writing quality of your document. It also explains the 12 questions in the clear writing assessment and offers tips to make testing easier. Finally, the guide provides a list of recommended resources to further improve your writing skills and the references for all the writing tips offered in this tool.

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## General Writing Tips

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Use these tips to improve the quality of your writing.

### Is the document as short as it can be?

The more you write, the less they'll read. Include information that is essential to your communication objective; leave everything else out. Omit needless words, sentences and paragraphs so you can communicate more concepts in less time and space.

Use these tips to help shorten your documents:

- Identifying the purpose of a document before you begin writing helps create a strong balance between conciseness and clarity. It helps you think in one single direction and stay relevant to your topic.
- Editing after writing will help you shorten you document too. Treat your words like replaceable commodities. They're only good if they add meaning to your copy. If not, remove or replace them.
- Repeating yourself makes documents long and dampens originality. Say what you want to say once, and say it meaningfully.

### Example of Wordiness

**Before:** Because of the fact that people benefited from reading my article, I decided to follow up with another.

**After:** Because people benefited from reading my article, I wrote a follow up.

Also, look for and delete the following to tighten up your writing:

- repeated content
- unnecessary background information
- unnecessary descriptions and adjectives  
(e.g., call it “a set of guide sheets” instead of “a comprehensive collection of instructional guidance materials”)
- content that doesn’t apply to the target audience or support the purpose of the document

**TIP:** Draft your document with an effort at conciseness. Walk away for a day. Come back with a fresh look and cut another 10% or more. It can almost always be shorter.

### Did you write the document so your target audience can easily understand and remember it?

Sometimes, we have the habit of trying to impress our readers with academic-sounding or complicated sentences instead of focusing on how to make our sentences as clear as possible. People are more apt to follow you if you use words they can understand (“use” instead of “utilize”). Be expressive, but remember that most public health writing is no place for literary flair — it’s not going to be someone’s fireside reading. As George Orwell said, “Never use a long word where a short one will do.” And avoid complicated grammar structures with lots of clauses and punctuation. Instead, follow a simple subject-verb-object sentence structure.

#### Write like you speak (when appropriate).

One of the biggest obstacles on the journey to natural writing is your education. Smart, highly educated people have a hard time giving themselves permission to write less formally. Formal writing leaves just a tiny space for your voice, but writing like you talk reveals your voice and brings your words to life.

The problem with writing like you speak, however, is that in informal, improvised conversation, you don’t pay close attention to important features of clear writing, like grammar and word choice. Therefore, the goal isn’t to write like you talk informally; the goal is to craft a piece of writing that doesn’t sound like writing, but like a conversation with your reader.

#### Write for one person in your audience.

Writing for one person helps you write more conversationally. Writing to the dark or to a faceless crowd makes you sound formal, impersonal, and boring. Talk to one particular person and make it a conversation. And it’s ok to use “you.”

#### Use contractions in your writing.

Depending on your audience and the purpose for your writing, using contractions is one of the best ways to catch and keep your readers’ attention. When readers see a contraction, almost instantaneously they let their eyes go back to the contraction. It also makes your writing less intimidating, which is particularly important if you are writing to an audience with low literacy or health literacy skills.

#### Test your writing

Try reading what you have written aloud. If it flows, then you have accomplished your mission of writing conversationally. If at any time you stumble as you are reading your work, then it may not be flowing.

## Does the document have a clear organizational pattern?

Organization is key for clear writing. People seek out patterns to help make sense of information. When readers are not able to find a pattern that makes sense, or have to double back to understand it, they will stop reading.

Respect the natural order of things. If you're giving your reader a list of steps, you present them in the order they need doing. But if the items in your list aren't steps, they often still have a natural order – like most important to least important.

Since today's readers tend to skim, obvious organization will make skimming easier. The specific pattern you choose depends upon the topic and your objectives. Think carefully about which pattern makes the most sense in helping the reader understand and remember the information.

Here are some excellent ways to organize:

- **Chronological:** Appropriate for news stories, history articles, and explanations of development or change
- **Sequential:** Information arranged according to a specific series of steps in a particular order.
- **Order of Importance**—From the most important point to the least
- **Problem/Solution:** Dividing information into two main sections, one describing a problem and one describing a solution.
- **Advantages/Disadvantages:** Organize information about a topic by dividing it up into its pros and cons so the reader can weigh both sides.
- **Topical Pattern:** Arrange information according to different sub-topics within a larger topic.

## Did you use CDC's Clear Communication Index (Index) too?

The Clear Writing Assessment works best when used with the Index because the former focuses on plain language while the latter focuses on health literacy.

The Clear Communication Index (the Index) is a research-based tool to plan and assess communication products for the public. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) developed the Index to identify the most important factors that increase clarity and aid understanding of public messages and materials.

The Index includes 4 questions and 20 scored items that staff can use to develop and assess written information in different formats or distribution channels.

CDC now requires that materials submitted to clearance score at least 80% on the Index. You can ask your colleagues to score your materials. Writer-Editor Services also offers a free service that uses the Index to evaluate and score factsheets and provides recommendations for improving your score.

Use the results of both testing tools (CWA and Index) to guide your revisions. Look for the places where your score was "0" and fix those specific issues.

# Health Literacy Considerations

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The following helps explain questions 1-4 in the clear writing assessment.

## 1. If your document includes a necessary term your target audience might be unfamiliar with, did you explain the term in plain language?

Before you start writing, consider who will use the information and their reading level. As much as possible, use words your audience will understand. Even readers familiar with the specialized language you use might better grasp simpler phrasing. Write so that someone just starting in the profession will be able to understand your report.

When you need to explain a specialized term, the most direct way is to define it on first use. You can also give examples and include further explanations.

**For example: “Infectious” diseases** mean illnesses caused by germs (such as bacteria, viruses, and fungi) that enter the body, multiply, and can cause an infection.

- Some infectious diseases are contagious (or communicable), that is, spread from one person to another.
- Other infectious diseases can be spread by germs carried in air, water, food, or soil. They can also be spread by vectors (like biting insects) or by animals.”

With or without a definition, explaining a term through context can also help your reader grasp its meaning. Another way to help explain a term is to include a picture or illustration.

Overuse of technical terms, especially without explanations, is jargon. Readers complain about jargon more than any other writing fault, because writers often fail to realize that terms they know well may be difficult or meaningless to their audience. Try to substitute everyday language for jargon as often as possible.

**Example:** There may not be another correct way to refer to a “brinulator valve control ring.” But that doesn’t prevent you from saying “tighten the brinulator valve control ring securely” instead of “Apply sufficient torque to the brinulator valve control ring to ensure that the control ring assembly is securely attached to the terminal such that loosening cannot occur under normal conditions.” The first is a necessary use of a technical term. The second is jargon.

Special terms can be useful shorthand within a particular audience and may be the clearest way to communicate with that group. However, going beyond necessary technical terms can alienate your readers, even if they are specialists. If you must use many technical terms, you might also include a glossary or table that provides definitions.

## 2. If your document uses a Q&A format, did you use questions your target audience would ask?

Question headings are useful in content that serves as an informational resource, such as an instructional procedure, a troubleshooting guide, or a website’s FAQ page.

Question headings are only useful if you know what questions your audience will ask. Most people come to government documents with questions. If you know those questions, use them as headings to help the audience scan the document and find specific information.

Questions can also serve to organize more qualitative information intended to expand readers' knowledge. A question is an invitation to participate in a conversation. It immediately draws readers in, moving them from passive to active reading. Of course, it has to be something people care about—your target audience needs to want the answer.

Never ask a question that anyone could easily answer. If your heading addresses a question that most people already know the answer to, they probably won't be interested. Never use a question heading that can be answered with a single word or phrase.

When using questions as headings, use "I" and "me" to reflect the voice of the user.

**TIP:** The easiest way to find out is to talk to some members of your target audience. Don't assume you know.

### **3. Did you avoid using ALL CAPS?**

ALL CAPS are harder to read for people with visual impairments and for people who struggle with reading comprehension. Most people learned to read with sentence case (i.e., where the first word in the sentence is upper case and all other words are lower case unless they are proper nouns). This is the most familiar pattern for low-literacy readers and the easiest for them to process.

Also, in electronic media (such as email), ALL CAPS have come to indicate shouting. It's best to avoid this misinterpretation of tone by avoiding ALL CAPS.

### **4. Did you use pronouns like "you" and "we" to connect with the reader and make the tone more conversational?**

Even though your document may affect a thousand or a million people, you are speaking to the one person who is reading it. When your writing reflects this, it's more economical and has a greater impact.

Pronouns help the audience picture themselves in the text and relate to what you're saying. More than any other single technique, using "you" pulls users into the information and makes it relevant to them. When you use "you" to address users, they are more likely to understand what their responsibility is.

Using "we" makes your agency more approachable and also helps you use fewer words. Just be sure to define who "we" is somewhere in the document so it's clear to the user.

# Formatting

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The following helps explain questions 10-12 in the clear writing assessment.

## 5. Does the document use left justification?

Left-justified text is aligned down the left side and “ragged” down the right side (like the text in this document.) This alignment creates natural spacing between words and is easier to read. Justified text is aligned down the left and right sides, creating awkward, distracting spacing between words. Centered text is also hard to read because the starting point changes for each line.

## 6. Did you use more space before and less space after each heading so it’s clear how your content is chunked?

Make sure your headings don’t “float” on the page (floating happens when there’s too much white space above and below the heading). Make it clear which chunk of text the heading corresponds to.

The diagram shows a sample text layout within an orange-bordered box. It contains three sections, each with a heading and a paragraph of text. The headings are: "Testing Your Materials", "Why do I need to test my material?", and "What type of testing is right for me?". Two annotations with arrows point to the spacing between the heading and the text. The first annotation, "Just a little space between the heading and corresponding text", points to the space between "Testing Your Materials" and its paragraph. The second annotation, "More space here to show that we are moving to another heading and text", points to the space between "Why do I need to test my material?" and "What type of testing is right for me?".

Just a little space between the heading and corresponding text

More space here to show that we are moving to another heading and text

### Testing Your Materials

Testing helps make sure that your final product will be useful for your readers. Here are some easy recommendations for informal testing.

### Why do I need to test my material?

When it comes to understanding your material, your readers are the experts. Testing your material with the target audience can improve your readers’ satisfaction and increase their trust in your material.

### What type of testing is right for me?

There are lots of options to test your material with your audience, and each method of testing has pros and cons. Read on to learn about focus groups, interviews, surveys, and protocol tests.

## 7. Did you use bold fonts for emphasis (i.e., if you had words or sentences that needed to be emphasized)?

Bold font is an easy way to call attention to text, but use it sparingly. Using bold font too frequently gives you nowhere to go when you need to emphasize a word. Avoid using all caps. It reads as if you are shouting at your audience.

Underlining makes text look busy and should be used only to indicate a hyperlink. Italics can be hard to read and should be used sparingly (e.g., titles of works, foreign words, species name, and single-word emphasis like only). It’s best to use bold (and sometimes color, also sparingly).



# Writing Principles

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The following helps explain questions 8-16 in the clear writing assessment.

## 8. Do the sentences in your document have about 25 words or fewer?

Long sentences are hard to read and remember. The main point can get lost in a forest of words. Short sentences are easier to skim, so readers are less likely to miss what is most important.

It's okay if you occasionally have a sentence that is 28 or 29 words, but generally keep your sentences to 25 words or fewer. Also, vary your sentence length (e.g., a 10-word sentence, followed by a 22-word sentence, followed by a 14-word sentence). Your writing will sound monotonous if all the sentences are around 25 words long.

**TIP:** Some software\* highlights long sentences so you don't have to manually count each of them (e.g., StyleWriter or Hemingway Editor).

## 9. Do all the paragraphs in the document have 5 sentences or fewer?

Short paragraphs are easier to read and understand. Long paragraphs that end up creating a "wall of words" can keep your audience from even trying to understand your material. Short paragraphs also increase the white space in your document, making it less intimidating. Limit each paragraph to a single topic. Write short paragraphs that vary in length.

**TIP:** If readers will view your document primarily on a mobile device, limit your paragraphs to 4 sentences or fewer. Because mobile screens are smaller, paragraphs will look longer with more sentences.

## 10. Does the document contain 1 heading or subheading for every 1-3 paragraphs?

Giant blocks of text without headings make your document appear complicated, intimidate low-literacy readers, and even deter high-literacy readers.

The best-organized document will still be difficult for users to follow if they can't see how it's organized. An effective way to reveal your document's organization is to use lots of useful headings. A document with lots of informative headings is easy to follow because the headings break up the material into logical, understandable pieces. Using lots of headings can also make your document more visually appealing by increasing white space. Headings should be meaningful, visually distinct, and an appropriate length:

- **Meaningful:** Use specific headings that let readers know what comes next. For example, instead of "overview" use "CDC Study Looks at Lead Contamination." Instead of "recommendations" use "CDC Recommends You Test Your Well Water."
- **Visually Distinct:** Headings should be bold and larger font than the text that follows. Also, leave more space above a heading than below.
- **Appropriate Length:** Headings should generally be about 8 words or less; however, FAQ headings can be a bit longer (i.e., up to about 15 words).

## 11. Do all bulleted lists contain 7 items or fewer? Numbered lists may be longer if they present steps or actions or if they are written as “top 10” type of list or article.

Use of bulleted lists is a great way to call attention to listed information—but when they’re too long, they lose this effect and instead become tedious and distracting. Keep bulleted lists short and sweet: no more than seven items maximum. This is based on short-term memory research about how much information most people can process at a time (“The Magical Number Seven...” by George Miller).

These additional tips will help you create effective lists:

- Use a lead-in sentence to explain your lists and indent your bulleted items.
- Punctuate bullets according to the grammatical structure. If a sentence follows the bullet, place a period at its end. Words and phrases need no ending punctuation.
- Use bullet symbols if you have a list of items of equal importance. Use numbers for items with different degrees of value or for steps in a process.
- Write bulleted lists in the same grammatical structure: all verbs, nouns, sentences, clauses, or equal phrases.
- Avoid bulleted lists with sub-bullets. They make text busy and create walls of words.

**TIP:** Don’t place the word “and” before the last item in a bulleted list (M. Strumpf and A. Douglas, *The Grammar Bible*. Owl, 2004).

## 12. Are the bulleted items written in parallel structure?

Each item in your list should be parallel—structured the same way. For example, if the first bulleted item is a complete sentence, then all other bulleted items should also be complete sentences. If the first is a sentence fragment, the rest should be fragments.

All items should start with the same part of speech too. For example, if your first bullet point starts with an “ing” verb, then all of the bullet points need to start with an “ing” verb. If the first one starts with a noun, then all the rest need to start with a noun. Look at the examples below.

### **Bad Example: This list is NOT parallel.**

Those at higher risk for severe illness include the following:

- Elderly
- People who have severe underlying medical conditions
- If you are immunocompromised

### **Good Example: This list is parallel.**

Those at higher risk for severe illness include the following:

- People who are 65 and older
- People who have severe underlying medical conditions
- People who are immunocompromised

### 13. Did you set the bulleted list up with a lead-in sentence?

The bullets should logically follow the content of the lead-in sentence. Look at the example below. The lead-in sentence is about keeping physical distance. But none of the bullets that follow are about physical distance.

**Bad Example: The following lead-in sentence does NOT set up the bulleted list.**

Keep Physical Distance Between You and Others

- When you return home, remove the mask carefully.
- Wash your hands and wash the mask.
- Continue to follow everyday health habits.

How can you fix this? You need to either write a new lead-in sentence. Or, in this case, see if you can reorder the bullets to make more logical sense.

**Good Example: The lead-in sentence now sets up the bulleted list.**

Continue to follow other healthy habits:

- When you return home, remove the mask carefully.
- Wash your hands and wash the mask.
- Keep physical distance between you and others.

### 14. Is the document written mostly in active voice (i.e., contains about 15% or less passive voice)?

First, make sure you understand the difference between active and passive voice.

- A verb is in the **active voice** when the performer of the act is the subject of the sentence—when the subject is doing the action in the verb. For example, “CDC wrote the report.”
- A verb is in the **passive voice** when the receiver of the act is the subject of the sentence. For example, “The report was written by CDC.”

Passive voice is formed by using some form of “to be” (i.e., am, is, are, was, were, has been) with the past participle of a verb:

- The filing deadline **was** unintentionally **missed**. (“was” and “missed”)
- The review of all positions **has been completed** by HR. (“has been” and “completed”)

Next, know why most writing manuals recommend active voice instead of passive voice—because it’s clear, concise, and direct. The easiest structure to understand in English is subject → verb → object, which is active voice. As a rule, active voice is more accurate, more precise, and less wordy than passive voice. It’s also easier to understand because it sounds closer to the way we talk.

**Passive:** The brakes were slammed on by her as the car sped downhill.

**Active:** She slammed on the brakes as the car sped downhill.

In some circumstances, you may choose to use passive voice instead:

- **When the subject is unknown**  
Example: A memo was circulated in the office. (You don't know who circulated it.)
- **When the subject is irrelevant**  
Example: The samples were being analyzed. (The analysis is important—not who is analyzing.)

**TIP:** Use MS Word to calculate the percentage of passive sentence in your document.

## 15. Are the subject and verb placed next to or near each other (within 1-4 words) in all sentences?

Because the natural order of an English sentence is subject-verb-object, readers expect the verb (action) in a sentence to be near the subject. Keeping the subject and verb close together adds clarity to your writing. Some authors tend to insert a lot of text that describes the subject between the subject and verb. Or they interrupt the sentence with a long phrase or clause. (See below)

**NO:** Good *subject* writers, no matter how much they like to interrupt themselves, imagine a magnet between subject and verb. *verb*

**YES:** Good *subject* writers imagine a magnet between subject and verb, no matter how much they like to interrupt themselves. *verb*

--The Writer Blog (2013)

When several words or phrases come between subjects and verbs, readers may forget what the subject is and have to re-read the sentence. This can be especially confusing if the extra words include other verbs. Remember: when re-reading is necessary, writing is not clear enough.

### Can you follow this long, convoluted sentence?

If any member of the board retires, the company, at the discretion of the board, and after notice from the chairman of the board to all the members of the board at least 30 days before executing this option, may buy, and the retiring member must sell, the member's interest in the company.

In essence, the sentence says: **The company may buy a retiring member's interest.** All the rest of the material modifies the basic idea and should be moved to another sentence or at least to the end of the sentence.

**TIP:** Check wordy sentences to be sure the subject and verb are close together. Find the verb first and ask “who” or “what” does the action in the verb. If you have trouble finding these parts of the sentence, there may be too many words between them.

## 16. Does the document contain no or few hidden verbs (nominalizations)?

A nominalization is a noun created from another form of speech, such as a verb or adjective. The Federal Plain Language Guidelines liken nominalizations to “hidden verbs.” Hidden verbs tend to weaken sentences by introducing more words than readers need.

Here's what happens. Sometimes, to sound more academic, we take the verb (action) in our sentence and change it into a noun (a thing). We do this by adding endings such as *-ment*, *-tion*, *-sion*, and *-ance*. For example, we take a verb like "assist" and turn it into the noun "assistance," or we turn the verb "conclude" and turn it into the noun "conclusion." Then we have to add another verb to the sentence so it makes sense, such as *provide*, *achieve*, *effect*, *give*, *have*, *make*, *reach*, and so on.

For example, "We concluded" becomes "We came to the conclusion" and "We assisted" becomes "We provided assistance." "Please make an application for a personal loan," is longer and less clear than "Please apply for a personal loan."

Uncovering the hidden verb usually forces you to rephrase your sentence and cut out other poor habits such as wordy phrases. As these examples show, one way to cut the clutter in our writing is to recover any hidden verbs:

**Wordy:** The slider allows you to *make an adjustment to* the volume.

**Revised:** The slider allows you to *adjust* the volume.

**Wordy:** After *conducting a review of* your class notes, *perform an analysis of* past quizzes to identify trouble spots.

**Revised:** After *reviewing* your class notes, *analyze* past quizzes to identify trouble spots.

**Wordy:** The director *made an announcement* that the new policy will *have an immediate implementation date*.

**Revised:** The director *announced* that the new policy will *be implemented immediately*."

**TIP:** Use software\* such as StyleWriter, MSWord, or ProWritingAid to check for nominalizations in your document.

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## Recommended Resources

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Use the following free tools and trainings to improve your writing skills.

- NCEH/ATSDR Clear Writing Hub ([www.cdc.gov/nceh/clearwriting](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/clearwriting))
- CDC Health Literacy Website ([www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/gettraining.html](http://www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/gettraining.html))
- Federal Plain Language Guidelines ([www.plainlanguage.gov](http://www.plainlanguage.gov))
- Government Training in Plain Language ([www.plainlanguage.gov/training/online-training](http://www.plainlanguage.gov/training/online-training))
- Center for Plain Language ([www.centerforplainlanguage.org](http://www.centerforplainlanguage.org))

## References

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The questions in the Clear Writing Assessment and tips in the User Guide are based on long-standing writing practices presented in the following references:

- Brevity in Speech and Writing ([www.thoughtco.com/brevity-speech-and-writing-1689037](http://www.thoughtco.com/brevity-speech-and-writing-1689037))
- Campaign to Cut the Clutter ([www.thoughtco.com/how-to-recover-hidden-verbs-1692665](http://www.thoughtco.com/how-to-recover-hidden-verbs-1692665))
- CDC Health Literacy Website ([www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy](http://www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy))
- CDC Style Guide (<http://intranet.cdc.gov/od/ocs/workingWithOcos/correspondence>)
- Chicago Style Manual ([www.chicagomanualofstyle.org](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org))
- Clear Communication Index ([www.cdc.gov/ccindex](http://www.cdc.gov/ccindex))
- Examples of Methods of Organization (<https://smallbusiness.chron.com/examples-methods-organization-18982.html>)
- Federal Plain Language Guidelines ([www.plainlanguage.gov](http://www.plainlanguage.gov))
- How to Use Italics ([www.wikihow.com/Use-Italics](http://www.wikihow.com/Use-Italics))
- How to Write in a Conversational Tone ([www.doyouspeakfreedom.com/write-conversational-tone](http://www.doyouspeakfreedom.com/write-conversational-tone))
- NCEH/ATSR Clear Writing Guide ([www.cdc.gov/nceh/clearwriting](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/clearwriting))
- NCEH/ATSDR Communication Playbook ([www.cdc.gov/nceh/clearwriting](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/clearwriting))
- Two Techniques that Embrace Brevity ([www.copyblogger.com/embrace-brevity](http://www.copyblogger.com/embrace-brevity))

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