Exercise Eleven: Evaluating Sample Text

Here some sample text to convert to plain language:

Effective June 1, 2017, in response to client feedback, hiring managers are no longer required to submit competition documentation to the BC Public Service Agency to confirm a hire.

Eliminating the requirement to submit competition documentation to complete a hire does not remove the requirement for hiring managers to retain competition documentation. Hiring managers are still responsible for documenting and retaining all competition files, as they currently do, for a minimum of two years.

Instructions:

1. Copy the text into Microsoft Word.
2. Use the spell checker to obtain a Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level for the page. Aim for a grade 6-8 reading level.
3. Use what you have learned in this course and the Plain Language Checklist to edit the text. Simplify, clarify, and improve the content.
4. Use Hemingway App to review the page content for additional tips.

Takeaways/answers on next page.

Exercise Eleven Takeaways

Sample Revised Text:

Hiring managers must keep competition files for at least two years. They don't need to submit them to the BC Public Service Agency.

This policy changed June 1, 2017.

Notice the following:

- The new text passes all of the Hemingway App's tests
- The readability score has dropped to grade 5 – lower than our target! Can you make it even lower without compromising the clarity of the message?
- The phrase "competition files" is government jargon. We have not changed it because our target audience is government hiring managers, and the meaning will be clear to them
- The word count has dropped to 29 – less than half of the original text!
- The effective date of the change has been moved to the end as that information is less important than the changed policy itself
- The reason for the change has been omitted as it is not likely important to the audience. Is there other information that could be left out?

Tips
There are limits to the usefulness of tools like the Hemingway App! Don't compromise clarity or lose track of what you're trying to say just to make it easier to read.