

## Plain Language Checklist

Use this checklist to make sure your writing follows Plain Language guidelines.

- Scan-ability: Look at the page with fresh eyes. Is it easy to scan and pick out main points?
- Purpose: Is it clear who and what the page is for?
- Know your [audience](#). Plain language at high levels, technical detail below
- Start with the most important information. Put details below
- Keep [sentences short](#)
- Keep paragraphs short and on topic
- [Cut unnecessary words](#)
- Use the [shortest word](#)
- Choose everyday words. Avoid acronyms and jargon
- [Define acronyms](#) the first time you use them
- Write in the present tense
- Use [active voice](#). “We mailed your form on May 1” not “Your form was sent on May 1.”
- [Tone](#): use conversational pronouns (you, us, our, we). Use contractions (we’re instead of we are)