

The UVM Center on Disability & Community Inclusion

PLAIN LANGUAGE CHECKLIST

1. Use active voice. Don't let yourself get used by passive voice.

2. Use short sentences. Try to keep each sentence to 15-20 words.

3. Use simple, familiar language.

- Choose common words: use, not utilize,
- Aim for words of no more than 3 syllables
- Avoid jargon
- Don't use a lot of acronyms

4. Keep it at a 6th grade level. Use a tool such as readable.com or Yoast's [Readability Analysis](#) or measure how complex your text is.

5. Think about how design can make your text easier to read.

- Make shorter paragraphs.
- Leave lots of white space for people's eyes to rest.
- Use the important information first in a paragraph.
- Use lists.
- Include headings.
- Align your text to the left.
- Choose an easy-to-read font.
- NO ALL-CAPS. *No all-italic paragraphs.*

And finally think about other ways to make reading your text easier and more accessible for everyone.

This can include:

- Providing both text & audio or video versions
- Providing a glossary in plain language
- Writing the version you're comfortable with plus a plain language version

But most of all: get feedback from people with disabilities!