

# Plain Language Foundations



## Overview

This course explores writing in plain language and how to communicate well with your audience.

## Details

### Audience

This e-learning is for all LINZ employees.

### Requirements

You will need to complete the knowledge checks and an assessment in the e-learning module to complete this learning.

### Time

This module will take approx. 1 hour to complete.

### Feedback

Your feedback will be greatly appreciated. A survey will be available on completion of the course.

eLearning

Feedback



Released under the Official Information Act 1982

Plain Language Foundations course page

# Plain Language Foundations



## Overview

This course explores writing in plain language and how to communicate well with your audience.

## Details

### Audience

This e-learning is for all LINZ employees.

### Requirements

You will need to complete the knowledge checks and an assessment in the e-learning module to complete this learning.

### Time

This module will take approx. 1 hour to complete.

### Feedback

Your feedback will be greatly appreciated. A survey will be available on completion of the course.

Plain Language Foundations eLearning module



eLearning



Feedback



Released under the Official Information Act 1982



MENU

▼ Introduction

[Introduction to the course](#)

▶ Lesson 1 What is plain language

▶ Lesson 2 Your readers

▶ Lesson 3 Writing process

▶ Lesson 4 Purpose

▶ Lesson 5 Structure

▶ Lesson 6 Sentences

▶ Lesson 7 Words

▶ Lesson 8 Editing and proofreading

☰ Plain Language Foundations

# Introduction to Plain Language Foundations



Released under the Official Information Act 1982



- ▶ Introduction
- ▼ Lesson 1 What is plain language
  - Lesson 1 — What is plain language?
  - A standard for plain language excellence
  - Why plain language is good for writers ...
  - Busting the myth of 'dumbing down'
  - Activity
  - Quiz
- ▶ Lesson 2 Your readers
- ▶ Lesson 3 Writing process
- ▶ Lesson 4 Purpose
- ▶ Lesson 5 Structure
- ▶ Lesson 6 Sentences
- ▶ Lesson 7 Words
- ▶ Lesson 8 Editing and proofreading

## Lesson 1 — What is plain language?

In this lesson, we explain what plain language is and why it's a good idea — for writers, readers, and organisations. We start to uncover in more detail why plain language works for readers. And we bust the 'dumbing down' myth.

write



▶ Introduction

▼ Lesson 1 What is plain language

Lesson 1 – What is plain language?

[A standard for plain language excellence](#)

Why plain language is good for writers ...

Busting the myth of 'dumbing down'

Activity

Quiz

▶ Lesson 2 Your readers

▶ Lesson 3 Writing process

▶ Lesson 4 Purpose

▶ Lesson 5 Structure

▶ Lesson 6 Sentences

▶ Lesson 7 Words

▶ Lesson 8 Editing and proofreading

## A standard for plain language excellence

Plain language documents excel at achieving the principles set out in [our Write Plain Language Standard \[PDF, 750kb\]](#), which you can download. We'll be exploring these principles throughout this course.

Let's look at the ten elements of the standard.

write

- ▶ Introduction
- ▼ Lesson 1 What is plain language
  - Lesson 1 — What is plain language?
  - A standard for plain language excellence
  - Why plain language is good for writers ...
  - Busting the myth of 'dumbing down'
  - Activity
  - Quiz
- ▶ Lesson 2 Your readers
- ▶ Lesson 3 Writing process
- ▶ Lesson 4 Purpose
- ▶ Lesson 5 Structure
- ▶ Lesson 6 Sentences
- ▶ Lesson 7 Words
- ▶ Lesson 8 Editing and proofreading

## Why plain language is good for writers and for business

As a writer, you're more likely to get the results you want from your content. As a reader, you're more likely to know what the writer wants you to do as a result of reading plain language content.

From a business perspective, plain language leads to more efficient processes, more collegial working relationships, and better customer service.

write

## MENU

▶ Introduction

▼ Lesson 1 What is plain language

Lesson 1 — What is plain language?

A standard for plain language excellence

Why plain language is good for writers ...

**Busting the myth of 'dumbing down'**

Activity

Quiz

▶ Lesson 2 Your readers

▶ Lesson 3 Writing process

▶ Lesson 4 Purpose

▶ Lesson 5 Structure

▶ Lesson 6 Sentences

▶ Lesson 7 Words

▶ Lesson 8 Editing and proofreading

## Busting the myth of 'dumbing down'

Some people have the misconception that plain language refers to just the words used in a document. But plain language is more than removing jargon and using simple words, and it isn't language that is dumbed down. It's a way of writing that's reader-focused with appropriate style and tone. Think of yourself as having a conversation with the reader.

write





MENU

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Lesson 1 What is plain language
  - Lesson 1 — What is plain language?
  - A standard for plain language excellence
  - Why plain language is good for writers ...
  - Busting the myth of 'dumbing down'
  - Activity**
  - Quiz
- ▶ Lesson 2 Your readers
- ▶ Lesson 3 Writing process
- ▶ Lesson 4 Purpose
- ▶ Lesson 5 Structure
- ▶ Lesson 6 Sentences
- ▶ Lesson 7 Words
- ▶ Lesson 8 Editing and proofreading

☰ Plain Language Foundations

# Activity

2017 Febru

M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4
6	7	8	9	10	11
13	14	15	16	17	18
20	21	22	23	24	25
27	28				

Released under the Official Information Act 1982





▶ Introduction

▼ Lesson 1 What is plain language

Lesson 1 – What is plain language?

A standard for plain language excellence

Why plain language is good for writers ...

Busting the myth of 'dumbing down'

Activity

Quiz

▶ Lesson 2 Your readers

▶ Lesson 3 Writing process

▶ Lesson 4 Purpose

▶ Lesson 5 Structure

▶ Lesson 6 Sentences

▶ Lesson 7 Words

▶ Lesson 8 Editing and proofreading

# 1. What is plain language?

- Writing that only focuses on simple topics for a young audience
- A style of writing that puts the reader first
- An approach to writing that 'dumbs down' complex topics
- A style of writing that primarily shows off the writer's skills and expertise

write

MENU

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Lesson 1 What is plain language
- ▶ Lesson 2 Your readers
- ▼ Lesson 3 Writing process
  - Lesson 3 — A writing process that works for you
  - Five steps to help you plan your writing task
  - How much time do I spend at each stage?
  - Plan how other people get involved in the process
  - If you're writing for someone else, get a brief
  - Activity
  - Quiz
- ▶ Lesson 4 Purpose
- ▶ Lesson 5 Structure
- ▶ Lesson 6 Sentences
- ▶ Lesson 7 Words
- ▶ Lesson 8 Editing and proofreading

## Lesson 3 — A writing process that works for you

In this lesson, you'll find out how a writing process saves you time and delivers a better result. You'll also get advice on how to involve other people in your writing task, and how to get a brief if you're writing to other people's requirements.

write



- Introduction
- Lesson 1 What is plain language
- Lesson 2 Your readers
- Lesson 3 Writing process
  - Lesson 3 — A writing process that works for you
  - Five steps to help you plan your writing task
  - How much time do I spend at each stage?
  - Plan how other people get involved in the process
  - If you're writing for someone else, get a brief
- Activity
- Quiz
- Lesson 4 Purpose
- Lesson 5 Structure
- Lesson 6 Sentences
- Lesson 7 Words
- Lesson 8 Editing and proofreading

## Five steps to help you plan your writing task

Sometimes you have 5 minutes. Sometimes you have 3 weeks, or even 6 months. No matter how much time you have to write, you'll get more value out of the time you spend writing if you use your time purposefully. To make the most of your time, adapt this writing process to suit you.



write

## MENU

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Lesson 1 What is plain language
- ▶ Lesson 2 Your readers
- ▼ Lesson 3 Writing process
  - Lesson 3 – A writing process that works for you
  - Five steps to help you plan your writing task
  - [How much time do I spend at each stage?](#)
  - Plan how other people get involved in the process
  - If you're writing for someone else, get a brief
  - Activity
  - Quiz
- ▶ Lesson 4 Purpose
- ▶ Lesson 5 Structure
- ▶ Lesson 6 Sentences
- ▶ Lesson 7 Words
- ▶ Lesson 8 Editing and proofreading

## How much time do I spend at each stage?

If we group the steps above into three broader stages, let's look at how much time you might spend on each stage.

- Thinking and outlining
- Writing
- Editing and proofreading

write

## MENU

## ▶ Introduction

## ▶ Lesson 1 What is plain language

## ▶ Lesson 2 Your readers

## ▼ Lesson 3 Writing process

Lesson 3 — A writing process that works for you

Five steps to help you plan your writing task

How much time do I spend at each stage?

Plan how other people get involved in the process

If you're writing for someone else, get a brief

Activity

Quiz

## ▶ Lesson 4 Purpose

## ▶ Lesson 5 Structure

## ▶ Lesson 6 Sentences

## ▶ Lesson 7 Words

## ▶ Lesson 8 Editing and proofreading

## Plan how other people get involved in the process

It's a good idea to get other people involved in your writing process — two heads are better than one! If you're writing something you've never written before, ask someone to comment on your outline. If perfection doesn't come naturally to you, ask someone else to proofread your work.

write



MENU

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Lesson 1 What is plain language
- ▶ Lesson 2 Your readers
- ▼ **Lesson 3 Writing process**
  - Lesson 3 – A writing process that works for you
  - Five steps to help you plan your writing task
  - How much time do I spend at each stage?
  - Plan how other people get involved in the process
  - If you're writing for someone else, get a brief**
  - Activity
  - Quiz
- ▶ Lesson 4 Purpose
- ▶ Lesson 5 Structure
- ▶ Lesson 6 Sentences
- ▶ Lesson 7 Words
- ▶ Lesson 8 Editing and proofreading

## If you're writing for someone else, get a brief

When writing to someone else's requirements, make sure you get a brief from them. Having a brief means you're more likely to write what's needed.

write



## MENU

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Lesson 1 What is plain language
- ▶ Lesson 2 Your readers
- ▼ Lesson 3 Writing process
  - Lesson 3 — A writing process that works for you
  - Five steps to help you plan your writing task
  - How much time do I spend at each stage?
  - Plan how other people get involved in the process
  - If you're writing for someone else, get a brief
  - Activity
  - Quiz
- ▶ Lesson 4 Purpose
- ▶ Lesson 5 Structure
- ▶ Lesson 6 Sentences
- ▶ Lesson 7 Words
- ▶ Lesson 8 Editing and proofreading

## Plain Language Foundations

# 1. Create a writing plan

Think of a writing task you've got on your to-do list. Create your own plan for producing this piece of writing. Make sure to include all the parts of the writing process we've shared above.

Record how long you spend on each part of the process. This will help you understand what aspects you need to spend more or less time on, or what parts of the process you need to practise more.

write





## MENU

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Lesson 1 What is plain language
- ▶ Lesson 2 Your readers
- ▼ Lesson 3 Writing process
  - Lesson 3 — A writing process that works for you
  - Five steps to help you plan your writing task
  - How much time do I spend at each stage?
  - Plan how other people get involved in the process
  - If you're writing for someone else, get a brief
  - Activity
  - Quiz
- ▶ Lesson 4 Purpose
- ▶ Lesson 5 Structure
- ▶ Lesson 6 Sentences
- ▶ Lesson 7 Words
- ▶ Lesson 8 Editing and proofreading

## Plain Language Foundations

# 1. What are the main benefits of following a writing process? (Tick all that apply)

- You'll do the right task at the right time, saving you from double-handling
- You'll be able to produce documents like a robot
- Your main messages will be clearer because you will have done the thinking first
- You'll produce a better document overall
- You'll never have to edit or proofread again
- You'll be able to produce documents more efficiently

write



MENU

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Lesson 1 What is plain language
- ▶ Lesson 2 Your readers
- ▶ Lesson 3 Writing process
- ▼ Lesson 4 Purpose
  - Lesson 4 — A clear purpose for writing
  - The document purpose gives your reader the 'why'
  - Some tips for making your purpose clear
  - Write compelling titles or subject lines
  - Quiz
- ▶ Lesson 5 Structure
- ▶ Lesson 6 Sentences
- ▶ Lesson 7 Words
- ▶ Lesson 8 Editing and proofreading

## Lesson 4 — A clear purpose for writing

In this lesson, you'll find out why making your purpose clear at the start of your document is so important, and learn tips for getting it right.

write



Released under the Official Information Act 1982

## MENU

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Lesson 1 What is plain language
- ▶ Lesson 2 Your readers
- ▶ Lesson 3 Writing process
- ▼ Lesson 4 Purpose
  - Lesson 4 — A clear purpose for writing
  - [The document purpose gives your reader the 'why'](#)
  - Some tips for making your purpose clear
  - Write compelling titles or subject lines
  - Quiz
- ▶ Lesson 5 Structure
- ▶ Lesson 6 Sentences
- ▶ Lesson 7 Words
- ▶ Lesson 8 Editing and proofreading

## ☰ Plain Language Foundations

## The document purpose gives your reader the 'why'

Readers need to know the purpose of your content at the beginning. That way they know if they're going to invest their time in reading. Write a clear purpose statement to tell readers exactly why you are writing. It works as a cue and helps focus your readers' attention.

write



## MENU

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Lesson 1 What is plain language
- ▶ Lesson 2 Your readers
- ▶ Lesson 3 Writing process
- ▼ Lesson 4 Purpose
  - Lesson 4 — A clear purpose for writing
  - The document purpose gives your reader the 'why'
  - Some tips for making your purpose clear
  - Write compelling titles or subject lines
  - Quiz
- ▶ Lesson 5 Structure
- ▶ Lesson 6 Sentences
- ▶ Lesson 7 Words
- ▶ Lesson 8 Editing and proofreading

## Some tips for making your purpose clear

Here are some tips for writing clear purpose statements.

- Describe both the purpose and what your reader can do with the information — you can often write this in the form <purpose> so that <outcome>.
- Tell the reader why they should care about the document — how does it affect them?
- Writing your purpose with a strong verb, and enough details, will help to make sure your readers are not left asking 'Why?'

write



## MENU

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Lesson 1 What is plain language
- ▶ Lesson 2 Your readers
- ▶ Lesson 3 Writing process
- ▼ Lesson 4 Purpose
  - Lesson 4 — A clear purpose for writing
  - The document purpose gives your reader the 'why'
  - Some tips for making your purpose clear
  - Write compelling titles or subject lines**
  - Quiz
- ▶ Lesson 5 Structure
- ▶ Lesson 6 Sentences
- ▶ Lesson 7 Words
- ▶ Lesson 8 Editing and proofreading

# Write compelling titles or subject lines

A compelling title or subject line is like a good newspaper headline: it summarises your key message or contains a powerful hook. It tells the reader enough so they can decide whether to read more or not.

write



MENU

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Lesson 1 What is plain language
- ▶ Lesson 2 Your readers
- ▶ Lesson 3 Writing process
- ▼ Lesson 4 Purpose
  - Lesson 4 — A clear purpose for writing
  - The document purpose gives your reader the 'why'
  - Some tips for making your purpose clear
  - Write compelling titles or subject lines
- Quiz
- ▶ Lesson 5 Structure
- ▶ Lesson 6 Sentences
- ▶ Lesson 7 Words
- ▶ Lesson 8 Editing and proofreading

## Choose the best subject line for an email

Here's an email with the subject line 'Your X-Trail'. Read the email and then choose a better subject line from the options.

write



Released under the Official Information Act 1982



MENU

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Lesson 1 What is plain language
- ▶ Lesson 2 Your readers
- ▶ Lesson 3 Writing process
- ▶ Lesson 4 Purpose
- ▼ Lesson 5 Structure
  - Lesson 5 — Structure that makes it easy for readers
  - Structure based on your readers' questions
  - Use an inverted pyramid structure, placing main message...
  - Use MADE for emails, letters, and reports
  - Write instructions step by step
  - Write useful and informative headings
  - Quiz
- ▶ Lesson 6 Sentences
- ▶ Lesson 7 Words
- ▶ Lesson 8 Editing and proofreading

## Lesson 5 — Structure that makes it easy for readers

In this lesson, you'll learn about different structures for different document types, and get hot tips on how to write excellent headings.

write



Released under the Official Information Act 1982



MENU

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Lesson 1 What is plain language
- ▶ Lesson 2 Your readers
- ▶ Lesson 3 Writing process
- ▶ Lesson 4 Purpose
- ▼ Lesson 5 Structure
  - Lesson 5 — Structure that makes it easy for readers
  - Structure based on your readers' questions
  - Use an inverted pyramid structure, placing main message...
  - Use MADE for emails, letters, and reports
  - Write instructions step by step
  - Write useful and informative headings
  - Quiz
- ▶ Lesson 6 Sentences
- ▶ Lesson 7 Words
- ▶ Lesson 8 Editing and proofreading

## Structure based on your readers' questions

Your structure will depend on your readers, your purpose, and the key question that the readers have. Once you know your readers' main questions, you can build a structure that supports the answer to those questions.

write



Released under the Official Information Act 1982



## MENU

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Lesson 1 What is plain language
- ▶ Lesson 2 Your readers
- ▶ Lesson 3 Writing process
- ▶ Lesson 4 Purpose
- ▼ Lesson 5 Structure
  - Lesson 5 — Structure that makes it easy for readers
  - Structure based on your readers' questions
  - Use an inverted pyramid structure, placing main message...
  - Use MADE for emails, letters, and reports
  - Write instructions step by step
  - Write useful and informative headings
  - Quiz
- ▶ Lesson 6 Sentences
- ▶ Lesson 7 Words
- ▶ Lesson 8 Editing and proofreading

# Use an inverted pyramid structure, placing main messages first throughout

Where you put your content matters. Readers expect to get in, get what they need, and move on.

Your main messages are the important pieces of information from your reader's point of view. Put them in an order that makes sense to your reader, usually from most important to least important.

write



## MENU

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Lesson 1 What is plain language
- ▶ Lesson 2 Your readers
- ▶ Lesson 3 Writing process
- ▶ Lesson 4 Purpose
- ▼ **Lesson 5 Structure**
  - Lesson 5 — Structure that makes it easy for readers
  - Structure based on your readers' questions
  - Use an inverted pyramid structure, placing main message...
  - Use MADE for emails, letters, and reports**
  - Write instructions step by step
  - Write useful and informative headings
  - Quiz
- ▶ Lesson 6 Sentences
- ▶ Lesson 7 Words
- ▶ Lesson 8 Editing and proofreading

## Use MADE for emails, letters, and reports

The MADE structure follows the 'inverted pyramid' model, and is useful for emails, letters, and reports that require an action.

Let's take a closer look at the MADE structure on the next page.

write





## MENU

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Lesson 1 What is plain language
- ▶ Lesson 2 Your readers
- ▶ Lesson 3 Writing process
- ▶ Lesson 4 Purpose
- ▼ **Lesson 5 Structure**
  - Lesson 5 — Structure that makes it easy for readers
  - Structure based on your readers' questions
  - Use an inverted pyramid structure, placing main message...
  - Use MADE for emails, letters, and reports
  - Write instructions step by step**
  - Write useful and informative headings
  - Quiz
- ▶ Lesson 6 Sentences
- ▶ Lesson 7 Words
- ▶ Lesson 8 Editing and proofreading

# Write instructions step by step

If the main purpose of your document is to give instructions, you need to choose a particular type of structure.

Each task can be described in step-by-step chronological order. How the tasks are ordered will depend on the reader and purpose.

write



## MENU

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Lesson 1 What is plain language
- ▶ Lesson 2 Your readers
- ▶ Lesson 3 Writing process
- ▶ Lesson 4 Purpose
- ▼ Lesson 5 Structure
  - Lesson 5 — Structure that makes it easy for readers
  - Structure based on your readers' questions
  - Use an inverted pyramid structure, placing main message...
  - Use MADE for emails, letters, and reports
  - Write instructions step by step
  - Write useful and informative headings**
  - Quiz
- ▶ Lesson 6 Sentences
- ▶ Lesson 7 Words
- ▶ Lesson 8 Editing and proofreading

## Write useful and informative headings

Use headings to help readers navigate your document. Make sure your headings are:

- specific and informative
- interesting and original, where possible
- related to the document title
- related to the text that follows.

write



## MENU

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Lesson 1 What is plain language
- ▶ Lesson 2 Your readers
- ▶ Lesson 3 Writing process
- ▶ Lesson 4 Purpose
- ▼ Lesson 5 Structure
  - Lesson 5 — Structure that makes it easy for readers
  - Structure based on your readers' questions
  - Use an inverted pyramid structure, placing main message...
  - Use MADE for emails, letters, and reports
  - Write instructions step by step
  - Write useful and informative headings
  - Quiz
- ▶ Lesson 6 Sentences
- ▶ Lesson 7 Words
- ▶ Lesson 8 Editing and proofreading

# 1. What type of structure works well for readers?

- An inverted pyramid structure, with main messages first
- A traditional academic structure, with introduction first and conclusions last
- A stream-of-consciousness structure

write



MENU

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Lesson 1 What is plain language
- ▶ Lesson 2 Your readers
- ▶ Lesson 3 Writing process
- ▶ Lesson 4 Purpose
- ▶ Lesson 5 Structure
- ▼ **Lesson 6 Sentences**
  - Lesson 6 – Clear and compelling sentences
  - Prefer shorter sentences, with an average of 12 to 20 wor...
  - Aim for one main idea in each sentence
  - Use simple verbs to express actions
  - Prefer the active voice
- Quiz
- ▶ Lesson 7 Words
- ▶ Lesson 8 Editing and proofreading

1. The buildings will be demolished.

- Active
- Passive

write



Released under the Official Information Act 1982



MENU

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Lesson 1 What is plain language
- ▶ Lesson 2 Your readers
- ▶ Lesson 3 Writing process
- ▶ Lesson 4 Purpose
- ▶ Lesson 5 Structure
- ▶ Lesson 6 Sentences
- ▼ Lesson 7 Words
  - Lesson 7 — Precise and simple words
  - Choose precise — and familiar — everyday words
  - Explain technical terms
  - Identify and avoid jargon
  - Avoid relying on acronyms to convey meaning
  - Quiz
- ▶ Lesson 8 Editing and proofreading

## Lesson 7 — Precise and simple words

In this lesson, we'll look at how to make sure your words work for your readers.

write



Released under the Official Information Act 1982



## MENU

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Lesson 1 What is plain language
- ▶ Lesson 2 Your readers
- ▶ Lesson 3 Writing process
- ▶ Lesson 4 Purpose
- ▶ Lesson 5 Structure
- ▶ Lesson 6 Sentences
- ▼ Lesson 7 Words
  - Lesson 7 — Precise and simple words
  - Choose precise — and familiar — everyday words
  - Explain technical terms
  - Identify and avoid jargon
  - Avoid relying on acronyms to convey meaning
  - Quiz
- ▶ Lesson 8 Editing and proofreading

## Plain Language Foundations

# Choose precise — and familiar — everyday words

Everyday words that your reader finds familiar will make your writing clear and easy to understand. As writers, we're often tempted to use more complicated words than we need to. Readers appreciate clarity and simplicity.

A good way to check your words is to ask yourself, 'How would I explain this topic to a friend?' Use the same everyday words that you'd use in conversation with a friend.

write



MENU

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Lesson 1 What is plain language
- ▶ Lesson 2 Your readers
- ▶ Lesson 3 Writing process
- ▶ Lesson 4 Purpose
- ▶ Lesson 5 Structure
- ▶ Lesson 6 Sentences
- ▼ Lesson 7 Words
  - Lesson 7 — Precise and simple words
  - Choose precise — and familiar — everyday words
  - Explain technical terms
  - Identify and avoid jargon
  - Avoid relying on acronyms to convey meaning
  - Quiz
- ▶ Lesson 8 Editing and proofreading

## Explain technical terms

However, technical terms can create problems for readers who do not understand them. Always consider your reader: explain technical terms where necessary.

write



## MENU

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Lesson 1 What is plain language
- ▶ Lesson 2 Your readers
- ▶ Lesson 3 Writing process
- ▶ Lesson 4 Purpose
- ▶ Lesson 5 Structure
- ▶ Lesson 6 Sentences
- ▼ Lesson 7 Words
  - Lesson 7 — Precise and simple words
  - Choose precise — and familiar — everyday words
  - Explain technical terms
  - Identify and avoid jargon
  - Avoid relying on acronyms to convey meaning
  - Quiz
- ▶ Lesson 8 Editing and proofreading

## Plain Language Foundations

## Identify and avoid jargon

Jargon is more difficult to define than technical terms. Whether your writing is considered to be jargon depends entirely on who your audience is — a word that one person considers to be a technical term may be jargon to another.

Check the meaning of a word in the dictionary — if your organisation uses it differently, it is probably jargon.

write



MENU

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Lesson 1 What is plain language
- ▶ Lesson 2 Your readers
- ▶ Lesson 3 Writing process
- ▶ Lesson 4 Purpose
- ▶ Lesson 5 Structure
- ▶ Lesson 6 Sentences
- ▼ **Lesson 7 Words**
  - Lesson 7 — Precise and simple words
    - Choose precise — and familiar — everyday words
    - Explain technical terms
    - Identify and avoid jargon
    - Avoid relying on acronyms to convey meaning**
    - Quiz
- ▶ Lesson 8 Editing and proofreading

## Avoid relying on acronyms to convey meaning

Acronyms are invented to shorten a title or concept, to reduce the number of words needed to describe it. They can be effective for audiences that know the acronym's meaning without effort.

write



MENU

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Lesson 1 What is plain language
- ▶ Lesson 2 Your readers
- ▶ Lesson 3 Writing process
- ▶ Lesson 4 Purpose
- ▶ Lesson 5 Structure
- ▶ Lesson 6 Sentences
- ▼ Lesson 7 Words
  - Lesson 7 — Precise and simple words
  - Choose precise — and familiar — everyday words
  - Explain technical terms
  - Identify and avoid jargon
  - Avoid relying on acronyms to convey meaning
  - Quiz
- ▶ Lesson 8 Editing and proofreading

# 1. What is a simple alternative for 'endeavour'?

- Try
- Engage
- Suggest
- Establish

write

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

MENU

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Lesson 1 What is plain language
- ▶ Lesson 2 Your readers
- ▶ Lesson 3 Writing process
- ▶ Lesson 4 Purpose
- ▶ Lesson 5 Structure
- ▶ Lesson 6 Sentences
- ▶ Lesson 7 Words

▼ Lesson 8 Editing and proofreading

Lesson 8 — Editing and proofreading

Editing fixes any problems with the big picture, structure, ...

Proofreading is the last step

Quiz

Congratulations!

## Lesson 8 — Editing and proofreading

In this lesson, we'll look at the difference between editing and proofreading, and why both are important.

write



Released under the Official Information Act 1982

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Lesson 1 What is plain language
- ▶ Lesson 2 Your readers
- ▶ Lesson 3 Writing process
- ▶ Lesson 4 Purpose
- ▶ Lesson 5 Structure
- ▶ Lesson 6 Sentences
- ▶ Lesson 7 Words
- ▼ Lesson 8 Editing and proofreading
  - Lesson 8 — Editing and proofreading
  - Editing fixes any problems with the big picture, structure, ...
  - Proofreading is the last step
  - Quiz
  - Congratulations!

## Editing fixes any problems with the big picture, structure, and language

You edit a document so it will read smoothly and accurately, with nothing extra left in and nothing important left out. The editing process checks the same aspects of writing as these lessons cover — the big picture, structure, and language.

write



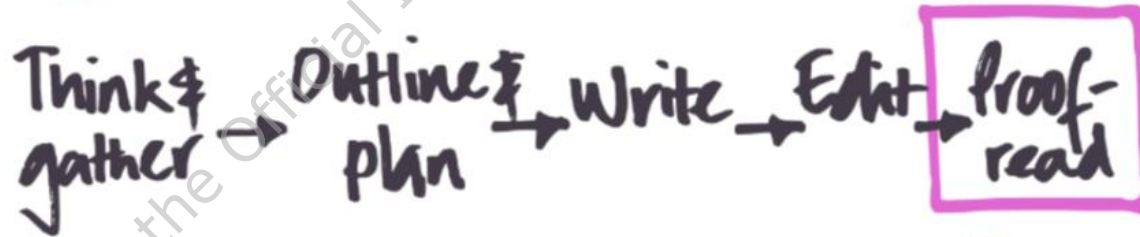


MENU

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Lesson 1 What is plain language
- ▶ Lesson 2 Your readers
- ▶ Lesson 3 Writing process
- ▶ Lesson 4 Purpose
- ▶ Lesson 5 Structure
- ▶ Lesson 6 Sentences
- ▶ Lesson 7 Words
- ▼ Lesson 8 Editing and proofreading
  - Lesson 8 — Editing and proofreading
  - Editing fixes any problems with the big picture, structure, ...
  - Proofreading is the last step**
  - Quiz
  - Congratulations!

Proofreading is the last step

# 5 STEPS in the WRITING PROCESS



YOU ARE HERE

write



MENU

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Lesson 1 What is plain language
- ▶ Lesson 2 Your readers
- ▶ Lesson 3 Writing process
- ▶ Lesson 4 Purpose
- ▶ Lesson 5 Structure
- ▶ Lesson 6 Sentences
- ▶ Lesson 7 Words

▼ Lesson 8 Editing and proofreading

Lesson 8 — Editing and proofreading

Editing fixes any problems with the big picture, structure, ...

Proofreading is the last step

[Quiz](#)

Congratulations!

1. Your manager reviews your document and suggests you move your conclusions to the first page.

- Editing
- Proofreading

write



Released under the Official Information Act 1982

MENU

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Lesson 1 What is plain language
- ▶ Lesson 2 Your readers
- ▶ Lesson 3 Writing process
- ▶ Lesson 4 Purpose
- ▶ Lesson 5 Structure
- ▶ Lesson 6 Sentences
- ▶ Lesson 7 Words

▼ Lesson 8 Editing and proofreading

Lesson 8 – Editing and proofreading

Editing fixes any problems with the big picture, structure, ...

Proofreading is the last step

Quiz

Congratulations!

# Congratulations!



You've completed the Plain Language Foundations course. We hope you've enjoyed it and can use what you've learnt.

**write**

[www.write.co.nz](http://www.write.co.nz) • Using the power of words for good



Released under the Official Information Act 1982