

Arguing for plain language

The following is a list of resources that may help you be a plain language advocate.

Karen Schriver, Plain by Design: Evidence-based plain language <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AMvMTvKV9Wc>

Readers prefer plain language

- Reading business writing isn't like reading a novel / no one wants to read what you write <http://www.informationmapping.com/en/resources/blog/nobody-wants-to-read-what-you-write-1?platform=hootsuite>
- As a reader's level of education increases, so does their preference for plain language: Trudeau C. http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1843415
AND <https://gds.blog.gov.uk/2014/02/17/guest-post-clarity-is-king-the-evidence-that-reveals-the-desperate-need-to-re-think-the-way-we-write/>
- What's easy to read is easy to like <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/why-easy-to-read-easy-like-what-science-tells-us-caitlin-whiteman>
- Simple vs sophisticated tone of voice / Economist style guide <http://www.dorisandbertie.com/goodcopybadcopy/2016/01/04/sophisticated-tone-of-voice>
- When the audience is the general public, who do we write for? <http://www.thelanguagelab.ca/posts/using-plain-language-is-the-least-you-can-do-modern-best-practice/>
- Even Google wants you to use plain language <http://centerforplainlanguage.org/google-content-guidelines/>

You don't sound smart

- Consequences of Erudite Vernacular Utilized Irrespective of Necessity: Problems with Using Long Words Needlessly. <http://www.ucd.ie/artspgs/semantics/ConsequencesErudite.pdf>
- Your attempts to be courteous can actually offend http://www.dorisandbertie.com/goodcopybadcopy/2013/09/11/courteous-english-can-make-readers-angry/?utm_content=buffercf92f&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer
- Readers label you based on your style / plain passages preferred <https://proswrite.com/2015/10/30/readers-label-you/>
- Common refrain against #PlainLanguage: "It doesn't sound professional." But what's professional about a blank stare? – Centre for plain language tweet
- <http://socialtriggers.com/the-big-problem-with-big-words-hint-they-make-you-look-stupid/>
- <http://www.business.com/technology/cut-the-code-why-speaking-in-technical-jargon-is-not-making-you-look-smarter/>
- <http://lifehacker.com/using-big-words-doesn-t-always-make-you-sound-smarter-1737035773>

Plain language is good for business

- Plain language helps the bottom line <http://www.plainlanguage.gov/whyPL/benefits/bottomline.cfm>
- Using plain language is profitable <http://ht.ly/MuZb8>
- <http://www.marketingdonut.co.uk/marketing/customer-care/customer-complaints/jargon-basement-how-not-to-talk-to-customers>

Evidence of importance of plain language

- Study finds plain language makes court forms more user-friendly <http://centerforplainlanguage.org/court-forms-user-friendly/>

Editors Canada Conference, Vancouver, 2016

- Consumers Council of Canada warns Canadian businesses and consumers both face risk from poorly understood terms and conditions statements <https://cira.ca/news/consumers-council-canada-warns-canadian-businesses-and-consumers-both-face-risk-poorly>
- Jargon in legal language (And if 2 yahoos out of 376 are impressed, the cost-benefit of using Latinisms isn't there) <http://t.co/tp68yg7ALK>
- Plain language and justice system <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3183333/Social-worker-s-jargon-like-foreign-language-Angry-judge-calls-experts-write-reports-plain-language-involved-understand.html>

Consequences of not using plain language

- Medical errors leading to death (communication) <http://www.cbc.ca/news/health/medical-errors-deaths-1.3565736>
- Language, culture, and medical tragedy: the case of Willie Ramirez <http://healthaffairs.org/blog/2008/11/19/language-culture-and-medical-tragedy-the-case-of-willie-ramirez/>
- The high costs of language barriers in medical malpractice. www.healthlaw.org/images/stories/High_Costs_of_Language_Barriers_in_Malpractice.pdf
- Without proper language interpretation... a \$350,000 verdict is reached <http://www.ahcmedia.com/articles/29414-legal-review-commentary-without-proper-language-interpretation-sight-is-lost-in-oregon-and-a-350-000-verdict-is-reached>
- The Comma That Costs 1 Million Dollars (Canadian) http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/25/business/worldbusiness/25comma.html?_r=0

Editor as advocate

- <http://www.talksciencetome.com/editor-as-advocate>
- <https://www.copiediting.com/disabling-ableist-language/>

Suggested reading levels

- This Surprising Reading Level Analysis Will Change the Way You Write <https://contently.com/strategist/2015/01/28/this-surprising-reading-level-analysis-will-change-the-way-you-write/>
- "Even though most adults read at an eighth-grade level, and 20 percent of the population reads at or below a fifth-grade level." <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16100861>
- Medline suggests grade 7 or 8 <https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/etr.html> Medline ETR (Easy to read) health materials
- National Institutes of Health (NIH) patient education material should be at 4th to 6th grade <http://medicaleconomics.modernmedicine.com/medical-economics/content/tags/jama-internal-medicine/most-patient-education-materials-suffer-lack-r>
- Health Canada says grade 6-8 for Patient Medication Information on products http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/prodpharma/applic-demande/guide-ld/monograph/pm_faq_mp_fq-eng.php
- Experts recommend that documents for the general public be written at the 7th-grade level. Documents about health, medicine, or safety should be written at the 5th-grade level. Plain Language Quality and Productivity Commission http://qpc.co.la.ca.us/cms1_033658.pdf
- Canadians have low literacy <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2528650/> and <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/hcp/details/education.aspx>