

Assessing Written Materials

Reading Ease and Actionability

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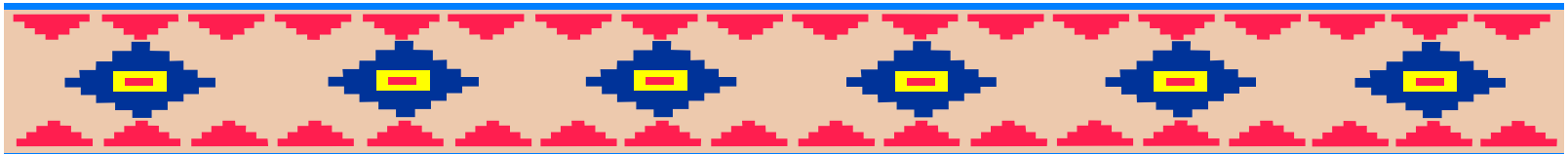
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Literacy, Language and Culture

Language is reflective of cultural beliefs and concepts.

In the Navajo language there is no word or concept for chemotherapy.



Source: Andrulis, DP and Brach, C. (2007) Integrating Literacy, Culture, and Language to Improve Health Care Quality for Diverse Populations. *Am J Health Behav.* 31(Suppl 1): S122-133.

Enhanced Cultural and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) Standards

- **Principle Standard (Standard 1).** Provide effective, equitable, understandable and respectful quality care and services that are responsive to diverse **cultural** health beliefs and practices, preferred **languages, health literacy** and other communication needs.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health.
National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health and Health Care: A Blueprint for Advancing and Sustaining CLAS Policy and Practice. U.S. DHHS. Washington, DC: 2013.

CLAS Standards by Theme



- **Governance, Leadership and Workforce** (Standards 2-4)
- **Communication and Language Assistance** (Standards 5-8)
- **Engagement, Continuous Improvement and Accountability** (Standards 9-15)

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health. *National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health and Health Care: A Blueprint for Advancing and Sustaining CLAS Policy and Practice*. U.S. DHHS. Washington, DC: 2013.

Integrate Health Literacy and Cultural Competency

- Plain language + **Translation** + Cultural Relevance
- Avoid Jargon + **Interpretation** + Teach-back



What do you find hard to read and why?

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Article Title

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Abstract

>Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Ut purus elit, vestibulum ut, placerat ac, adipiscing vitae, felis. Curabitur dictum gravida mauris. Nam arcu libero, nonummy eget, consectetur id, euismod sodales, sollicitudin vel, wisi. Morbi auctor lorem non justo. Nam lacu libero, pretium at, lobortis vitae, ultricies et, tellus. Donec aliquet, tortor sed accumsan bibendum, erat ligula aliquet magna, vitae ornare odio metus a mi. Morbi ac cecci et nisl, hendrerit mollis. Suspendisse ut massa. Cras nec ante. Pellentesque a nulla. Cum sociis natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus. Aliquam tincidunt urna. Nulla ullamcorper vestibulum turpis. Pellentesque cursus luctus mauris.

I. INTRODUCTION

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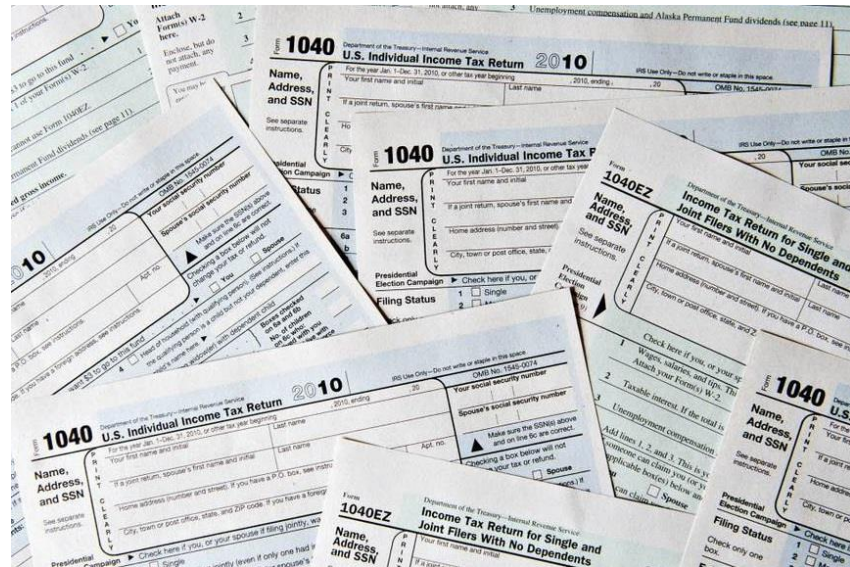
II. METHODS

Maecenas sed ultricies felis. Sed imperdiet dictum arcu a egestas.

- Donec dolor arcu, rutrum id molestie in, viverra sed diam
- Curabitur feugiat
- turpis sed auctor facilisis
- arcu eros accumsan lorem, at posuere mi diam sit amet tortor
- Fusce fermentum, mi sit amet accumsan rutrum
- sem lorem molestie diam, iaculis aliquet sapien tortor non nisi
- Pellentesque bibendum pretium aliquet

Quisque ullamcorper placerat ipsum. Cras nibb. Morbi vel justo vitae lacus tincidunt ultr-

*A thank you or further information



Audience-Centered Materials Development

- Involve your **AUDIENCE**
- Specify **OBJECTIVES**
- Consider **USE** and **FORMAT**
- Develop the **CONTENT**



Develop the Content

- Use everyday “*living room*” language
- Limit information to *need to know*
- Provide information that is *culturally relevant* to audience concerns
- Break complex information and instructions into manageable *chunks*

Activity

Plain language practice

Write down 5 medical words or public health terms. Suggest alternative living room language familiar to your audience.

How People Process Text

Adapted from Doak C, Doak L, Root J. *Teaching Patients with Low Literacy Skills* (2nd edition). Lippincott 2007

<i>Proficient Readers</i>	<i>Below Basic Readers</i>
Interpret meaning, generalize	Take words literally
Read with fluency	Read slowly, or one word at a time
Get help for uncommon words	Skip over unfamiliar words
Grasp the context, make inferences	Miss the context, may not make inferences
Persists in reading	Tires quickly when reading

Plain Language Writing Principles

- Write in everyday language
- Define unfamiliar words
- Use active voice
- Use shorter words and shorter sentences
- Avoid abbreviations and acronyms
- Give *pro-nun-see-AY-shun* if needed



Tips for Writing

- Q & A format (“I”/ “you”)
- Bulleted lists
- Interaction
- Story telling
- Dialogues

Plain Language Design Principles

- Lots of white space and wide margins
- Use **SERIF** font for text
- **NON SERIF** for headers
- Larger type (12 point or larger)
- **UPPER AND LOWER CASE—NOT ALL CAPS**
- ***Avoid italics, script, fancy fonts***

Plain Language Design Principles

- **Bold**, concise headers
- Consider use of columns
- Ragged right edge
- Appealing colors
- High contrast

RECOMMENDED REGARDING WRITING IN TERMS OF ITS RECEPTION

IT IS NOT INAPPROPRIATE , WHEN USING PRINT MEDIA TO IMPART MATERIAL OF A FACTUAL OR INTERPRETIVE NATURE WHICH HOLDS THE INTENTION OF CONVEYING CRITICAL INFORMATION TO AND/OR INCLUDING A CRITICAL ACTION BY ITS PROSPECTIVE RECIPIENTS, TO EMPLOY RELATIVELY NONCOMPLEX VERBIAGE SO AS TO MAXIMIZE COMRPEHENSION IN THE AFOREMENTIONED POPULATION.

Credit: Lessons in Plain Language 1992, PLAN, Inc.

How Readers Process Visuals

Adapted from Doak C, Doak L, Root J. *Teaching Patients with Low Literacy Skills* (2nd edition). Lippincott 2007

<i>Proficient Readers</i>	<i>Below Basic Readers</i>
Scan the visual to find central concept	Eyes wander, difficulty finding central focus
Quickly identify key features in a visual	May skip over key features
Separate key points from details	May get lost in or too focused on details
Quickly interpret visual information to derive meaning	Interpret visuals more literally

Tips for Visuals

High-Fiber Diet

Eat foods like these every day to get enough fiber:

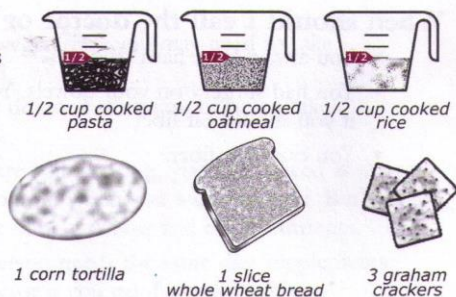
- 2 servings of fruits like:



- 3 servings of vegetables like:



- 6 servings of cereals or grains like:



- Use realistic, uncluttered drawings or photos
- Select images relevant to your audience
- Apply labels and arrows

Tips for Numbers

- Reduce effort, do the math
- Provide fewer options
- Keep denominator the same (1 in 100 / 4 in 10)
- Use appropriate visuals
- Use labels carefully (poor, fair good, excellent)
- Use frequency (1 out of 10) vs percent (10%)



www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/numeracy-course

Notes on Translation

- **DO NOT USE Online Tools**
- **DO NOT EXPECT Word-for-word**



- Emphasize need for plain language
- Work with experienced translators
- Consider back-translation
- Field-test and localize

Field-testing

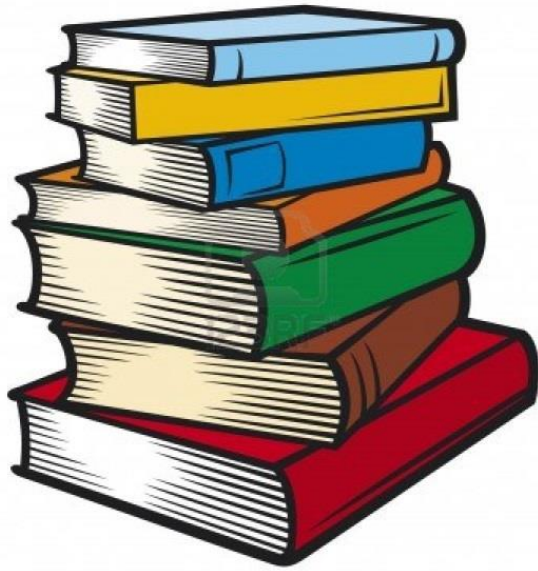
A process of reviewing draft materials with your target audience

- **Questions**

- What did you learn?
- What will you do?
- How would you say this?
- What do the pictures tell you?



Materials Assessment

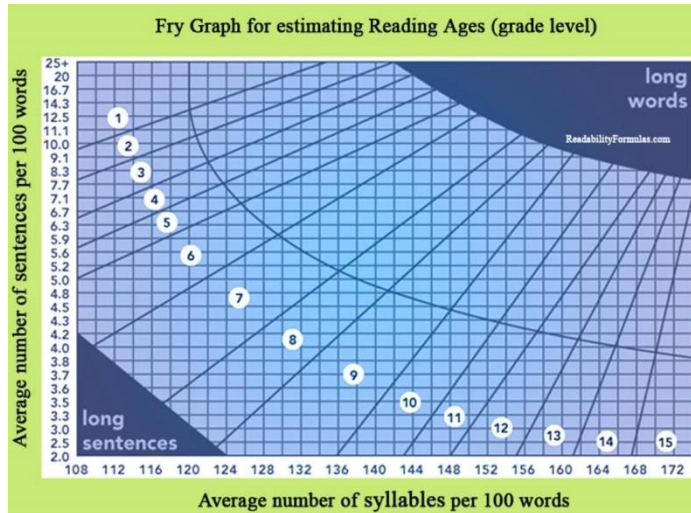


Available for English,
Spanish, German Chinese,
French, Hebrew, Russian,
Vietnamese, others.

What are readability formulas?

- Assess the reading grade level at which a material is written
- Mathematically calculated and expressed as a school grade level
- Correlated plus or minus 1.5 grade
- Most assess two aspects of text
 - Word length
 - Sentence length

Readability Formulas



- **Fry**

- Number of words per sentence, syllables per word
- Plotted on a graph
- 100 word sample

- **SMOG**

- Simplified Measure of Gobbledygook
- Extensively used in health
- 3 samples of 10 sentences

Pros and Cons

- How are they helpful?
- What are their limitations?



Beyond Readability



CDC Clear Communication Index

<http://www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/pdf/clear-communication-user-guide.pdf>

Patient Education Materials Assessment Tool (PEMAT)

<https://www.ahrq.gov/professionals/prevention-chronic-care/improve/self-mgmt/pemat/index.html>

Suitability Assessment of Materials (SAM)

<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/healthliteracy/resources/d-oak-book>

Criteria for Assessment

- Language
- Design
- Cultural Appropriateness
- Numbers
- Call to Action

Check List Approach

Language

- ❖ Does both the main message and call to action use active voice?

- Yes = 1
- No = 0
- NA

Design

- ❖ Does the material use bulleted or numbered items?

- Yes = 1
- No = 0
- NA

Actionability

- ❖ Does the material include one or more calls to action

- Yes = 1
- No = 0
- NA

Numbers

- ❖ Does the material explain what the numbers mean?

- Yes = 1
- No = 0
- NA

Culture

- ❖ Does the material include pictures reflective of the primary audience?

- Yes = 1
- No = 0
- NA

90% or above = Excellent

89% or below = Needs improvement

Score ___ / Total ___ x 100 = ___%

Activity

Small group discussion

Review fact sheets. Consider criteria for assessment. Which is easier to read and why?

Key Points

- Take an audience-centered approach to materials development
- Keep literacy, language and culture in mind throughout the process
- Practice plain language writing and design principles
- Field-test your materials and make suggested changes