

Better Plain Language for Better Health Outcomes

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What is Plain Language?



- wording
- structure
- DESIGN

that help readers
find, understand, & use
relevant information

Better PL is based on 5 principles

- 1 **Relevance:** fit content to purpose
- 2 **Textuality:** word ideas clearly
- 3 **Adequacy:** adapt style to the audience
- 4 **Accessibility:** apply structure & design
- 5 **Actionability:** plan & test for usability

How does PL fit in Health Literacy?



The **ISSUE:** **MYTHS** about PL
hinder your readers!

- ✗ One size fits all
- ✗ Ditch the passive voice
- ✗ Write as if you were speaking
- ✗ Readability formulas are the answer
- ✗ PL is the opposite of scientific language

more than lay term substitutions or readability scores

- ✗ Migraines are a neurological disorder with extremely incapacitating neurovascular symptoms, typically characterized by paroxysmal pain, usually unilateral, and other accompanying neurological...
- ✗ Migraines are a seriously disabling condition that affects nerves and blood vessels. Its main symptom is sudden pounding pain usually on one side of the head. Other symptoms include...

Filter content, check grammar, link sentences with cohesion & sort ideas with coherence

- ✓ Migraine is an incapacitating neurovascular disorder characterized by paroxysmal attacks of unilateral throbbing headache. It is accompanied by a host of neurological symptoms including hypersensitivity to light...

Score
Post-grad

Once text makes sense, then adapt style, structure, and design

- ✓ Migraine is a type of headache that:
 - causes pounding pain,
 - often affects just one side of the head,
 - interrupts plans and routines, and ...

Pounding pain
Mostly on one side
Sensitivity to light,
sound, and smell



Score
Grade 7

Dig deeper into the inner workings of text so your readers feel welcome

- Select and prioritize content
- Create flow and highlight connections
- Adapt terminology and style
- Use structure and signposts for guidance
- Include helpful visualizations

Score
Post-grad

Score
Grade 7