Checklist for Using Plain Language

Plain language (also called simple language) ensures that your text is concise and easy to understand. Using simple language benefits people with learning or other cognitive disabilities and language barriers.

To write using plain language, try the following tips:

- Cut extra words.
- Use short, everyday words, for example:
  - Ask, instead of inquire.
  - Next, instead of subsequently.
  - Help, instead of render assistance.
- Use the active voice (i.e., the doer of the action is at the beginning of sentence):
  - "Customers can now board the train on platform 12" (active voice).
  - "The train on platform 12 can now be boarded" (passive voice).
- Write in short sentences.
- Use action verbs.
- Avoid difficult words and explain difficult words if you must use them.
- Use contractions (i.e., don't instead of do not).
- Use neutral pronouns (they/them).
- Use bulleted lists.

For more information and resources on plain language, checkout these links:

  - [Translation Bureau, Government of Canada, Plain Language](#)
  - [Online readability checker](#)
  - [Readability Calculator](#)
  - [Datayze Readability Analyzer](#)