



MATIELLA HEALTH COMMUNICATIONS

Are Your Materials Easy to Read? 20 Questions

As health educators, we strive to use materials that are easy to read, but in my work as a social marketing and health communications consultant, I still encounter confusion about how to assess materials for Plain Language. Here are 20 questions you can ask yourself as you are reviewing materials for your audiences and remember, even folks who are highly educated and have no problem with literacy want something concise and easy to read!



Ask yourself these questions about the materials you are currently using. If you answer “no” to more than 3 of these questions, consider revising, editing, or hiring a Plain Language expert to help you.

1. Is the educational material written at 6th grade level or lower?
2. Does the material focus on only one or two educational/behavioral objectives?
3. Is the material written in the active voice?
4. Does the material clearly tell the reader what to do?
5. Has the material been field-tested with the intended audience?
6. Does it avoid the use of jargon?
7. If it uses jargon, does it explain it clearly and directly?
8. Does the material use organizing headers to guide the reader?
9. Is there plenty of white space?
10. Is the material written in short and natural sentences? (“Short” means less than 10 words.)
11. Is the material written in upper and lower case as opposed to all caps?
12. Has the use of Italics been avoided?
13. Has the use of all caps been avoided?
14. Does it use bold letters or underlining for emphasis, instead of all caps?
15. Does the material use serif type?
16. Does the material use a 12pt type or larger?
17. Is the material written with dark ink on light background for maximum contrast?
18. Are illustrations, photos and drawings culturally relevant and appropriate to the intended audience?
19. Can the reader follow the text from left-to-right?
20. Is the material respectful and not condescending?

For more information on how Matiella Health Communications can help you create easy to read, and entertaining educational materials in Spanish or English or Both, contact us at

www.matiellahealthcommunications.com