

Keep it Short and Simple

1. Short and Simple Words

- a. avoid long or difficult words
- b. avoid jargon
- c. use as few words as possible

2. Short and Simple Sentences

- a. use the active rather than the passive voice
- b. use "we" and "you" and "do" (the imperative mood)
- c. use verbs rather than nouns derived from verbs
- d. use bullets
- e. use no more than 20 words in a sentence (aim for 10 - 14 for best readability)

3. Short and Simple Paragraphs

- a. one topic (or subtopic) per paragraph
- b. strong topic sentences

Use: Short, clear sentences, short clear paragraphs, bullets, keep bold, italics, and capitals to a minimum. No underlining, acronyms, abbreviations, or other symbols.

Design Tips

- Write in short paragraphs to introduce white space
- Use left flush, right-ragged orientation
- Break a word at end of line **only** with justified text
- Use serif font for body text, sans-serif for headings
- Use a larger font for easier reading (at least 12)
- Avoid too many different fonts in one document
- Use **bold** for emphasis, not underlining or all caps
- Avoid ALLCAPS for headings
- Avoid extended body text in italics
- Maintain good contrast between text and background
- Use graphics to enhance, attract, but not distract