

IS IT EASY TO WRITE EASY ENGLISH?

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YES! ANYONE CAN WRITE EASY ENGLISH. ALL YOU NEED TO DO IS LEARN THE STYLE AND PRACTISE.

There are a number of key features that are commonly found in Easy English documents produced in Australia and overseas. For example, simplified language and grammar; key messages; good formatting; and images to aid understanding of difficult concepts.

But we won't focus on these features now. You can read more about them in Scope's *Clear Written Communications* style guide or the [Research to Action guide](#), which was based on research conducted by Scope and the University of Melbourne in 2017.

If you want to write Easy English documents for your organisation, these five practical tips will help you get started.

1. Think about your audience

- When planning your document, consider what people with low English literacy really need to know. How can you help them understand key messages? What do you want them to do with the information?
- Think about the length of your document. Reading can be hard work for people with low literacy – even if it is written in Easy English. Based on feedback from our own consumer testers, we recommend a maximum of 20 pages of Easy English.
- Also, involve your readers in the process whenever you can. Their input is invaluable.

2. Get the structure right

- Read your document a few times before you get started. Think about what is 'nice to know' versus 'need to know' information. Internally-focused information like mission and vision statements or corporate achievements is a good place to start hitting delete.
- Think about your key headings. You can be organised and start with a draft heading hierarchy, then move information into relevant sections, or you can edit the document as you go. There's no right or wrong approach – it just comes down to your own writing style.
- We like to start our documents with an introduction about 'hard words' and 'how to get help'. We usually follow the introduction with trusted themes of 'who, what, when, where and why'. And we always conclude with a call to action such as a 'more information' or 'contact' page.
- When you restructure a document into a logical flow with clear headings, it's easy to identify repetitive or unnecessary information.

3. Get writing!

- It's a good idea to use Easy English formatting when you write your document. For example, large font, white space and bullet lists. This helps to get your head into the Easy English writing style.
- If you get stuck, why not refer to some Easy English documents that have been written about similar topics for inspiration?
- As you write or edit information, remember to simplify language and unpack hard words and concepts using definitions, examples and bullet lists where needed.
- If you identify that your document is missing some key information, make sure you add it under appropriate headings or sub-headings.



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4. Images must add meaning

- Only add images next to text when you are trying to explain hard words or concepts.
- If you add images that don't explain the text you risk confusing your reader.
- Too many images can also make a page look cluttered and take up valuable white space.
- PS: make sure you get permission to use images and logos in your Easy English documents.

5. Shout about your Easy English communications

- You've recognised that people with low English literacy are an important part of your audience and you've created Easy English documents to address their needs. Now you just need to make the documents available in places and formats that are easy to access.
- Bottom line: Writing Easy English is easy. Just follow these practical tips and get started!