

Apolitical workshop: Essential writing skills for working effectively in government

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Speak plainly

The simpler the language, the more **everyone** understands and retains

- global connectedness
- immigration

Plain language and simplifying is not dumbing down. It's

- not using jargon and slang
- explaining technical terms or concepts
- using simple sentence structure
- using active voice

Use analogies and comparisons make things tangible

- themeasureofthings.com

What do **they** need?

Focus on what the readers need to know, not what you want to tell them

- curse of knowledge

Why does it matter to them?

- impacts
- benefits
- risks

Make your call to action clear

Don't bury the lead

- put whatever it is you need people to know or do **first**
- if they only read your title or first sentence, make sure it's the most important thing

Tell them how

- be clear
- don't skip steps

Why comes last

- this is usually what we want to tell them
- also supports transparency

Speak to your audience

Match how and where you communicate with the people you're talking to

Break your audiences down

- what do they value?
- what kind of language or messaging do they respond to?
- where are they and where do they get their information?

Generational differences

Baby boomers

- avoid punitive language
- frame benefits in terms of happiness, cost savings, health/well-being

Generation X

- short and simple, involve over tell
- frame benefits in terms of local impact and time savings

Millenials/Generation Y

- diverse and accepting but get to the point and be honest
- frame benefits in terms of cost-savings and wellness

Generation Z

- smart and socially conscious, choose brands that share their views and tend to be progressive
- be transparent and authentic, make interactions meaningful, personal
- frame benefits in terms of new experiences, innovation and doing good

Equitable and inclusive language

The words we use, or don't use, matter

Pay attention to colonial and white-centered language

- Columbus didn't "discover" America, he visited there
- Chief
- Master
- Blacklist (or whitelist)
- Grandfathered

Find out what terms people you talk to prefer and use them

Be open to feedback and learning