

# Making information easier to read and understand



Make it easy to see and read



Say it simply



Say it clearly



Keep it short and focussed



Show and tell

# Make it easy to see and read

Use big enough writing  12pt+

Many people like writing to be 14pt or 16pt. Large print writing must be at least 16pt.

Use sans serif font (no flicks or tails)

 Sans serif  Serifs

Sans serif fonts do not have any extra lines or fancy tails that make the shape of the letters harder to see and read. Examples of sans serif fonts are: Calibri, FS Me, Poppins, and Arial.

Protect the shape of letters

 no effects  
bold  *italics*  
BLOCK CAPITALS  
underlining

You can use bold text to make some words stand out. It does not change the shape of the letters.

Do not use italics, block capitals or underline.



## Use sentence case

Sentence case is when you only use a capital letter for the first letter of:

- the first word in a new sentence,
- proper nouns (a proper noun is a word that names something specific, for example a city, country, person or company),
- words in a title.

Write left to right with equal spaces between words (left align)



Never right align or justify



Right aligned text is harder to read for most people in the UK (and other English speaking or Western countries) who learned to read and write from left to right.




Justified text is spread across the page so it starts and stops an equal distance from both sides of the page. This makes the spaces between words unequal (different) and can make it harder to read.

## Put space between lines of writing

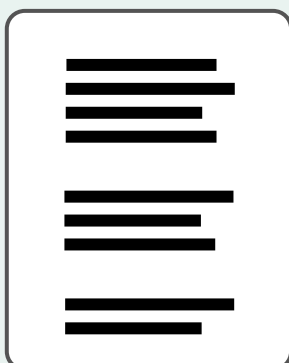


Use 1.15 line spacing (line spacing is the setting on your computer that sets how much space is between lines of writing).

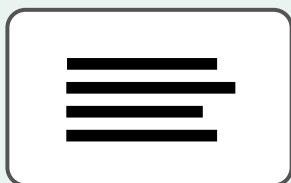
## Use normal character spacing (spaces between letters)

-  Most people find text with normal spaces between letters easier to read.
-  Text with spread out characters can be harder to read.
-  Decreased letter spacing makes text hard to read.

## Put space between paragraphs and different bits of information

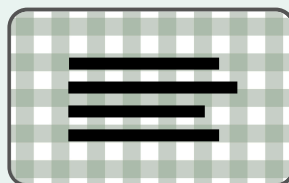
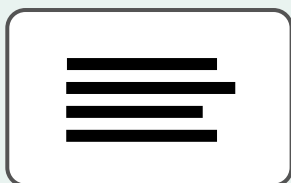


## Put space around your writing

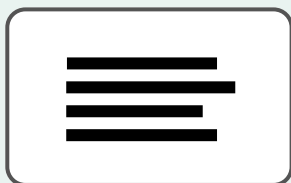


Space around writing helps our eyes and brains see letters and words more easily and make sense of what we are seeing.

## Make your background plain. Never put your writing over a pattern or picture.



## Use contrasting colours for your writing and background



Write in a colour that is easy to see against your background. Usually it is best to use dark text on a light background.

Some people prefer different contrast colours, for example white text on black background, or yellow text on darker blue.

## Make your information easy to find and navigate

### Use headings and subheadings

Headings and subheadings provide structure to a document. They signal what each section is about. An example of a subheading would be the name of a section or new topic.

### Use bigger font for titles and headings to make them stand out

### Start new topics on a new page

#### Example:



### A pill organiser

You can use a pill organiser for your medication.

# Say it simply



Use easy words



Use common words



Short words can be easier to understand (if they are also common words)



Explain hard or unusual words e.g. compliance

an injection  
in your back  
to stop you  
feeling pain



Explain medical or technical words (jargon) e.g. epidural



Do not use contractions (e.g. don't, we're)



Use basic, common punctuation

, . ?

## Word length

Shorter words are often easier to understand, but not always. The most common word will be the easiest to understand, even if it is longer.

For example, the word different is easier to understand than vary because it is used more often, so more people know what it means.



## Contractions

Contractions are words that have been shortened by taking away letters and adding an apostrophe in place of the missing letters. Examples of contractions are it's, won't, or we'll.

Contractions can be confusing to some readers. Some people do not know that the apostrophe means there are missing letters. Some people cannot see or process the apostrophe. For some it looks like the letter L/l or I/i.



Do not use negative contractions (for example don't, wouldn't). Some readers think these mean the opposite.



Never use complex or less common contractions (for example should've, could've).



Never use contractions that look like another word if the apostrophe was not there. For example:

- we'll (can look like 'well')
- I'll (can look like 'ill')
- we're (can look like 'were')



# Say it clearly



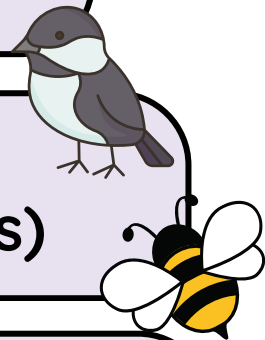
Say exactly what you mean



do not be vague (do not hint at or suggest your meaning)



Do not use metaphors, sayings, euphemisms (e.g. birds and the bees)



Give simple, direct instructions using the active voice e.g. swallow the pill



Explain abbreviations and acronyms - words first

Home  
Sampling  
Kit (HSK)



Give examples



Use words that have clear meanings

- words that sound alike but mean different things can be confusing (e.g. hypo and hyper)
- words that have more than one meaning can be confusing

# Keep it short and focused



Use the fewest words needed

a bit, very,  
quite, some



Leave out or remove words that do not add clear meaning



Use short, focused sentences



Use short, focused paragraphs

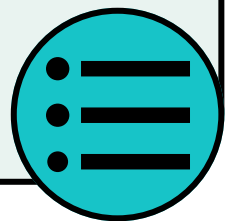


Talk about 1 topic, point, or idea in each sentence or paragraph



Break complicated information or instructions into small parts

- short sentences, steps, or bullet points are good



## Example:

You can get a free pregnancy test from:

- your school nurse
- a sexual health service
- your doctor
- a pharmacy

# Show and tell

Pictures can be very helpful for some people. They can make written information easier to understand.



Use simple, clear pictures



Make your pictures big enough for people to see the details easily



Use accurate and factual pictures



Use pictures that match what you are writing about



Use age appropriate images

Example:



You need to remember to take a pill at the same time each day.



[www.healthyrespect.co.uk](http://www.healthyrespect.co.uk)



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