

10 tips for readable content

A web writer's role is not just to write, but to communicate. To do this successfully online, content must be clear, direct and concise.

1	Write an approachable style	Avoid writing in a tone that is too formal. Don't use bureaucratese, legalese, marketese, academic style or gobbledegook.
2	Use everyday words	Use words familiar to users of the content. Be careful using jargon or specialist language. Avoid idioms.
3	Be careful using abbreviations	Try to limit abbreviations, acronyms or initialisms to those familiar to users of the content.
4	Write short sentences	Aim for an average sentence length of 15-20 words. Avoid sentences longer than 30-35 words.
5	Prefer the active voice	Only use the passive voice when appropriate (for example, when the actor is irrelevant or unknown, or to emphasise the object of the action).
6	Don't turn verbs into nouns	Check verb phrases. Look for nouns ending in -ion, -ment, -ing, -ant, -ance, -ness and -dom. Where appropriate, rewrite to use them as verbs.
7	Use verbs in the present tense	Where possible, rewrite future-tense verbs to use the present tense.
8	Use personal pronouns	Refer to the owner of the content with 'we' and 'our' and to users with 'you' and 'your'.
9	Write concisely	Watch out for paired words, wordy phrases and other unnecessary words.
10	Review and edit	Never publish a first draft. Let some time pass before editing. Review from a printed version. Read the draft aloud. Where possible, get another writer to do a further review.