

Plain Writing

What is our goal?

Desired Organizational Outcomes: NARA writers communicate clearly and concisely, with the reader's needs in mind. NARA complies with the Plain Writing Act of 2010 and NARA Policy 120, Plain Writing at NARA, and gets high marks for the effectiveness and clarity of its communications from readers and the Center for Plain Language.

What do I need to do?

Supervisors and Managers are expected to

- **write** internal and external communications in plain language and encourage staff to also do so,
- **ensure review** of documents and web pages before they are published (see the Plain Language checklist), and
- **identify and assist** employees who need to develop their writing.

How do I need to manage this?

Supervisors and Managers should **routinely ensure** that their staff who write for the public

- **track** the types of communications (print and online) written in plain language,
- **solicit public and customer response** on how the use of plain language has improved the customer experience, and
- **report these responses** to the Office's POC for NARA's annual compliance report.
- [See chart on Page 2](#)

Where can I get help?

Program Office POC (communicates information, collects data)

Learning Opportunities (webinar, classroom, one-on-one support)

Plain Language Checklist (must be in NARA network)

Introduction to Plain Language Online Course_(LMS log-in required)

Plain Writing Tips

[Top 10 Plain Writing List](#)

Performance Management

- [NARA Competencies](#)
Communication, Customer Service
- [Strategic Plan](#)
Connect with Customers

Helpful Links/ Resources

- **NARA Directive 120**
- **Annual Compliance Tracking Form**
- **Plain Language Checklist**
- [NARA Style Guide](#)
- [PlainLanguage.gov](#)
- Plain Language on Archives.gov
- Plain Language on NARA@work

Quick Contacts

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Plain Writing POC

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Leadership/Management Strategies to Support Plain Writing

1. **Teach your employees** that writing is plain when readers can...

- **Find** what they need *without much effort*
- **Understand** what they find
- **Use** what they find to meet their needs

2. **Develop work processes** that might include...

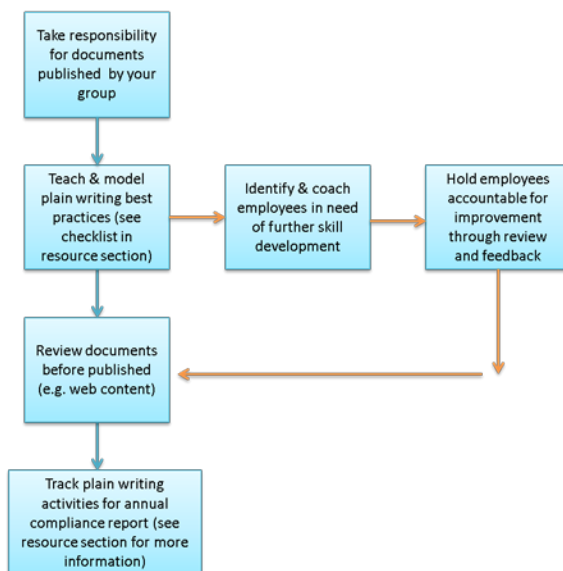
- Peer review that is productive and supportive
- An ICN group to collaborate on work, build best practices, and share and manage knowledge

3. **Communicate the benefits** of plain writing to your team and to NARA . Using plain language...

- Increases trust and agency integrity with the customer
- Reduces the number of questions from customers about what they need to do
- Reduces the number of customer errors on forms and applications
- Reduces the time staff spend on correcting errors

Set clear expectations. Consider mistakes as teaching moments to build morale, trust and learning. Use objective, frequent, constructive feedback to encourage and develop staff. Let them know when the work is well done and when improvement is needed.

***Increase agency integrity and customer trust
with clear communication***



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