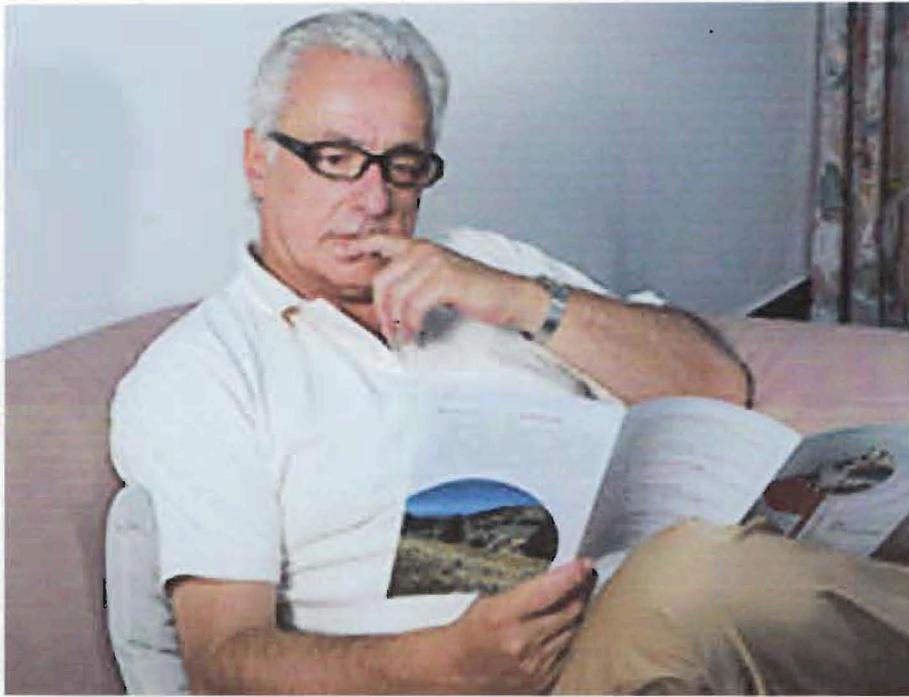


PRESTIGE COMMUNICATIONS



Guidelines for Writing Low Health-Literacy Literature

PRESTIGE COMMUNICATIONS PRESENTS

Guidelines for Writing Low Health-Literacy Literature

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Section
1

Simplifying Content

- ❖ **Write in plain language.**
- ❖ **Use personal pronouns.**
- ❖ **Avoid gender specific words.**
- ❖ **Use the active voice.**

	
<i>I made an appointment with the doctor.</i>	<i>An appointment with the doctor has been made.</i>

- ❖ **Action verbs get to the point faster.**

	
<i>pay</i>	<i>make payment</i>

- ❖ **Always repeat new or unfamiliar information.**
- ❖ **Sentences should be short and simple (i.e. 15-20 words).**

WRITING LOW HEALTH-LITERACY LITERATURE

- ❖ **Any unnecessary words should be eliminated so the reader does not become overwhelmed with information.**
- ❖ **Do not use synonyms; rather use the same words consistently. This will also decrease confusion and uncertainty.**
- ❖ **Medical terminology can be better understood by translating the Greek or Latin prefixes.**

	
<i>Swelling of the appendix</i>	<i>appendicitis</i>

- ❖ **Give examples to explain words the reader may have difficulty understanding.**
- ❖ **Be specific with your examples.**

	
<i>Keep blood glucose levels between 70-150 mg.</i>	<i>Keep blood glucose levels in a normal range.</i>

Section
2

Displaying the Information

- ❖ **Context should always come before the content.**
- ❖ **Organize information around major points (headings) and leave out less important information.**
 - Headings should be larger than their subtopics.
 - Headings should be in bold print.
 - Headings are more effective if displayed in question format

	
<i>What is Heart Disease?</i>	<i>Heart Disease</i>

- ❖ **Incorporate blank spaces to visually transition between main topics.**
- ❖ **Key points should be placed in the first and last section of the display.**
- ❖ **Choose fonts carefully.**
 - Words should be bold and block style as opposed to cursive.
 - One font should remain constant throughout the material.
 - Font that is 12 point or larger is preferred.
- ❖ **Avoid distracting graphics or unnecessary designs on the display.**
- ❖ **Illustrations, graphs, and charts are useful for understanding and motivation; as long as they are consistent with the material.**

Testing Reading Level

There are many different methods to test the reading level of your written material. This method utilizes the Fog Index created by Robert Gunning.

- 1) Take a 100-word sample from your written material, stopping at the end of a sentence.**
- 2) Count how many sentences are in the sample.**
- 3) Count the number of words in the sample.**
- 4) Divide the number of words in the sample by the number of sentences in the sample.**
- 5) Count the number of words with three or more syllables in the sample. Record this as number of hard words.**
 - a. Only count each different word once.**

WRITING LOW HEALTH-LITERACY LITERATURE

- b. Do not count proper nouns or easy compound words.**
 - c. Do not count any three syllable word made from a two syllable word with one of the following endings: -s, -es, -'s, -ed, -er, -ing, -ly, or -est.**
 - d. *Do* count any three syllable word made from a two syllable word with one of the following endings: -or, -ier, -iest, or -ily.**
- 6) Add the average number of words per sentence (step 4) to the number of hard words (step 5).**
- 7) Multiply the number (from step 6) by 0.4. This will give you the approximate grade level of your material.**

Getting Feedback

- ❖ **Give the reader an opportunity to ask questions.**
- ❖ **Let them know that you and/or a doctor would not object to answering their questions.**
- ❖ **While communicating with the individual ask them in a non-demeaning manner to reiterate what you just explained.**