

Tips for clear written materials

1. Make your purpose and audience clear

- Tailor your title
- Use meaningful visuals

2. Organize your information

- Include only need-to-know information
- Put most important information first
- Use clear headings
- Chunk related information together
- Use bullet points strategically

3. Use simple words and clear sentences

- Replace jargon or define important terms
- Use active voice
- Get rid of extra words
- Aim for a 6th grade or lower reading level

4. Make information easy to use

- Add space for clarity
- Format text clearly
- Highlight behaviors

5. Keep numbers simple and clear

- Use only essential numbers
- Do the math
- Give numbers meaning
- Use visuals to help make numbers clear

Activity 1: Assess purpose and audience

Write a new title for this flyer.

Title:

How could you use visuals to make the audience and purpose clear?

Notes:

A Healthier Tomorrow Starts Today
CALL TOLL-FREE, 1-800-880-5305

Use This Mail-In Application To Apply For

No-Cost Health Coverage for Children, Birth Through Age 18, and Pregnant Women

- No-cost comprehensive health, dental and vision benefits for children.
- No monthly premiums.
- No copayments for any benefit.
- Choice of health insurance plans in most major population centers.
- Family property (such as savings or cars) does not count for eligibility.
- More children with higher family incomes qualify for **no-cost Medi-Cal**.
- Available for children of single or two-parent working families.
- Mail-in application. Does not require a visit to the welfare office to apply.

Low-Cost Health Coverage for Children Birth Through Age 18

- Low-cost comprehensive health, dental and vision insurance.
- Low monthly premiums from \$4 per child to a maximum of \$45 per family.
- No copayment for preventive services (such as immunizations). \$5 copayment for non-preventive services (such as going to the doctor due to illness).
- Choice of health, dental and vision insurance plans.
- Family property (such as savings or cars) does not count for eligibility.
- For children without health insurance and children on **Medi-Cal with a cost**.
- Available for children of single or two-parent working families.
- Mail-in application.
- Apply up to 3 months in advance for an unborn child, or a child who will turn 1 or 6 years old and lose **no-cost Medi-Cal**.

Medi-Cal and Healthy Families are two health care programs:

- Family size, age of the child and income determine which program a child may qualify for. A younger child may qualify for **no-cost Medi-Cal** and an older child may qualify for **Healthy Families**.
- If the child qualifies for **no-cost Medi-Cal** he/she does not qualify for **Healthy Families**.
- If your income is too high to be eligible for **no-cost Medi-Cal**, your child may qualify for **Healthy Families**.

To be eligible for Medi-Cal or Healthy Families using this form, a person must be:

- Under age 19, or a pregnant woman
- Within income guidelines
- A California resident
- A U.S. citizen, national or eligible alien. Regardless of immigration status or date of entry, a child or pregnant woman can qualify for some form of **Medi-Cal**.

Activity 2: Include need-to-know information

Look at the sections on the screen and answer these questions:

What should readers do?

How they should do it?

Why they should do it?

Activity 3: Write clear headings

Review the passage below about asthma. It contains a lot of ideas that could be organized more clearly under separate headings. Create at least 3 headings.

Asthma is a condition that affects airways, which are like tubes that conduct the air through the lungs. Asthma makes it hard for your child to breathe.

Children with asthma have airways that are sensitive and easily irritated. Asthma can be very active at times, and when this happens the airways become swollen, tighter and narrower and produce more mucus.

These changes make it difficult for air to pass through and make it hard to breathe. This also causes other symptoms such as tightness in the chest and wheezing (a high-pitched sound when breathing). Other common symptoms of asthma are shortness of breath and coughing particularly at night or after physical activity.

Infants and young children tend to have asthma that is “episodic”. This means that a child can get asthma attacks with symptoms that may last for a few days, but in between episodes they do not have difficulty breathing.

Older children and adults tend to get asthma that is continuous or persistent and may be long-lasting (chronic).

Section 1:

Section 2:

Section 3:

Activity 5: Use clear words

Replacing jargon

On the line next to each difficult word, write a simple word or phrase you could use to replace it.

Inception

Approximately

Insufficient

Collaborate

Defining jargon

On the line next to each jargon word or phrase, write a definition for it in simple words.

A1C test

Chronic

Postpartum

Deductible

Activity 6: Write clear, direct sentences

For each sentence, cross out words that add length but not meaning. Then, rewrite the sentence so it's clear and short.

1. Show Me Healthy Women aims to be a catalyst in helping to leverage technology to address critical and potentially life-saving needs for women in Missouri.

2. Beyond providing financial resources in developing digital innovations, T-REX's digital experts are providing technical support and providing strategic insights on technology trends that may have implications on the solution design.

Activity 7: Measuring reading level

Live demo on how to prepare text for a reading level check on Microsoft Word.



Instructions on how to prepare your text for a reading level assessment

1. Make a copy of your document
2. Test at least 30 sentences or 300-500 words
 - Use complete sentences only (ending in a period, question mark, or exclamation mark)
 - If the document is long, use text samples from beginning, middle, and end
3. Delete:
 - Headings
 - Fragments
 - Bulleted lists that aren't full sentences
 - Any period that doesn't mark the end of a sentence (such as Dr.)
4. Select all (ctrl A)
5. Click on "Spelling & Grammar" to check the reading level

Activity 8: Create an easy-to-understand medicine chart

1. Break into groups of 4-6. Each group needs poster paper and 3-4 colored markers.
2. Imagine you have an elderly parent who needs to take 3 different medicines each day.
3. Using the design principles we just talked about, make a chart that will clearly show your parent:
 - When they should take their medicines
 - How much of each



Here's the information to include in your chart:

Medicines, dosage, and when to take

- Lisinopril (a round yellow pill to control blood pressure) – take one 40 mg (milligram) pill each morning
- Atenolol (a round white pill to control blood pressure) – take one 50 mg pill each morning
- Coated aspirin (a round orange pill to help prevent heart problems) – take one 325 mg pill at noon with food
- Vigamox liquid (a small white plastic bottle with built-in dropper) – place 1 drop in left eye each evening at bedtime

Activity 9: Present clear numbers

1. Read the sentence on the screen from a pharmaceutical coupon, which tells customers how much they could save on their prescriptions
2. Revise this information to help customers better understand how much they could save on each prescription

Keep in mind these numeracy principles:

- Do the math
- Give numbers meaning
- Use visuals to help explain numbers