

Write For A Reason (What is the driving reason for writing a policy?)

Questions to consider:

- Define a metric to measure performance
- Provide details regarding requirements
- Establish/outline consistent procedures
- Resolve legal disputes
- Fill a gap between existing policies
- Response to local/system/community situation

Write For The Users (not just the readers)

Questions to consider:

Where/how will this be used? What is the education/experience level of the users? What's In it For Me? So what? How soon can I stop reading this?

Write Content Right

Use Plain Language

Use Everyday Words

- Use easy to read words
- Free Your Verbs (from unnecessary extras)

Use Pronouns

- Speak directly to the user with verbs
 - You (user), We (organization), I (author)
 - "If **you** need a badge, **you** must fill out this form..."

Use Active Voice

- Shows responsibility/gives credit
- More direct sentences that get to the point
- Uses fewer words
- Form of "to be" + past participle = passive voice

Write for the Web: Usability

- Avoid the Word Wall
- Organize for novices, design for experts

- Use Headings (and Subheadings)
 - PolicyStat: Headings
 - PolicyStat: Deep Section Links
 - Site Admins > Policy Templates

<https://support.policystat.com/hc/en-us/articles/206288944>

- Use Lists
 - PolicyStat: Structured Headings
 - Multiple Lists with Subheadings

<https://support.policystat.com/hc/en-us/sections/201311465>

Q&A or If/Then Formatting

Use tables to break up text

<https://support.policystat.com/hc/en-us/sections/201336825>

Use visuals/graphics to draw the eye

<https://support.policystat.com/hc/en-us/articles/210882543>



See page 2 for resources!

PolicyStat: Writing Policies Right Webinar

Free Resources to Write Policies Right

Plain Language Information

- PlainLanguage.gov: <http://www.plainlanguage.gov/>
- Before and After Comparison: http://www.plainlanguage.gov/examples/before_after/index.cfm
- National Institute of Health Plain Language Training: <https://www.nih.gov/institutes-nih/nih-office-director/office-communications-public-liaison/clear-communication/plain-language/plain-language-getting-started-or-brushing>
- NIH Plain Language Online Training: <https://plainlanguage.nih.gov/CBTs/PlainLanguage/login.asp>
- Plain Language Resources: <http://www.plainlanguage.gov/howto/dictionaries/index.cfm>

Plain Language Exercises and Activities

- Hemmingway App: <http://www.hemingwayapp.com/>
- Readable.io: <https://readable.io/>
- Exercises: http://www.plainlanguage.gov/resources/for_trainers/plainFiles/exercises_all_writing_classes.pdf
- Quick Reference Checklist: <http://www.plainlanguage.gov/howto/quickreference/checklist.cfm>
- Active Voice: <http://www.englishforeveryone.org/PDFs/Active%20-%20Passive%20Voice.pdf>
- Simple Word Suggestions: <http://www.plainlanguage.gov/howto/wordsuggestions/simplewords.cfm>
- Hidden Verbs: <http://www.plainlanguage.gov/howto/wordsuggestions/hiddenverbs.cfm>

Writing for the Web/Usability

- Usability.gov: <https://www.usability.gov/>
- Organizing Content: <http://www.plainlanguage.gov/webPL/organization/index.cfm>
- Nielsen Norman Group: Writing For The Web: <https://www.nngroup.com/topic/writing-web/>
- **Don't Make Me Think** by Steve Krug <https://www.amazon.com/Dont-Make-Think-Revisited-Usability-ebook/dp/B00HJUBRPG>

Policy Writing

- Policy Writing: An Overview (Ford School of Public Policy, Univ. of Michigan) <http://fordschool.umich.edu/writing-center/policy-writing-overview>
- Policy Guidelines (Massachusetts Institute of Technology): <http://ist.mit.edu/for-ist/policies/guidelines>

Writing Humor

- How to Write Good: <http://www.plainlanguage.gov/examples/humor/writegood.cfm>
- Funny Headlines (Supporting clarity): <http://www.plainlanguage.gov/examples/humor/headlines.cfm>

For additional help, visit support.policystat.com or contact support@policystat.com. To participate in upcoming Education session, visit learn.policystat.com/lceducation/