

# PLAIN LANGUAGE AND CLEAR ENGLISH RESOURCES

## Basic References on How to Use Plain Language

**Writing User-Friendly Documents**—produced by the Plain Language Action Network, a U.S. government group working to improve communications.  
*A detailed guide to writing plain language that uses a lot of examples. If you use only one reference, this is the one to use.*

<http://www.plainlanguage.gov/handbook/index.htm>

**Be on the Cutting Edge: Learn These Seven Plain Language Principles Now!**—by Carol Ann Wilson, a writer, instructor, and legal secretary in Houston, Texas.  
*Encourages the use of plain language in legal documents following clear principles, complete with right and wrong examples.*

<http://wwlia.org/plainlan.htm>

**Drafting Legal Documents**—U.S. Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration  
*Includes guidelines for legal document structure, advice about ambiguity, clear writing, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, cross-references and expressions to avoid.*

<http://www.nara.gov/fedreg/dldhome.html>

**Plain Language: What is it?** –U.S. Small Business Administration  
*Defines plain language and gives 13 tips on how to write plainly.*

<http://www.sba.gov/plain/whatis.html>

**Garbl's Writing Resources Online**—created and maintained by Gary B. Larson of Seattle, Washington.  
*An annotated directory of websites that provides links with a focus on plain language, English grammar, and writing standards. Very helpful resource.*

<http://www.garbl.com/>

## Supplemental Information

**Answering the Critics of Plain Language**—by Professor Joseph Kimble of the Thomas Cooley Law School of Lansing, Michigan.  
*This defense of plain language includes a history of the plain language movement and its adherents. Lots of references.*

<http://www.plainlanguage.gov/library/kimble.htm>

**Frequently Asked Questions About Plain English and Clear Writing**—David Jackisch, Fog-Free Editorial Services, Madison, Wisconsin  
*Provides clear answers to frequently asked questions.*

<http://www.fog-free.com/faq.html>

## **Books**

Bailey, Edward P., Jr., Bailey, Larry, *Plain English at Work: A Guide to Writing and Speaking*. Oxford University Press, 1996.

Baldwin, Carol M., *Plain Language and the Document Revolution*. Lamp Lighter Press, 1999.

Maher, Chrissie, Plain English Campaign, *Language on Trial: The Plain English Guide to Legal Writing*. Robson Book Ltd., 1996.

Martineau, Robert J., *Drafting Legislation and Rules in Plain English*. West/Wadsworth, 1991.

Myers, Judith Gillespie, *Banishing Bureaucratese: Using Plain Language in Government Writing*. Management Concepts, Inc, 2001.