

# Plain Language

Your content matters. That's why we've put together these tips to help you communicate clearly and simply.

16%

of people actually read word-by-word

79%

of users scan text that they read

1

## Know your audience.

What do they already know?  
What do they need to know?

2

## Organize your thoughts.

Guide your reader.  
Leave out unnecessary info.

3

## Use everyday words.

Use familiar language.  
Avoid jargon and limit acronyms.

4

## Be concise.

One idea per sentence.  
Eliminate unnecessary words.

5

## Aim for active voice.

Keep the subject and verb close.  
Use the passive voice rarely.

6

## Make it personal.

Directly address the reader.  
Write in conversational tone.

7

## Use inclusive language.

Use accessible language.  
Avoid labelling people.

8

## Design your work.

Make content scannable.  
Use visuals to simplify info.

9

## Measure readability.

Measure the reading level.  
Target lower reading levels.

## EXAMPLES



This team requires that these applications follow the Town's standard submittal requirements.

**All applications must meet town submission standards.**



You can access the following application to make additions or alterations to commercial properties on OpenGov.

**Use OpenGov to apply for commercial property additions or alterations.**



Concept plan review by the Planning Commission is needed for the following applications.

**The Planning Commission must review concept plans for the following applications.**



Go with

Do

Gain

You

Some

Very

Start

So

Speed up

Change

Before

Use

But



Accompany

Accomplish

Accrue

Addressee

A number of

Immensely

Commence

Consequently

Expedite

Modify

Prior to

Utilize

However