

Factsheet 1 - What is Easy English?

1.1 Easy English can help people with low English literacy

Easy English is a style of writing that has been developed to provide understandable, concise information for people with low English literacy. People with low English literacy can be described as people with a limited ability to read and write words.

A person with low English literacy may have difficulty with spoken or written language skills for

- working out meaning and
- conveying meaning.

Literacy also requires the ability and flexibility to take knowledge and apply it.

The definition of literacy has evolved. It now has been expanded to include literacy in information and communication technologies.

For more information see the 'Who is Easy English for?' fact sheet.

1.2 Other names for Easy English

Easy English may also be known as accessible written information, Easy Read, Easy to Read, Plain Language and Aphasia Friendly.

1.3 The key features of Easy English include:

The key features of Easy English include:

- simplified language and grammar
- minimal punctuation
- simplified font, layout and design and
- images that illustrate headings and key messages.

The style uses:

- a significant amount of white space
- bullet points to break up large amounts of text
- a single column of writing. Tables and multiple columns are not used.

1.4 The key principles of Easy English

Easy English focuses on presenting key information rather than all the detail. Words are combined with images to enhance the message for the reader.

Ideally, reading an Easy English document is a shared activity between the reader and another person, such as a friend, a family member or support person. Through discussion, the meaning of the document can be clarified, understood and further details can be provided. Once the document has been explained it can be a useful reminder for the person later.

1.5 Print vs website


Easy English works best for print. There is more space for larger text, double spacing, and images. Also, people with low English literacy may not access a computer or the Internet at all. This may be for a range of reasons including socioeconomic, confidence, skills, and physical access. If people do access websites, they may find them extremely difficult to navigate and understand.


Despite this, in our technology based society, there is a huge amount of information solely produced on websites, and no longer printed. Because of this, it is especially important to produce websites that are accessible to as many people as possible. You can also create documents that can be easily printed off your website, so that people can use them in this way.

“web-based favour those of a higher socioeconomic group most people with intellectual disability who notably live in poverty. They printed copies for care providers and people with intellectual disability..... less experience staff who are more comfortable with written materials” (Lennox, et. al. 2009)


Contact Information

Scope’s Communication Resource Centre

 **Address** 830 Whitehorse Road.
Box Hill, VIC 3128

 **Phone** +61 3 9843 2000
Fax +61 3 9843 2002

 **Email** crc@scopevic.org.au
Website www.scopevic.org.au

 **Facebook** <https://www.facebook.com/scopevic>
 **Twitter** <https://twitter.com/scopevictoria>