PLAIN LANGUAGE LEGAL WRITING: PART II – WRITING TO BE UNDERSTOOD

- July 07, 2014
- Cheryl M. Stephens

The actual writing phase begins when you prepare a first draft. At that point you are merely trying to record your ideas.

Always reshape your draft to match the needs and abilities of your target audience; a competent writer is one who can do this quickly and efficiently. With experience, a writer can anticipate the reader's concerns, and addresses them early in the process of composition.

The goal is to express simple ideas clearly, and complex ideas as precisely and simply as possible. Writing expert Joseph Williams describes the problem you face in trying to improve your mode of expression:

Whether we are readers or writers, teacher or editors, all of us in professional communities must understand three things about complex writing:

- · it may precisely reflect complex ideas.
- it may gratuitously complicate complex ideas.
- it may gratuitously complicate simple ideas.

(Style: Toward Clarity and Grace, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990)

The information that follows shows how to simplify language and expression. Many writing checklists exist that can facilitate a quick editorial review to improve the style of your first draft. The clarifying effect on your writing will be cumulative.

The rules set out here should not become cliches of style, but guidelines for improvement. The essential incredient is thoughtful consideration of your reader.

CHOOSE YOUR WORDS WISELY WHICH WORDS SPEAK DIRECTLY TO YOUR READERS?

"Don't be afraid to sound like a lawyer, but try not to sound like the popular stereotype of a lawyer." (Henry Weihofen, Legal Writing Style, West Publishing Co., St. Paul, Minn. 1961)

Readers prefer familiar and concrete words. They prefer simplicity and consistency. They prefer genuineness to pretension, modern expressions to archaic words.

Style must be clear, as is proved by the fact that speech which fails to convey a plain meaning will fail to do just what speech has to do. Clearness is secured by using the words... that are current and ordinary. (Anistotle, Rhetoric, The Words of Anistotle, W. Ross, ed. 1946)

While you struggle to clarify your meaning, keep in mind the level of simplicity and formality that is appropriate to the particular document and for the particular reader. The last refuge of a sloppy writer is the excuse, "But my clients prefer formality" by which is meant pompous, inflated language.

TRY THIS PLAIN LANGUAGE

- 1. James Jones covenants
- He is against it.

Plain Language Handbook For Legal Writers

Christine Mowat

Plain Language Handbook For Legal Writers:

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perspective among different jurisdictions such as China the EU and Japan offering multiple and pluralistic viewpoints This book presents a collection of studies in legal translation which not only provide the latest international research findings among academics and practitioners but also furnish us with a new approach to and new insights into the phenomena and nature of legal translation and legal transfer The collection provides an invaluable reference for researchers practitioners academics and students specialising in law and legal translation philosophy sociology linguistics and semiotics Language in Plain English Cheryl Stephens, 2010 This book shows you how to write for customers and clients in language that s easy to understand It is a thorough companion to the writing process with comprehensive guidance and advice on understanding your readers planning and creating your text and presenting your words in a good design The contributor list reads like a who s who of plain language experts Plain Language in Plain English is a valuable resource for governments businesses service providers and professionals in any field to improve their communication From organizational guidelines literacy awareness and reader expectations to effective speaking strategies for presentations Plain Language in Plain English is a comprehensive tool to have in your communication toolbox Legal Writing in Plain English Bryan A. Garner, 2022-12-22 This easy to follow guide is useful both as a general course of instruction and as a targeted aid in solving particular legal writing problems Harvard Law Review Clear concise down to earth and powerful all too often legal writing embodies none of these qualities Its reputation for obscurity and needless legalese is widespread For more than twenty years Bryan A Garner's Legal Writing in Plain English has helped address this problem by providing lawyers judges paralegals law students and legal scholars with sound advice and practical tools for improving their written work The leading guide to clear writing in the field this indispensable volume encourages legal writers to challenge conventions and offers valuable insights into the writing process that will appeal to other professionals how to organize ideas create and refine prose and improve editing skills Accessible and witty Legal Writing in Plain English draws on real life writing samples that Garner has gathered through decades of teaching Trenchant advice covers all types of legal materials from analytical and persuasive writing to legal drafting and the book s principles are reinforced by sets of basic intermediate and advanced exercises in each section In this new edition Garner preserves the successful structure of the original while adjusting the content to make it even more classroom friendly He includes case examples from the past decade and addresses the widespread use of legal documents in electronic formats His book remains the standard guide for producing the jargon free language that clients demand and courts reward Those who are willing to approach the book systematically and to complete the exercises will see dramatic improvements in their writing Law Library Journal Handbook of Communication in the Legal Sphere Jacqueline Visconti, 2018-09-24 This volume explores communication and its implications on interpretation vagueness multilingualism and multiculturalism It investigates cross cultural perspectives with original methods models and arguments emphasizing national EU and international perspectives Both traditional fields of investigations along with an emerging new field Legal

Visual Studies are discussed Communication addresses the necessity of an ongoing interaction between jurilinguists and legal professionals This interaction requires persuasive convincing and acceptable reasons in justifying transparency visual analyses and dialogue with the relevant audience The book is divided into five complementary sections Professional Legal Communication Legal Language in a Multilingual and Multicultural Context Legal Communication in the Courtroom Laws on Language and Language Rights and Visualizing Legal Communication The book shows the diversity in the understanding and practicing of legal communication and paves the way to an interdisciplinary and cross cultural operation in our common understanding of legal communication This book is suitable for advanced students in Linguistics and Law and for academics and researchers working in the field of Language and Law and jurilinguists Legal Writing in Plain English, Third Edition Bryan A. Garner, 2023-09-06 The leading guide to clear writing StartFragment and clear thinking StartFragment in the legal profession for more than two decades now newly updated Admirably clear concise down to earth and powerful all too often legal writing embodies none of these qualities Its reputation for obscurity and needless legalese is widespread Since 2001 Bryan A Garner's Legal Writing in Plain English has helped address this problem by providing lawyers judges paralegals law students and legal scholars with sound advice and practical tools for improving their written work Now the leading guide to clear writing in the field this indispensable volume encourages legal writers to challenge conventions and offers valuable insights into the writing process how to organize ideas create and refine prose and improve editing skills Accessible and witty Legal Writing in Plain English draws on real life writing samples that Garner has gathered through decades of teaching experience Trenchant advice covers all types of legal materials from analytical and persuasive writing to legal drafting and the book s principles are reinforced by sets of basic intermediate and advanced exercises in each section For this third edition Garner has retained the structure of the previous versions with updates and new material throughout There are new sections on making your writing vivid and concrete and on using graphics to enhance your argument The coverage and examples of key topics such as achieving parallelism avoiding legalese writing effective openers and summaries and weaving quotations into your text have also been expanded And the sample legal documents and exercises have been updated while newly added checklists provide quick summaries of each section Altogether this new edition will be the most useful yet for legal professionals and students seeking to improve their prose

Immerse yourself in heartwarming tales of love and emotion with Crafted by is touching creation, Experience Loveis Journey in **Plain Language Handbook For Legal Writers**. This emotionally charged ebook, available for download in a PDF format (Download in PDF: *), is a celebration of love in all its forms. Download now and let the warmth of these stories envelop your heart.

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