Checklist for documents

NALA
National Adult Literacy Agency
Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh

This checklist offers a quick way for you to review a letter, leaflet, booklet or short report to see if it uses plain English and is easy to follow. Not all questions will apply to every document, but try to answer 'yes' as much as possible to the questions that do apply.

		Yes	No
Language, punctuation and grammar			
1	Does the document use 'you' and 'we', where possible?	☐	☐
2	Does it use the active voice most of the time?	☐	☐
3	Does it keep technical terms and abbreviations to a minimum?	☐	☐
4	Does it define any necessary terms and abbreviations clearly?	☐	☐
5	Does it keep 'corporate jargon' to a minimum?	☐	☐
6	Does it avoid Latin and French phrases and Latin abbreviations?	☐	☐
7	Does it use the same term for the same concept throughout?	☐	☐
8	Does it have an average of 15 to 20 words in each sentence?	☐	☐
9	Does it use the simplest verb tense possible?	☐	☐
10	Does it avoid abstract nouns where possible?	☐	☐
11	Does it use correct punctuation?	☐	☐
12	Do nouns and verbs agree (singular noun with singular verb, for example)?	☐	☐
Structure			
13	Does it organise information according to the reader's needs and interests?	☐	☐
14	Does it use informative headings or questions to break up text?	☐	☐
15	Does it include a natural flow from one point to the next?	☐	☐
16	Are paragraphs relatively short?	☐	☐
17	Does it use bullet point lists for detailed or complicated information?	☐	☐
Page design			
18	Does it avoid underlining, groups of italics and unnecessary capital letters?	☐	☐
19	Is text in a readable typeface (font), aligned to the left and 1.5 spaced?	☐	☐
20	Are images, charts or blocks of colour, if any, clear and relevant to the text?	☐	☐