



making it clear.

making it clear

**CLEAR LANGUAGE FOR
UNION COMMUNICATIONS**



Canadian Labour Congress

Congrès du travail du Canada

CONTENTS

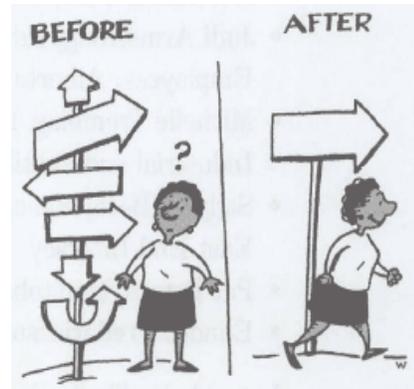
Foreword.....	i
What is clear writing and design?	
Introduction.....	1
The Communications Barrier.....	1
What is Clear Writing and Design?.....	3
Why Not?.....	3
Communication: Making Something Happen.....	5
The First Step.....	7
Making Things Happen.....	9
Writing in clear language	
Organization: The Order and Flow of Ideas and Information.....	12
Words to Use and Words to Avoid.....	14
Sentence Length and Structure.....	19
Tone: How You Speak to Your Reader.....	20
Clear design	
Introduction.....	22
Highlighting Text.....	22
Type Styles.....	23
Type Size.....	24
Capital or Lower Case Letters.....	27
Line Length and Margins.....	27
Colour of Paper and Ink.....	28
Illustrations and Graphics.....	28
Layout: Putting It All Together.....	29
Document testing	30
Oral and Internet communication	
Oral Communication.....	32
Internet Communication.....	32
Advocating for clear writing	
Steps for Carrying Out a Clear Language Plan.....	35
Union Advocacy Plan.....	35
Workplace Advocacy Plan.....	37

Clear language workshop	
Introduction.....	38
Sample Flyer.....	39
Sample 2- Day Agenda.....	40
Detailed Workshop Plan.....	42
Workshop exercises	
Introduction.....	45
Workshop Exercise 1.....	46
Workshop Exercise 2.....	48
Workshop Exercise 3.....	50
Workshop Exercise 4.....	57
Workshop handouts	
Introduction.....	59
Leaflets That Work Making It Clear	
Workshop overheads	
Introduction.....	67
Overhead 1 - Clear Language	
Overhead 2 - Technical Words	
Overhead 3 - Words and Idioms	
Overhead 4 - Abbreviations	
Overhead 5 - Clauses	
Overhead 6 - Tone	
Overhead 7 - Type Styles	
Overhead 8 - Upper and Lower Case	
Overhead 9 - Alignment	
Overhead 10 - Lists	
Overhead 11 - Layout	
Overhead 12 - Highlighting	
Resources	
Books and Other Print Resources.....	I
Videos.....	III
Web Sites.....	III
Writing for the Web.....	IV
Organizations.....	IV

Foreword

by Ken Georgetti, President
Canadian Labour Congress

Making It Clear: Clear Language for Union Communications is part of the *Learning in Solidarity* series of the Canadian Labour Congress' Workplace Literacy Project. The *Learning in Solidarity* series is producing a number of resources to help unions create a learning climate within their own organizations and within the community of labour. We are trying to reach out beyond our members who are currently active, to those who don't yet feel connected. The project is seeking meaningful ways to include them and to look critically at how we do things so that we can make the union more inclusive and accessible.



Making It Clear is an important product of the *Learning in Solidarity* series. It is about learning how to communicate clearly so that the messages we send are understood well by our readers. It is about what we have to say and about how it will be received. This includes unlearning old habits: many of us have often been encouraged to write in complex and inaccessible ways.

I would like to thank the principal writer of this resource kit, Anna Larsen of the Metro Labour Education Centre in Toronto, as well as Debra Hutcheon of the Ontario Federation of Labour's BEST program for their excellent work. I would also like to express my appreciation to Tamara Levine, Coordinator, CLC Workplace Literacy Project, for coordinating and providing direction to the project.

In addition, the reference group for this project has given generously of their time, insight and knowledge. Thanks to:

- Rosemarie Bahr, Editor, Canadian Association of Labour Media
- Judi Armstrong, Education Representative, Canadian Union of Public Employees, Alberta
- Michelle Tremblay, Literacy Coordinator, Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees
- Sally McBeth, Manager, Clear Language and Design consulting service, East End Literacy
- Pat Peters, Manitoba Labour Education Centre
- Elinore Frederickson, Yukon College instructor.

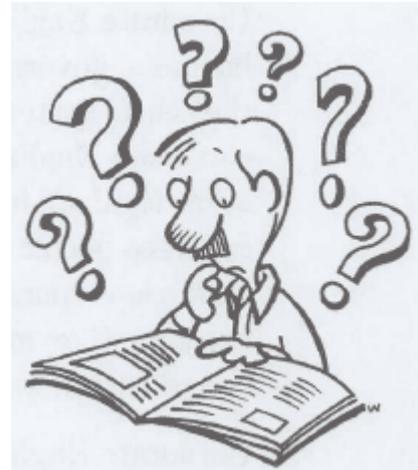
I would also like to thank Brigid Hayes, Program Consultant at the National Literacy Secretariat, for her enthusiastic support for this project.

What is clear writing and design?

It means thinking about your readers first

"A collective agreement spells out workers' rights, and workers have the right to understand what those rights are. A clearly written contract makes those rights clear. It helps us figure out where we need to go in the future. If the contract language is confusing and complicated, then workers will be confused and not know their rights. "

- A union negotiator



INTRODUCTION

Do you sometimes re-read contract clauses to understand what they mean? Do you put off reading documents that are too wordy, complex or technical? We've all been there. Contracts, constitutions, policies, even brochures, flyers and newsletters are often written in language that is hard to understand. As union activists, we want the written word to work with us in organizing workers for their rights.

THE COMMUNICATIONS BARRIER

Unclear writing wastes time and causes confusion. A large number of union members speak English as a second language and may not read English well. Some members have limited or weak reading skills. Older workers often complain about small print and unnecessarily long words. Union activists receive so much material, they wonder when they will ever get time to read it.

And yet the labour movement relies heavily on written material in union communications, aware that we need informed members to be effective with the employer, politicians and the community.

Corporate English: keeping people out

Corporate English is used in business, government, academia and the school system. Even unions use corporate English in contracts and other legal affairs. It is language that can keep people out. When union staff use corporate English with workers, they mark themselves as one of "them" and not one of "us."

Corporate English can be used to reinforce control. Verbal overkill works to put people in their place.

Corporate English obscures reality by excluding people. Passive verbs are consistently used, and the subjects of actions are not identified (as in this sentence). Corporate English commonly portrays economic processes as if they just happen, independent of people. "Tuition fees are going up," instead of "The school is charging students more money for courses." Or, "Interest rates may climb again" instead of "The banks will charge you more for a loan."

In these ways writers can avoid saying *who* is responsible for actions.

This means no one can be called to account for them. The human experience and consequences are left out. An "escalating inflation rate" or "pension de-indexing" does not conjure up an image of people lining up at food banks.



So, corporate English can leave people out. But it also draws people in. Although it comes from dominant organizations, elements of it become part of everybody's language.

For example, when people use the word "restraint" to describe a government that's cutting social service budgets, they mouth the government's line, perhaps in spite of themselves. In this way, corporate English can come to control the content of our thought and speech.

- Source: Progressive Literacy Group, *Writing on Our Side*, Vancouver, 1986

Making It Clear will help union activists and staff find ways to overcome this communications barrier. Clear writing and design will make your union communications reader-friendly. This means thinking about your readers and their needs first. Everyone will benefit from information that is quick and easy to read and understand.

WHAT IS CLEAR WRITING AND DESIGN?

Clear writing is clear language. It uses language that your audience will understand and that gives readers the information they need. Clear language combines *what* you write with *how* you write. Clear design uses the way material appears on the page to help the reader understand the content.

Research shows that clear language has benefits for readers at all levels. Clear language and design saves time and avoids confusion and errors.

WHY NOT?

Some people resist clear language, thinking:

- *It's simple-minded writing, or it uses vocabulary that talks down to people.* Not so! Clear language is easy for your readers to understand. It helps people find the information they need.
- *We need legal or technical terms; some things just can't be written differently.* Not so! Legally binding documents can be written in clear language, with the plus that people can understand them. If a technical term is needed, explain the term when you first use it.
- *It takes too long and costs too much.* Not so! Clear language saves time and money. Your readers will have fewer questions and complaints. Why spend money on materials people can't understand? Clear language is effective language.

The CAW rewrites its union constitution

The Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) wanted to redo their constitution so that activists and members could understand it. In 1991, the Executive Board set up a committee that represented the various facets of the union and included staff whose jobs involved interpreting the constitution. The committee of 12 worked for one year with a clear language consultant to prepare a draft of the new constitution in English and French. After another year's experience using the draft, the new constitution was adopted at the CAW's 1994 convention.



Before

To achieve the objectives and purposes of this organization as set forth in this Constitution, the funds of this organization are authorized to be managed, invested, expended or used under this Article and Constitution not only for the purposes and objectives expressly set forth in Article 2 and otherwise in this Constitution, but also for any additional purposes and objectives not inconsistent there with as may be contained at any time in the resolutions and programs adopted and/or ratified by any National Convention or which the National Executive Board believes will further the general interest and welfare of the membership of this organization or any substantial part thereof.

After

The National Executive Board will manage and use the National Union's funds for the objectives set out in this constitution and other purposes it believes will further the welfare of the members.

"The constitution is easier to read now. Without a doubt, people tend to use the constitution more. There's been less constitutional appeals because people understand it better. And they know how to follow the steps if they do have an appeal. It's much more accessible to the membership."

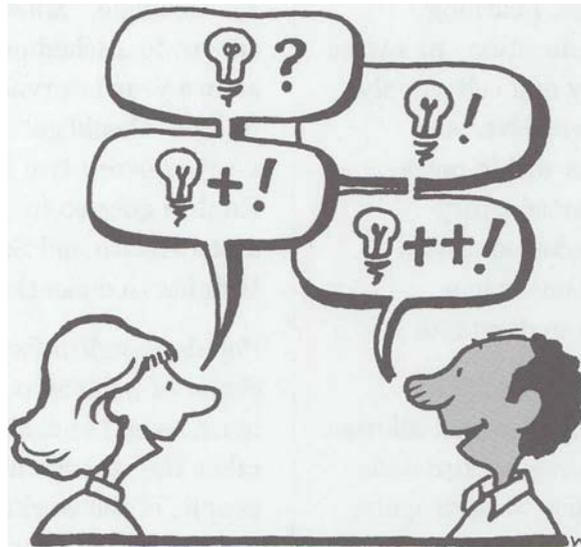
- Peter Kennedy, Assistant to the Secretary- Treasurer, CAW

Clear language does not oversimplify, or leave out essential information, or bore the reader. Clear language is writing that is widely accessible, because it is as direct as possible, and because it begins with people's experience. Clear language does not patronize people. It includes them.

Clear language allows you to reach a larger audience with your message. And that's important to unions - in campaigns, bargaining, health and safety, in all kinds of union communications.

COMMUNICATION: MAKING SOMETHING HAPPEN

Clear language is an approach to communication that begins with the needs of your readers, a specific audience. When we *speak* directly to someone, we get immediate feedback. We can adjust our message if the audience does not clearly understand.



Written communication poses a greater challenge. We can't get immediate feedback. We have to think in advance about the needs of our readers and our needs. We have to seek feedback so that our message is as clear as possible.

Popular Education, Popular English

Clear language has its roots in the popular education movement. Popular education is a philosophy of learning that starts where ordinary people are at. Educators create learning experiences that help people look at their situation at work, at home and in the community. Workers use their own skills and experiences to identify social and economic issues, gain an understanding of their root causes and learn how to bring about social change. Learning through popular education empowers people individually and collectively to stand up for themselves and improve their lives within more democratic and participatory communities. Popular education speaks to people's needs in a language they can understand.

Clear language helps create a positive learning climate that allows workers from diverse backgrounds an equal opportunity to participate. Popular education establishes each person's right to speak and be heard, regardless of economic status, class, gender or race.

Vancouver's Progressive Literacy Group took clear language one step further in its 1986 booklet, *Writing on Our Side*. They talked about the difference between clear English and popular English:

Popular English is more than using easy words and sentences. It uses language that addresses matters of power and control - but with the people put back in.

For example, "Miners are advised to adhere to a schedule of chest x-rays at two year intervals," becomes: "Miners should get their chests x-rayed every two years." Popular English goes on to add: "And join the union Health and Safety Committee. It fights to make the mines safer."

Popular English focuses on the choice of political perspective as much as on the choice of words. It takes the standpoint of ordinary people, of the working class. Popular English aims to describe the world from the ordinary person's point of view.

THE FIRST STEP

Clear language is not a set of rules. Clear language is a process: thinking, planning, writing, designing, testing, revising.

The first step (thinking) starts with considering your reader, your purpose and the intended impact of your document.

Your reader

Who will be reading this material? What do your readers already know or understand about your subject? What is their:

- union experience (new members or long-time activists)
- sector or workplace
- employment and work experience
- age
- gender
- education
- cultural and language background
- literacy skills
- special needs
- urban or rural experience

If you can, work with a group of people like those you are writing for. Find out what they want to know. Ask them to review draft material.

Your purpose

Why are you writing this document?

- to report on a meeting?
- to ask the reader to do something?
- to inform the reader of new policy?
- to influence the reader's actions?
- to explain how to do something?

Overcoming the language barrier

Graphic Communications International Union

It's really hard to understand the language of pension funds and benefit plans. The Graphic Communications International Union tries to overcome this language barrier. The GCIU Supplemental Retirement and Disability Fund of Canada has published a 50-page booklet. It includes highlights and summaries in clearer language, followed by the plan's legal document.

"It's an important step forward," says Duncan Brown, GCIU Representative. "We still have a long way to go, but members find this booklet a big help in understanding their benefits."

Hospital Employees Union



The Hospital Employees Union

represents 45,000 workers in British Columbia. The union's servicing and bargaining staff produce an annotated version of their collective agreement for servicing reps, local activists and stewards. The document:

- explains the various clauses
- answers common questions
- interprets points of confusion
- highlights changes since the last agreement
- includes comments and examples of the practical application of agreement clauses

"Members and staff find the document to be extremely useful," says Mike Old from HEU. "It's very popular. Staff are just finishing a new version for our latest collective agreement."

Intended impact

What do you want your readers to do?

- do something?
- learn something?
- change their point of view?
- keep the document for future reference?

MAKING THINGS HAPPEN

Communication is always about making something happen. Take some time to think about the specific action you want the reader to do after reading your material. The most effective communication has a primary focus. Knowing the purpose of the document will help you identify it.

This will help you determine:

- the essential information to include
- the order in which to present the information
- words to use and words to avoid
- sentence length and structure
- tone (neutral, friendly, assertive)
- style (question and answer, narrative, point form)
- length of the document
- format (pamphlet, flyer, letter, poster, comic strip)
- design (type size, headings, illustrations, colour)

Clear language collective agreement

St. Christopher House is a Toronto community organization whose staff are represented by Local 3393 of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE). Members found it hard to understand the collective agreement. Even Human Resources management had difficulty with the legalese in the agreement, which had been prepared by a labour lawyer over many years.



The union tried to make the language clearer by suggesting hundreds of changes to the agreement. The employer would not consider the union's proposed changes, so the union decided to budget its own funds to prepare a clear language version of the contract. The clear language version has been "a godsend," says Nelson Lynch, Chief Steward of CUPE 3393. "It has helped get members more involved in the union."

Previously, there was confusion about whether a grievance was called for. Now there are fewer complaints and grievances are more targeted.

The 1998 round of bargaining showed the benefit of having a clear language version. "Previously we had to pull teeth to get bargaining proposals," says Lynch. "This time we had to have three meetings to go through all the ideas, and the emphasis was on establishing priorities." The union was better prepared for negotiations, based on the greater input from their members.

Lynch says, "We knew exactly where we stood, where to dig in our heels. They were the best negotiations we've had."

See sample language next page

Sample contract language revision

Before

ARTICLE 18 – HOLIDAYS

18.01 (b)

As an alternative to three (3) days at Christmas as scheduled by the Employer an Employee who is a follower of a non-Christian religion may schedule, in lieu of three (3) days at Christmas, up to three (3) days at other times for recognized religious and/or cultural holiday observance purposes consistent with his/her bona fide religious and/or cultural practices. Such Employee must give the Employer written notice at least one (1) month in advance of his/her request to take such a holiday for religious and/or cultural observance purposes. It is understood, however, that the Employer retains the right to decide which of its programs shall continue to operate during Christmas holidays (as well as other times) and to schedule and reassign Employees to perform such work as is required and available.

After

ARTICLE 18 - HOLIDAYS

18.01 (b)

If you are a non-Christian, instead of three days at Christmas, you may take three days at other times to observe your religious or cultural holidays. You must give your Employer at least one month's written notice asking for this time off.

The Employer has the right to decide which of its programs will continue to operate at any time, including Christmas, and to schedule and reassign Employees to do the work needed.

Writing in clear language

Organization, words, sentences and tone of voice

ORGANIZATION: THE ORDER AND FLOW OF IDEAS AND INFORMATION

The following points are general guidelines. Different formats have their own specific tips. For example, we usually do not use headings in a letter, however, they are helpful in a manual or brochure.

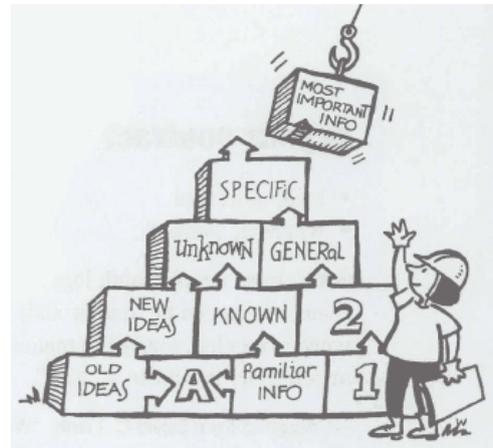
Decide what the essential information is and stick to it.

Put the main and most important ideas near the beginning

- the purpose of the material should be clear to the reader
- if you want your readers to do something, they need to know right away
- instructions must be explicit, not implicit
- consider highlighting the most important information, by using bold type, a box, or a different set-up
- repeat or summarize important facts or ideas

Use logical order based on the reader's needs

- start with information the reader is familiar with
- go from the known to the unknown
- build new ideas on old ideas
- go from the general to the specific
- give one new idea or piece of information at a time
- use chronological order when possible

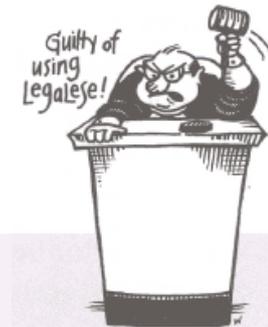


Make the order of the material obvious

- the title should interest the readers and give them a context for the information that follows
- use headings to divide the text into manageable units
- headings and sub-headings need to be clear and highlighted to help the reader through the material

Avoid ...

- titles that do not give enough information
- directions buried in the text
- poor organization of material
- too much information
- irrelevant information
- material continued on another page



Is your contract full of legalese?

- said, aforesaid
- whereof, thereof

Sometimes people think legalese makes things "precise" but words can be dangerously confusing and are usually made to make the meaning plain. Say "in this agreement," "in 3(2)(b)."

-- Adapted from David C. Elliott, "Writing Agreements"
Dispute Resolution Journal, March 1994

WORDS TO USE AND WORDS TO AVOID

Avoid jargon

- technical, legal or other job-related words or phrases may make material hard to understand
- if some technical terms are necessary, define them and include examples

Before

With respect to the processing, disposition and/or settlement of any grievance initiated under the Grievance Procedure Section of this Agreement, and with respect to any court action claiming or alleging a violation of this Agreement or any local or other agreement amendatory or supplemental hereto, the Union shall be the sole and exclusive representative of the employee or employees covered by this agreement.

After

The Union is your bargaining and grievance representative in all areas covered by the contract.

Avoid acronyms and abbreviations

- abbreviations, initials or short forms can be confusing
- if you must use short forms, write them out in full and explain them the first time you use them

Before

The CLC is holding an EI workshop on Tues., Sept. 19.

i.e.

e.g.

After

The Canadian Labour Congress is holding a workshop about Employment Insurance on Tuesday, September 19.

that is

for example

Before clear language: Acme Screw & Gear memo

Analysis

The title is vague. This may be standard procedure, but it seems to be new information.

The subject line is also vague.

Sentence 1 is too long and confusing, for example: "forbids unlawful harassment."

Paragraph 1 presumes that the reader has a large vocabulary.

Paragraph 2 does not address anyone in particular. What does "priority basis" mean?

Paragraph 3 is one, long sentence.

Paragraph 4 is too "legal" sounding. Block caps style is hard to read.

Difficult words

harassment
implied or expressed
intimidating
objectionable expeditious
utmost discretion frank
(honest) disciplinary

Summary

The language is very legal.

ACME SCREW & GEAR LTD. MEMO

Standard Procedure

Subject: Harassment/Sexual Harassment

Acme Screw and Gear has established a strict policy which forbids unlawful harassment of employees, including implied or expressed forms of sexual harassment by any of its employees, managers, customers or suppliers, as detailed in the Ontario Human Rights Code. This includes verbal, written, visual or physical acts that are offensive in nature, intimidating, unwelcome, or that could reasonably be taken as objectionable.

Any employee who feels that he or she has been legitimately subjected to harassment of any type, whether by a co-worker, supervisor or visitor of the company should promptly report the incident to the Personnel Manager. The Personnel Manager will investigate on a priority basis in order to resolve or correct the situation in an expeditious manner.

Employees having any questions concerning this policy or its administration should contact the Personnel Manager for a confidential and frank discussion, and employees are assured that the utmost discretion will be used in handling of such matters.

ACME STRONGLY DISAPPROVES OF ANY FORM OF HARASSMENT/SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORK PLACE, INCLUDING ACTS OF NON-EMPLOYEES. DISCIPLINARY ACTION WILL BE TAKEN PROMPTLY AGAINST ANY EMPLOYEE, SUPERVISORY OR OTHERWISE, ENGAGING IN UNLAWFUL HARASSMENT/ SEXUAL HARASSMENT.
-- Gordon W.E. Nore, *Clear Lines: How to Compose and Design Clear Language Documents for the Workplace*, Frontier College Press, Toronto, 1997

After clear language: Acme Screw & Gear memo

Analysis

The subject line shows that the two topics are different but related.

Since this is a sensitive issue, employees should know that a variety of people can provide information or assistance, which is the purpose of the "copy" line. This also shows that there is a united front.

The memo defines harassment and sexual harassment by addressing readers directly.

The definition also explains that harassment is against the law.

The company's position and role are much clearer.

The memo assures potential victims that action will be taken. This may also be important to those employees who do not feel this is serious.

A number of people are available for information and assistance.

If people are uncomfortable going to others at work, outside help is available.

ACME SCREW & GEAR LTD. MEMO

DATE: March 30, 1999

TO: All Employees

FROM: Carol Hines, General Manager

SUBJECT: Harassment and Sexual Harassment

COPY: Rena Parks, Shop Steward

Singh Samura, Human Resources Manager

What is harassment and sexual harassment?

- If anyone does or says anything to you which insults you, offends you, hurts, or embarrasses you in any way, this may be harassment.
- Harassment and sexual harassment are against the law, according to the Ontario Human Rights Code.

What are the company's rules about harassment and sexual harassment?

- Acme will not allow any employee, manager, customer or supplier to harass an Acme employee.
- Acme will use legal action against anyone who harasses an Acme employee. We will support, in any way possible, any employee who has been harassed.

Do you have any questions?

If you do not understand this policy, please contact someone in Human Resources, your union representative or me for more information.

If someone has harassed you, please contact someone in Human Resources, your union representative or me. We want to help you. We will not use your name.

For more information on the Ontario Human Rights Code, contact the Ontario Human Rights Commission at the address below.

-- Gordon W.E. Nore, *Clear Lines: How to Compose and Design Clear Language Documents for the Workplace*, Frontier College Press, Toronto, 1997

Use familiar words

- Avoid difficult words and unnecessary words and phrases.
- Use familiar words that your readers use when they speak.

Before

It is necessary to point out that the executive passed a motion to make an application for a grant.

After

The executive decided to apply for a grant.

Avoid words with overlapping meanings

Before

*ask the question
mandatory requirement*

After

ask
requirement

Avoid English idioms and words or phrases from other languages

- idioms depend on readers having a common background
- your readers may not understand words and phrases from other languages

Before

*give someone a hand
modus operandi*

After

help someone
way of doing things

Avoid nouns made from verbs (called nominalizations)

- these nouns have endings such as "ance", "ion", "tion", "ization" and "ment"
- use the verb to show action

Before

To effect a proper utilization of time, ensure that preparation of an agenda has been accomplished before the meeting.

After

Make an agenda before the meeting. This will help you use your time better.

Use concrete, specific words and phrases instead of abstract, general words

- concrete words make the writing clear and the meaning more specific
- abstract words can mean different things to different readers

Before *nutrition*

File a grievance if the circumstances warrant it.

After food

File a grievance if the following happens:

Avoid language that shows gender, class or cultural bias

- try rewriting your sentence in the plural to avoid the pronoun "he," except when referring to a specific male person
- avoid phrases that imply judgements based on sex, for example "took it like a man"

Before *policeman*

postman

After police officer

letter carrier

SENTENCE LENGTH AND STRUCTURE

Vary the sentence length

- balance short sentences with longer ones
- keep the average sentence length under 20 words
- shorter sentences are easier to understand than longer ones
- break up a sentence into two sentences if you are using several commas and semi-colons

Write sentences with no more than one or two clauses to a sentence. Present only one new item of information per sentence.

Before

In response to the Action Plan, the Canadian Labour Congress is working with the Canadian Health Coalition to make the public aware that corporate greed is threatening Medicare, and to build public demand for an end to the monopoly enjoyed by giant drug companies.

After

In response to the Action Plan, the Canadian Labour Congress is working with the Canadian Health Coalition. We are working together to make the public aware that corporate greed is threatening Medicare. We are helping to build public demand for an end to the monopoly enjoyed by giant drug companies.

Use simple, complete sentences

Write sentences with the usual English word order of subject, verb, object. The subject is the person or thing that does something. The verb shows the action. The object receives the action. The object answers the question "what" or "whom."

- this sentence structure is easiest to read because it is clear who is doing what
- this order helps people who speak English as a second language. This order is the way English is usually taught

The steward	filed	the grievance.
Subject	Verb	Object

Use lists

Use a list if you have a number of related items.

- make sure that all items in the list are in the same grammatical form

Before

A study of the policy may help the staff representative or grievance officer to determine whether or not it is clear and unambiguous, whether it was properly posted, whether it was discriminatory in its application and other useful information on which a defence in any disciplinary grievance concerning the policy may be raised.

After

Staff representatives and grievance officers should study every new management policy. They should ask the following questions:

- Is it clear?
- Was it properly posted?
- Does it apply equally to all members?

The answers to these questions can help defend a member who has been disciplined for disobeying the policy.

TONE: HOW TO SPEAK TO YOUR READER

Our tone changes depending on the audience and purpose of the material. For example, the tone may be angry in a complaint to the employer. We use a friendly tone in an invitation to a community group to send a guest speaker to our next local meeting. The suggestions below assume the reader is a union member or other friendly reader.

Use positive statements

- they tell the reader what to do, rather than what not to do
- they are easier to read and are less threatening

Before

Do not open door until checking that the area is clear.

After

Check that the area is clear before you open the door

Write in the active voice

When possible, make people the subject of your sentences. Avoid the passive voice; it creates a distant, formal tone.

Before

The contract was signed by the bargaining committee on January 18.

After

The bargaining committee signed the contract on January 18.

Write like you talk

Write the way you would speak, in a conversational style. This shows a positive attitude towards your readers and creates a direct and informal tone.

- use "I," "we" and "you" whenever you can
- use familiar words and the active voice

Before

Laid-off members are required to telephone the main office before their first visit. They will be directed to the action centre nearest to their home.

After

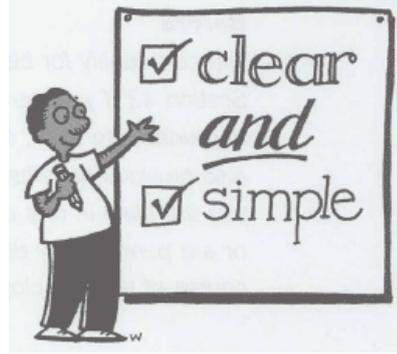
Please phone the main office before your first visit. We will send you to the nearest action centre.

Tell stories

If possible, tell stories to illustrate your ideas. Give examples related to the reader's experience.

Clear design

Keep the text readable, and use headlines to direct readers



INTRODUCTION

What is the best way to present information? Decide on the format by thinking about your reader, your purpose, and the intended impact. For example, you have been asked to prepare an announcement about a meeting. If the announcement is going to members of a small union sub-committee, you might choose a memo format. If the announcement is going to all local members and will be posted on the union bulletin board, you will probably choose a flyer or poster format.

HIGHLIGHTING TEXT

Think about how to highlight important information and vary the look of the text. Consider using:

- questions and answers
- check lists
- point form

This can make information easier to understand and faster to read.

Before

Come to the office between 11 and 2 to register for the program, which is a training program. You must be on day shift to register.

After

TRAINING PROGRAM

Who can register?

Anyone on day shift.

How can you register?

Come to the office between 11 and 2.

Before

You can qualify for benefits under Section 43 if you are sixty-four or older and unable to work, and that section also provides benefits in the event that you are blind in one eye, or both eyes, or are permanently disabled in the course of your employment.

After

You can qualify for benefits under Section 43 if you meet any one of the following conditions:

- You are 64 or older and are unable to work, or
- You are blind in one eye or both eyes, or
- You are permanently disabled in the course of your employment

To emphasize particular content, use:

- bold or italic type
- a different but complementary type style
- subheadings
- shading
- illustrations
- text in boxes

Be sure that information in a box makes sense all by itself. Readers may read only this information.

TYPE STYLES**Serif and sans serif**

There are two broad categories of type styles: *serif* and *sans serif*.

- *Serif* type has "hooks" or "feet" on the letters, like the type we're using in this text.
This is Century Schoolbook, a serif type style. It is an easy text type to read.
- *Sans serif* type has no hooks.
This is Helvetica, a sans serif type style. It is not as easy to read.

- The hook, or serif, helps the reader's eyes move along the line of type. Serifs also give the reader more information about the characteristics of each letter. This makes the letters more recognizable and easier to read. Serif type styles are usually your best choice for text type.
- Sans serif type styles draw the eye down into the text that follows. They are helpful for headings, tables and charts that you want to highlight from the main text. They are also useful when you have to use small type, such as in photo captions.



Keep it simple

Avoid complicated type styles.

- The style for the text should be clear and simple.
- Use styles consistently: one for titles, one for sub-titles, one for text. Avoid using more than three type styles in the same text.

complicated
clear & simple

TYPE SIZE

Text type

Readers generally find 12 point type easy to read for text. You might want to use 13 or 14 point type, depending on the type style.

Headings, or display type for flyers, posters and other promotional materials are usually 18 points or larger. The larger size is used to attract the reader's attention.

This is 12 point. This is 14 point. This is 18 point.

Before: Apparel Skills Training poster

Analysis

It's hard to figure out what this poster is about and it is difficult to read. Here's why:

- the main point is not emphasized too many subpoints are given equal emphasis, instead of being ranked by priority
- the all-caps headlines are difficult to read there's no contrast between the serif headlines and the serif text
- the headlines are too small - only slightly larger than the text
- there's no graphic interest (no interesting type or illustrations)

THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE CENTRE OF
UNITE LOCAL 459

presents

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS TRAINING

for the

APPAREL INDUSTRY

NO SEWING SKILLS REQUIRED AT THIS TIME

PURPOSE:

This 8 week training program will provide participants with the skills and knowledge necessary for entry level employment in the apparel Industry. Upon completion participants enter:

- Sewing skills training program
- Employment.

COURSE CONTENT:

PHASE ONE: 8 Weeks Pre-Employment Training

- Team Building and Interpersonal Skills
- Balancing Work & Home
- Problem Solving
- Management; Personal, Conflict, Stress & Time
- Work expectations & Work ethics in the Apparel Industry

TRAINING LOCATION:

THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE CENTRE OF UNITE
LOCAL 459 503 -138 Portage Ave. East

START DATE:

Thursday September 10, 1998

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

This training opportunity is being offered to people who are interested in working in the Apparel Industry.

APPLICANT MUST - be on social assistance or eligible for social assistance

- be willing and able to start work at 7:30 a.m.

APPLICATION & SELECTION PROCESS

Eligible Applicants will attend an information session followed by a Dexterity Assessment.

INFORMATION SESSION: AUGUST 31, 1998

TO REGISTER PHONE: Dana Janson or Donna May

Morin **946-1750** THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE
CENTRE of UNITE LOCAL 459, 508 -138 Portage Ave.
East



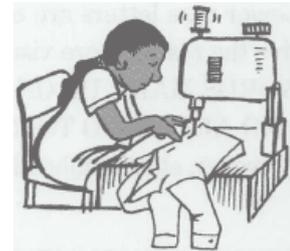
After: Apparel Skills Training poster

Analysis

- the information is now ordered by priority
- the main headline tells what the program is about
- the headline at the bottom highlights another key point
- all headlines are written in upper and lowercase
- the rest of the information is presented in short, clear sentences, with bulleted lists
- although sans serif type is used throughout, the large, extra-bold headlines stand out from the text
- a small illustration provides graphic interest
- there are fewer long words, and the union's name is spelled out

Introductory Skills Training for the apparel industry

An eight-week training program for people who want to work in the apparel industry.



- No sewing skills required.
- Training includes personal skills, industry skills and job skills.
- It begins on Thursday, September 10, 1998.
- After the training you can either begin work in the apparel industry or enter a sewing skills training program.

To be eligible for this program, you must:

- be on or eligible for social assistance
- be willing and able to start work at 7:30 a.m.
- attend an information session on Monday, August 31 and take a dexterity test

How to register

Call Dana Janson or Donna May Morin at **946-1750**.

Training location

The Learning Experience Centre of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees, UNITE Local 459, 138 Portage Avenue East, #503, Winnipeg

No sewing skills required!

Headline Type

The type you use for headlines (also called "display" type) can be the same style as the text type or it can be a different style. Whatever you choose to do, the display type and the text type should complement each other.

Use one or two methods to highlight headings. Don't overdo it:

AVOID HEADLINES LIKE THIS

CAPITAL OR LOWER CASE LETTERS

Lower case letters are easier to read than capital, or upper case letters. They give the reader more visual information about the characteristics of each letter. WORDS MADE UP OF CAPITAL LETTERS ARE SEEN AS BLOCKS AND ARE HARD TO READ, ESPECIALLY IN A PASSAGE OF TEXT. However, short subheadings in capital letters can be used to good effect.

LINE LENGTH AND MARGINS

Short lines and narrow columns make the eye shift too quickly and confuse the reader into reading across columns instead of down. Long lines can also be hard to follow. For letters or reports, use left and right margins of 1.2 inches.

Justification and Hyphenation

Text that has a ragged or uneven right margin (like the paragraph above) is easier to read than text that has a justified or full margin. A justified right margin creates unequal spaces between words and hyphenates many words at the end of lines. Hyphenated words are hard to read, so turn off "hyphenation" when you use a word processor.

(This paragraph was typed with a full margin and hyphenation.)

Text that is centred or ragged on both sides doesn't show the reader where sentences begin and end. It looks like each line is a sentence in itself.

(This paragraph is centred.)

Text density and white (blank) space

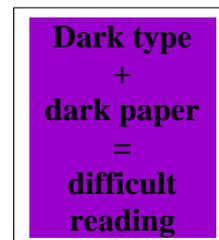
There should be enough white space on each page.

- there should be generous margins
- the text should be broken into manageable units with clear titles and headings
- when starting a new paragraph, leave an extra space
- keep paragraphs short

A page with ample margins and headings that divide the text is easier to read. It is also more visually appealing.

COLOUR OF PAPER AND INK

Choose colours that provide good contrast. Black type on light coloured paper is the easiest to read. Text on bright orange, pink or green paper is hard to read.



ILLUSTRATIONS AND GRAPHICS

Consider the following questions when deciding about adding illustrations to a text:

- Why are you adding graphics or illustrations?
- Is this the best way to "say" what you want to say?
- If you are using illustrations, are they accurate, up-to-date, clear and simple?
- Can your audience understand your illustrations? Do they mean the same to your audience as they do to you?

- Do your illustrations and graphics reflect your audience in: age, educational background, ethnic background, gender, ability or disability, work background?
- Is there any chance that your illustrations will offend any group of people?
- Do your text and graphics or illustrations complement each other?
- Are your illustrations or graphics placed with the text they explain? Make sure the placement won't interrupt normal reading patterns.
- Use tables, bar charts and line graphs to give summaries of information and to show numbers and trends.

- from Illustrations and Graphics Questions, by Betty-Ann Lloyd.

LAYOUT: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Too many elements

Don't include too many of these elements on a single page:

- illustrations
- different typefaces
- bold type
- boxes

Too many design elements don't give the reader a clear focus. In fact, they make it harder for the reader to scan and pick out information.

Watch for page breaks

Don't start a new story or topic at the bottom of a page. Try not to have sentences, or even paragraphs, carryover to a new page. If you must make your copy break to continue on another page, then do so at a logical place. This may take some last-minute editing at the layout stage.



Document testing

How to make sure your material is readable

Clear language is language that is clear to your audience. To be sure that the language is clear, you need to test it.

While preparing your draft, there are some quick and easy checks you can do:

- read your document aloud
- ask someone else to read your draft
- use the grammar and spelling checks in your word processing software (but be careful, they are sometimes wrong)



Testing with the Fog Index

There are also various computer and manual readability tests. One manual test is called the Fog Index. It estimates the grade level of your writing. (The computer tests in your word processing software work much the same way.)

- Start at the beginning of a paragraph and count off a 100-word sample.
- Count the number of sentences in this sample, then divide 100 by the number of sentences.
- Add the number of words with three or more syllables.
- Finally, multiply by .4 to get the grade level.

If you are testing a long document, take two or more samples.

As an example, let's use the Before and After versions of the memo on harassment from Acme Screw & Gear, found on pages 16 and 17.

100

-:- by the number of sentences

Before version: 3 sentences ($100 \div 3 = 33.3$)

After version: 8 sentences ($100 \div 8 = 12.5$)

+ the number of words with three or more syllables

Before version: 31 words ($33.3 + 31 = 64.3$)

After version: 26 words ($12.5 + 26 = 38.5$)

x .4 = years of education needed to read the sample

Before version: $64.3 \times .4 = 25.7$ years of education needed

After version: $38.5 \times .4 = 15.4$ years of education needed

In this example, there are a lot of three-syllable words that can't be avoided, such as harassment and employee. The big difference in grade level between the two versions comes from the number of sentences. The clear language version broke up the text into points and smaller sentences.

Fit your writing to your audience

Compare your result with what you know about your audience. As a guideline, think about newspapers. Each newspaper has some articles that are harder to read than other articles. Generally, tabloid newspapers use Grade 6-level writing. Main daily newspapers usually use Grade 8-level writing. *The Globe and Mail* uses Grade 10-level writing.

Don't rely on your word processor or Readability Tests. They can't tell you:

- how complex the ideas are
- how well or poorly the material is written
- if the vocabulary and tone are right for your audience
- if there is gender, class, racial or cultural bias
- if the order of the information makes sense to the reader
- if readers can find the information they need
- if the design is attractive and makes the document easier to read

Check with the experts

The best test is to check with the experts: your readers. Take the time to ask for feedback from people representative of your audience. Then, use the results to revise your document.

Oral and Internet communication

Take note - people don't read much on the web

ORAL COMMUNICATION

This handbook focuses on written communication. But we also need to use clear language in speeches, when facilitating workshops or educational courses, or when running a meeting.

- The best learning is based on participation. Plan to involve your audience in your presentation. This may include small group or pair activities, question and answer periods, and other techniques. Your union's Instructional Techniques course or the CLC's Instructor Training course are good sources for participatory teaching tips.
- Check with your audience often. Are they understanding what you're saying?
- Use a variety of resources such as videos, audio, slideshows.
- Use clear language and design in overheads, flip charts and handouts.

INTERNET COMMUNICATION

The Internet is changing our reading culture. More people are using the web for information. Much of what we write may find its way to our union's website. We need to think about on-line reading habits. People do not read every word. They spend less time per page while reading more slowly. The principles for effective writing for the web follow clear language principles: writing should be concise, scannable and objective.



How Users Read on the Web

They don't. People rarely read Web pages word by word. Instead, they *scan* the page, picking out single words and sentences. In a recent study, John

Clear language and harassment training



Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 3261 approached the Sexual Harassment Office, University of Toronto, suggesting training for the University's 800 cleaning and caretaking staff (CUPE members). They agreed that CUPE would deliver the training using its own three-hour workshop on workplace harassment. As always, the workshop was modified to meet the specifics of the workplace and local.

The majority of the members to be trained spoke English as a second language. This meant that material had to be adapted, because the language used in some of the workshop materials was too technical. This also affected the workshop delivery method. Few participants felt confident enough about their language skills to volunteer for the usual role of workshop recorders and reporters.

Responding to the participants' language needs, CUPE adjusted their workshop method by:

- ensuring that each small group included members who could translate for their brothers and sisters
- stressing oral information
- using larger groups based on how many members volunteered to be recorders and reporters
- speaking in clear language
- reviewing the design of the handouts to improve their readability
- revising technical definitions and including examples for each definition

Morkes and Jakob Nielsen found that 79 per cent of test users always scanned any new page they came across. Only 16 per cent read word by word.

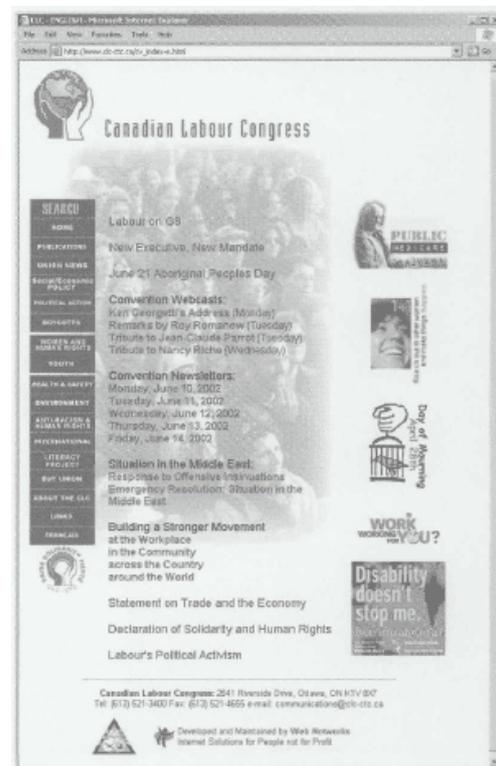
As a result, Web pages have to use scannable text, using

- highlighted keywords (typeface variations, colour)
- meaningful sub-headings
- bulleted lists
- one idea per paragraph
- the inverted pyramid style, starting with the conclusion (and then providing details later)
- half the word count (or less) than conventional writing

Morkes and Nielsen studied the effect of these guidelines using five different versions of the same website. They measured "usability" through time, errors, memory and site structure. Using all three principles to improve the writing - concise, scannable, and objective - increased usability by 124 percent.

-from Jakob Nielsen, Reading on the Web, Alertbox, October 1, 1997

If you want it read on the web, make your pages "scannable" - that means lots of graphics, headlines, bulleted lists, and the briefest possible text.



Advocating for clear writing

How to sell the idea to your local, or your employer

Knowing more about clear language and design is only half the battle. You now have to sell the idea to your local union, co-workers and your employer. Even after you have won them over, you will still have to decide how and where your organization can benefit from clear language.



You'll need to think about your organization and develop a strategy. Start by asking yourself these questions:

- Who will support clear language and design? Who will put up the greatest resistance?
- How can I get them to promote clear language? How can I convince them?
- What resources do I need for a clear language plan? What resources do I have to help me? Where can I get the resources I need?

STEPS FOR CARRYING OUT A CLEAR LANGUAGE PLAN

1. Gather supporters to create a Clear Language Advisory Group
2. Gather information about communication problems and collect samples of written material
3. Prepare a report that shows the benefits of clear language
4. Pilot a clear language program

UNION ADVOCACY PLAN

1. Gather supporters to create a Clear Language Advisory Group

- Talk to existing committees within your local union that might support clear language (education committee, health and safety committee,

local union executive, joint training committee)

- Talk to people you think may be supportive (stewards, trainers, union staff, local executive members)
- Be positive. Promote the benefits of clear language rather than criticize people for unclear language
- Set goals for the group

2. *Gather information about communication problems and collect samples of written material*

- Carry out an informal survey of local union members, committees and executive:
 - which documents cause the greatest confusion?
 - what is the most common means of communicating information?
 - ask for suggestions on how to improve written material
- Gather samples of union written material and assess them for readability, language and design problems:
 - assess material from a variety of sources to avoid offending a particular author
- Think about possible problems that could result because of unclear writing:
 - health and safety risk
 - worker loses grievance
- Gather anecdotal information about communication problems

3. *Report*

- Prepare a report to the local union executive that shows the need for clear language and the benefits of implementing a clear language and design plan:
 - include the findings of your informal survey, readability assessment and any examples of problems caused by unclear communications
 - outline the benefits of using clear language and design (saves time and money, avoids errors and confusion)
 - make recommendations for improving the readability of the documents that caused the most problems

- Develop an action plan with timelines and include suggestions for: - creating a campaign to get everyone interested and motivated
 - acknowledging clear writing and encouraging others to do so
 - developing materials and examples for training
 - holding clear language and design workshops
- Present the report and action plan to the local union executive
- Ask for feedback
- Gather support to pilot a program

4. Pilot a Clear Language Program

Changing the way a whole organization communicates can take time. Your local union could pilot the program as an example to the employer. You will then be ready to move the clear language plan to the workplace.

It is often best to pilot a clear language program in one department. Some people may want to begin in the department where there is the greatest support for clear language. Others may prefer an area that has the most problems with written communication. At the end of the pilot, you should evaluate how communication has changed and some of the resulting benefits.

WORKPLACE ADVOCACY PLAN

To advocate for clear language and design within your workplace, you would follow the same steps, and:

- Include supportive management people in your Advisory Group (Human Resource Manager, supervisors)
- Include non-bargaining unit staff in your survey
- Gather samples of written material from the workplace
- Prepare a report and action plan to pilot a program in the workplace
- Get support from the local union executive to present the plan to management

Clear language workshop

All the materials you need to run a two-day workshop

INTRODUCTION

There are many possibilities for clear language workshops in union education and activities:

- two-day Labour Councilor union weekend school
- one-day session as part of a weekend or five-day course
- one- or two-day session for union staff or activists from a particular work area
- short awareness sessions: 1.5 hours to half-day



We are including materials here for a two-day workshop. Facilitators can draw from this material to prepare shorter sessions. For example, an awareness session might combine the video, *The Clear Writer's Hit Squad*, with an overview and exercises. A one-day session might leave out Exercise 4 and "Advocating for Clear Language and Design."

It's important for the facilitator to talk with the workshop organizers in advance. Know your workshop audience: ask questions like those described on page seven.

The most effective clear language training includes a lot of hands-on practice with relevant material. In promoting the workshop, ask people to send you samples of their material that you can use in the workshop.

- Look in the materials for sample sentences, paragraphs and design to use in the workshop exercises. *Make sure to get the author's permission before using their work as an example.*
- Collect flyers, brochures, posters and other material from a variety of unions and community groups. You will use these samples in the workshop introduction and in "Looking at Type and Design."

SAMPLE FLYER

Clear language workshop for union activists

*Do members complain they can't understand or
don't have time to read everything we give them?*

This two-day workshop will make the written word work with us and make our communications reader-friendly. There will be lots of hands-on practice. Bring any material you are now working on.

Who should come?

- union newsletter committee
- executive and committee members
- anyone who writes communications

All are welcome!

- Union Hall: 456 Main Street
- September 25-26, 1999, 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Register early! Space is limited to 20 participants.
- Call Joe at the union office to register: 535-9999.

Sponsored by Local 123 Education Committee

SAMPLE 2-DAY AGENDA

Workshop Goals

- To introduce principles of clear language and design
- To give "hands-on" practice using clear language and design
- To consider what can be gained from clear language and why there is resistance
- To consider how to advocate for and implement clear language and design

Day 1 morning: What is clear language?

Introduction

Workshop Goals and Objectives

What is Clear Language and Design?

Know Your Audience

Day 1 afternoon: Writing in clear language

Organization

Words to Use and Words to Avoid

Sentence Length and Structure

Tone

Day 2 morning

Looking at Type and Design

Day 2 afternoon

Document Testing

Advocating for Clear Language and Design

Workshop Evaluation

Clear language workshop training

Judi Armstrong, Education Representative, CUPE, Alberta, describes a successful awareness session



Every year the CUPE Alberta Division hosts a Union Agreement Conference where members from every occupational group come together to discuss sectoral concerns and objectives. I was asked to present a 1.5 hour plenary workshop on Plain Language to all of our delegates.

The workshop I put together included watching the video *Clear Writer's Hit Squad* as well as a small group exercise giving participants a chance to actually write some companion language to selected collective agreement provisions. I used CUPE 3393's document as the model for the exercise (see the *Success Story* on pages 10-11).

The workshop was a huge success! All of the participants greatly enjoyed the opportunity to try their hand at writing in a plain language style. They were impressed with the CUPE 3393 document. That example has inspired a number of our locals in Alberta to try to change their style of writing.

DETAILED WORKSHOP PLAN

Day 1 morning

INTRODUCTIONS

Go around room. Ask participants to introduce themselves and say a few words about why and how they want to use clear language and design. If it is a large group, this could be a pair exercise, with one participant interviewing and introducing a partner.

WORKSHOP GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Review workshop goals and agenda with reference to their introductions.

WHAT IS CLEAR WRITING AND DESIGN?

Ask group to review *collection of 4-5 sample documents* from other locals, unions and organizations (picked previously as relevant to the group). What are some of your impressions? Use their feedback and fill in any gaps to summarize the topic.

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Review sample material. Ask participants to try to determine

- who is the audience, what are their characteristics?
- is the material appropriate for this audience?
- is it appropriate for those who have difficulty reading?

Use their feedback to generalize: different audiences, therefore different needs, different methods of writing.

Brainstorm:

- Who are *your* audiences?
- What are their characteristics?
- Fill in any gaps. Any questions?

Day 1 afternoon

WRITING IN CLEAR LANGUAGE

Move on to the areas we concentrate on when writing: organization, words to use and avoid, sentences, tone. In each case, start with participants' suggestions and then add anything missing from material included in this handbook. Or, show the video *Clear Writer's Hit Squad*. Overheads one to six provide samples for this section.

ORGANIZATION: THE ORDER AND FLOW OF IDEAS AND INFORMATION

- brainstorm: What suggestions come to mind?

HANDOUT, EXERCISE 1

Small groups: evaluate the "before" memo about harassment.

- report back

Small groups: evaluate the "after" memo.

- report back
- fill in any gaps

WORDS TO USE AND WORDS TO AVOID

- brainstorm: What suggestions come to mind?
- fill in any gaps

HANDOUT, EXERCISE 2: WORDS TO USE AND WORDS TO AVOID

- work in pairs and report back

SENTENCE LENGTH AND STRUCTURE

- brainstorm: What suggestions come to mind?

HANDOUT, EXERCISE 3: EDITING

- fill in any gaps

TONE: HOW YOU SPEAK TO YOUR READER

- brainstorm: What suggestions come to mind?
- fill in any gaps
- give out handout *Making It Clear*

Day 2 morning

LOOKING AT TYPE AND DESIGN

- individual or small group exercise: large collection of others' material, pick one you like and one you don't
- report back: explain choices to whole group
- overhead presentation, Overheads 7-12
- give out handout *Leaflets That Work*
- individual or small group exercise: from the collection of material from the group's union or area of work, pick one thing. How would you rewrite or redesign the material?
- report back

EXERCISE 4: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

- Prepare relevant scenarios for the group

Day 2 afternoon

DOCUMENT TESTING

- brainstorm: What suggestions come to mind?
- fill in any gaps

ADVOCATING FOR CLEAR LANGUAGE AND DESIGN

- brainstorm: What suggestions come to mind?

SMALL GROUP EXERCISE

- what kinds of activities within your workplace and union would help you and others to pursue clear language and design?
- what resistance might you expect; how would you argue the benefits?
- report back; fill in any gaps

EVALUATION

- how will this workshop help you in your work?
- did this workshop meet your goals?
- how can we improve the workshop for next time?

Workshop exercises

Writing and design exercises for your workshop

INTRODUCTION

The next 14 pages are the exercises you need for your clear writing workshop, outlined in the previous section.



WORKSHOP EXERCISE 1 *BEFORE*

ACME SCREW & GEAR LTD. MEMO
 STANDARD PROCEDURE
 SUBJECT: HARASSMENT/SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Acme Screw and Gear has established a strict policy which forbids unlawful harassment of employees, including implied or expressed forms of sexual harassment by any of its employees, managers, customers or suppliers, as detailed in the Ontario Human Rights Code. This includes verbal, written, visual or physical acts that are offensive in nature, intimidating, unwelcome, or that could reasonably be taken as objectionable.

Any employee who feels that he or she has been legitimately subjected to harassment of any type, whether by a co-worker, supervisor or visitor of the company should promptly report the incident to the Personnel Manager. The Personnel Manager will investigate on a priority basis in order to resolve or correct the situation in an expeditious manner.

Employees having any questions concerning this policy or its administration should contact the Personnel Manager for a confidential and frank discussion, and employees are assured that the utmost discretion will be used in handling of such matters.

ACME STRONGLY DISAPPROVES OF ANY FORM OF HARASSMENT/
 SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORK PLACE, INCLUDING ACTS OF NON-
 EMPLOYEES. DISCIPLINARY ACTION WILL BE TAKEN PROMPTLY
 AGAINST ANY EMPLOYEE, SUPERVISORY OR OTHERWISE, ENGAGING IN
 UNLAWFUL HARASSMENT/SEXUAL HARASSMENT.

WORKSHOP EXERCISE 1 AFTER

ACME SCREW & GEAR LTD. MEMO

DATE: MARCH 30, 1999

TO: ALL EMPLOYEES

FROM: CAROL HINES, GENERAL MANAGER

SUBJECT: HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

COPY: RENA PARKS, SHOP STEWARD

SINGH SAMURA, HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER

What is harassment and sexual harassment?

- If anyone does or says anything to you which insults you, offends you, hurts, or embarrasses you in any way, this may be harassment.
- Harassment and sexual harassment are against the law, according to the Ontario Human Rights Code.

What are the company's rules about harassment and sexual harassment?

- Acme will not allow any employee, manager, customer or supplier to harass an Acme employee.
- Acme will use legal action against anyone who harasses an Acme employee. We will support, in any way possible, any employee who has been harassed.

Do you have any questions?

- If you do not understand this policy, please contact someone in Human Resources, your union representative or me for more information.
- If someone has harassed you, please contact someone in Human Resources, your union representative or me. We want to help you. We will not use your name.

For more information on the Ontario Human Rights Code, contact the Ontario Human Rights Commission at the address below.

WORKSHOP EXERCISE 2 *BEFORE*

Words to Use and Words to Avoid

Use simple, familiar words. They are easier to read and understand. Here are some words to avoid. Can you think of a better choice?

Instead of

advise
 adversely affect
 anticipate
 approximately
 assist
 at the present time
 commence
 concur
 consequently
 cooperate
 demonstrate
 endeavor
 equitable
 forfeit
 has the capability
 implement
 indicate
 in lieu of
 notify
 operational
 remuneration
 strategize

Use



WORKSHOP EXERCISE 2 AFTER

Words to Use and Words to Avoid

Use simple, familiar words. They are easier to read and understand. Here are some words to avoid. Can you think of a better choice?

Instead of

advise
adversely affect
anticipate
approximately
assist
at the present time
commence
concur
consequently
cooperate
demonstrate
endeavor
equitable
forfeit
has the capability
implement
indicate
in lieu of
notify
operational
remuneration
strategize

Use

tell
hurt
expect
about
help
now
start
agree
so, as a result
help
show
try
fair
lose, give up
is able, can
start, begin, do
show
instead of
tell, let know
working
pay, salary, income
plan



WORKSHOP EXERCISE 3

Editing Exercise A: Editing sentences

Use samples of unclear sentences and paragraphs from materials provided by the union, local, or area of work before the workshop. With the workshop participants, identify the reader. Ask each participant to edit one or two sentences and present to the whole group.

Here are some sentence examples you may want to use.

Rewrite as if the audience were your local members.

Bill C-66 is the culmination of a process that has taken over two years, directly involved three federal ministers, and consumed countless hours of discussion and consultation. The CLC's involvement in this process has been guided by the insight and experience of representatives of affiliated unions whose activities and membership are, in whole or in part, affected by Part I of the Canada Labour Code.

The Kader toy factory fire in Thailand, and subsequent fires in Chinese factories, in which many workers, mostly young women, were maimed or lost their lives, dramatically brought home to Canadians that some workers are paying a very high price for the cheap goods we enjoy.

We have seen the federal government download responsibility for social programs through the Canada Health and Social Transfer, reversing decades' long traditions of universal standards of care across the country. Their rhetoric of local community control and individual consumer choice in health, education, pensions and social security hides the reality that only rich provinces and rich individuals will benefit.

Because of special disability allowances and specific disability benefits (such as mobility allowances, appliances, home modifications and remedial or special education), the benefits are better than, or less bad than, for welfare recipients generally.

Deficits are falling not so much because of growth in the economy - which has been extremely weak - as because of spending cuts and, to a much lesser extent, tax increases.

Our power is based upon the collective strength of our unions, our ability to work in solidarity with other movements and the wider community, and our ability to elect and influence democratic governments prepared to intervene in the market.

We have said that a regulated market can be a useful instrument for promoting a productive and efficient economy, but that the "free market" economy must be regulated and made accountable to democratic controls if it is to help us achieve our wider social goals.

We have recognized and embraced the need to make economic development sustainable in terms of the carrying capacity of the natural environment.

Determined to reach the 60 per cent of workers who remain unorganized, delegates to the provincial Federation of Labour endorsed plans to set up an organizing program that aims to increase unionization, to train new organizers, mobilize existing union members, reaching out to sectors of the community where rates of unionization are low.

The speaker pointed out that government staff cuts and the disappearance of jobs in hospitals, schools, and other public services is hurting women disproportionately and ensuring that single parent families will be disadvantaged.

These Bills involve a totally unjustified reduction to the income protection of unemployed workers; they move the program away from its fundamental purpose of stabilizing the incomes of workers by replacing earnings during periods of unemployment; and, they increase the authority of the federal government to make

changes to the program on a day-to-day basis without reference to either Parliament or labour, one of the program's key stakeholders.

While all the delegates are fully aware of the low support shown the NDP in the northeastern corner of BC, where the right-wing parties constantly receive in excess of fifty per cent of the vote, the close result of the last provincial election in Peace River South is a reminder of the need to pull all the plugs because one never knows when a breakthrough will occur.

The fact is that the more we examine the situation, the more we substantiate union members' concerns about the lack of education about unions and working people. The omission of this information means that an imbalanced view of the world is being given to our young people.

Free trade is about a fundamental shift in the balance of power – from governments (accountable to the people), to corporations (controlled by a small number of business elites and accountable only to their shareholders).

The newest policies and political will have allowed government to take even less responsibility for health and safety, hiding behind the façade that the two workplace parties, utilizing the internal responsibility system and a co-operative spirit (the erroneous argument has always been that health and safety is unlike collective bargaining), can effectively deal with health and safety issues, mainly without regulator involvement.

No employee shall be discharged, penalized or disciplined for refusing to work on a job or in any workplace or to operate any equipment where he/she or a member of the Health and Safety Committee believes that it would be unsafe or unhealthy to himself/herself, an unborn child, a workmate, or the public, or where it would be contrary to the applicable federal, provincial or municipal health and safety legislation or regulations.

Editing Exercise B: Collective Agreement

Before

Article 10 - Grievance Procedure

10.01 Should differences arise as to the interpretation, application, administration, or alleged violation of the provisions specifically mentioned in this Agreement, such differences shall be adjusted according to the following steps in the order named. Any adjustments so made shall be final and binding upon both Parties and the Employee concerned. The term "grievance" as used in this Agreement shall mean a complaint by any Employee against the Employer alleging failure to comply with the provisions of this Agreement. Such grievance must be covered by specific provisions of this Agreement and complaints with reference to matters not included in this Agreement shall not be subject to the grievance or arbitration procedures.

After

Article 10 - Grievance Procedure

(What to do if you have a complaint against your Employer)

10.01 When the word "grievance" is used in this document we mean a complaint by an Employee against the Employer for not following this Collective Agreement. Any grievance must be covered by specific articles of this Collective Agreement. Complaints about things other than what is covered in this Collective Agreement cannot be dealt with by the grievance or arbitration procedures.

If you and your Employer have a difference of opinion about how to interpret, apply, or administer this Collective Agreement, or about a violation of this Collective Agreement, it will be dealt with according to the following steps.

- Collective Agreement between St. Christopher House and the Canadian Union of Public Employees and its Local 3393, April 1, 1994 - March 31, 1997

Editing Exercise C: Collective Agreement

Before

Article 20 - Sick Leave

20.01 It is the Employer's policy that all Employees on the active payroll shall be entitled to continuation of regular pay in accordance with the provisions of this Article when absent due to illness, injury, disability, or illness of an immediate family member (immediate family is defined as spouse (including common law spouse or gay/lesbian spouse residing with the Employee in a conjugal relationship outside of marriage), and dependent children, parents or grandparents of the Employee residing with the Employee).

After

Article 20 . Sick Leave

20.01 If you are on the active payroll you will be paid your regular pay if you are absent due to:

- illness,
- injury,
- disability, or
- the illness of an immediate family member. Immediate family member means your spouse (includes common law, gay or lesbian spouse), dependent children, parents, or grandparents who live with you.

- Collective Agreement between 51. Christopher House and the Canadian Union of Public Employees and its Local 3393, April 1, 1994 - March 31, 1997

Editing Exercise D: Union Constitution

Before

The National Executive Board shall select from the credentials of delegates to each National Convention a Resolutions Committee of not less than seven (7) members, which shall assemble at least seven (7) days prior to the convening of the Convention. It shall be the duty of said Committee to consider such resolutions as may be properly referred to it under this Constitution. This Committee shall have authority to originate resolutions to be presented at the Convention.

After

A Resolutions Committee of at least seven members will meet at least one week before the convention to consider resolutions referred to it. The committee may also write new resolutions.

-Canadian Auto Workers Constitution

Editing Exercise E: Union Constitution

Before

The National Executive Board of the CAW-Canada shall be one (1) National President, one (1) National Secretary-Treasurer, one (1) Quebec Director, whose positions will be full time on behalf of the National Union, plus two (2) National Board members who will serve as Trustees, all of whom shall be elected by the National Constitutional Convention, as provided for in Sections 4 and 5 of this Article. In addition, the duly elected six (6) members of the Executive Board of the CAW Council, the President of the Quebec Council and the President of the FFAW/CAW shall be members of the National Executive Board by virtue of their elections to those positions by the CAW Council, by the Quebec Council and by election, as President, of the FFAW/CAW.

After

The 13 National Executive Board members will be:

- the National President (full-time)
- the National Secretary Treasurer (full-time)
- the Quebec Director (full-time)
- two Trustees

All of the above will be elected by the Constitutional Convention.

- the six members of the CAW Council's Executive Board
- the President of the Quebec Council
- the President of the FFAW/CAW

- Canadian Auto Workers Constitution

WORKSHOP EXERCISE 4: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Prepare one or more scenarios relevant to the group. The group, or small groups, should first discuss the scenario and identify the reader, the purpose and the intended impact. They should decide the best format but keep it to one page. Unless this is part of a desktop publishing course, the design should just be a sketch showing what design elements will be used.

Scenario 1

Your union local is planning a New Year's party for members and friends. You need to let everyone know the details.

Example of group discussion:

Reader: local union members

Purpose: inform members about details of the party (where, when...)

Intended impact: to encourage members to buy tickets; to come to the party and have a good time

Format: flyer/poster

Scenario 2

The government has announced funding cutbacks to the local women's shelter. The union executive has decided to ask members to phone or write the local politicians to support the shelter and stop the cut.

Reader: local union members

Purpose: inform members about cut and the need of the shelter

Intended impact: to phone or write local politicians

Format: leaflet

Scenario 3

The next stewards' meeting has to be rescheduled. Also, there's a new point for the agenda: Labour Council is planning a special meeting to publicize a new CLC campaign that's very important for your workplace.

Reader: stewards

Purpose: inform stewards about new meeting time, and special new point

Intended impact: to come at the right time and be sure to be there

Format: memo

Workshop handouts

Supplementary learning resources for your workshop

INTRODUCTION

The next five pages are a handout called *Leaflets That Work*. You can give it out at the end of the workshop, or you can use it during the workshop to show the main points in an alternative way.

Following *Leaflets That Work* is a two-page handout called *Making It Clear*. It summarizes many of the key points made in this workshop.



Leaflets that work

How to turn this...

**UNITED
PLANT & OFFICE WORKERS**

UPOW

Dear Employee:

As President of UPOW Local 1999, I would like to inform you of the start of our campaign to represent you and your co-workers.

With our local as your collective bargaining agent, we will achieve for you much-needed improvements in your wage-benefit package. As members of UPOW you will become part of a union that cares – about you and your community.

I have met with representatives of our national union in Ottawa, and they stand 100 per cent behind our efforts to organize the unorganized. Rest assured that the full resources of the UPOW will be at our disposal during our drive to get you a certified union and a collective agreement.

As you know, it only takes 40 per cent of the workers in your plant and office to sign a card in order to get a union election. If you haven't signed a card yet, please do so and mail it in today.

If you have any questions about UPOW, please feel free to call us. We will notify you shortly about the time and place of the next organizing meeting.

Fraternally,
Jimmy Higgins, President
UPOW Local 1999

...into this.

**Our boss says
we don't need a union.**



He's wrong.

We're tired of:

- low pay
- excessive workloads
- favouritism
- unfair discipline

... and together we can do something about it.

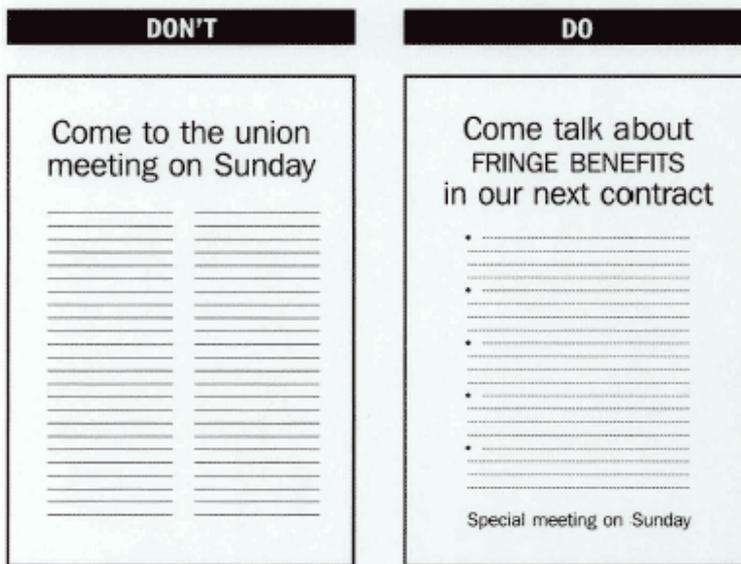
Come to a meeting to talk about joining the United
Plant and Office Workers Union, Local 1999.

123 MAIN STREET
Thursday, May 26, 7:30 p.m.

*You have to think of the readers first, and what might interest them.
Only the leaflet on the right (above) focuses on the problems that would
make that group of workers consider joining a union.*

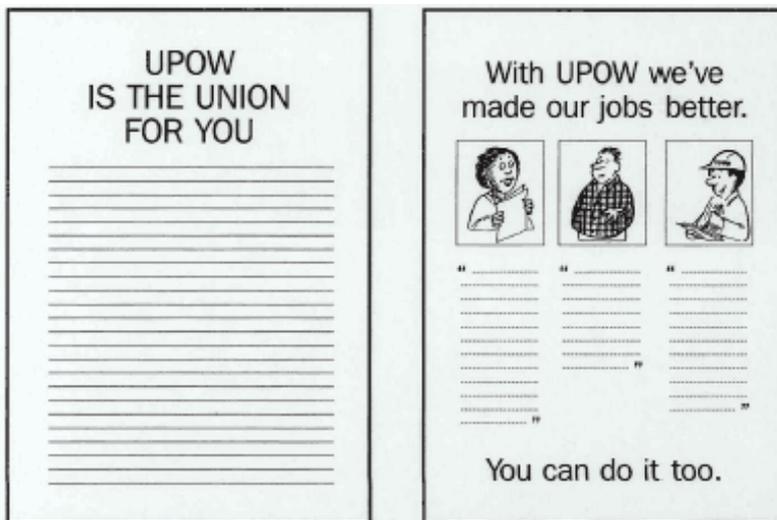
Leaflets that work

Leaflets can be an important tool- whether you're organizing new members, or motivating current members to take action on a particular problem. Preparing a leaflet is simple, but you must follow basic principles of clear writing and design. If you don't, your leaflet may not communicate. It might even damage your cause.



Write about issues that concern people.

If you are trying to motivate people, you have to show how the information on your leaflet relates to their problems.

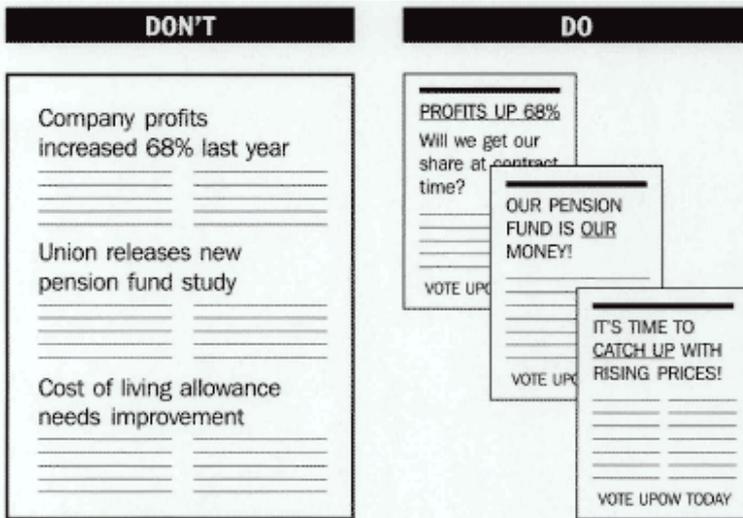


Write from the point of view of the workers, not the organizers.

Just by the way it is written, the leaflet should emphasize that the union is the workers, not a distant institution serving the interests of "outsiders."

Whenever possible, leaflets should be written as workers talking to each other and should use "we" rather than "you."

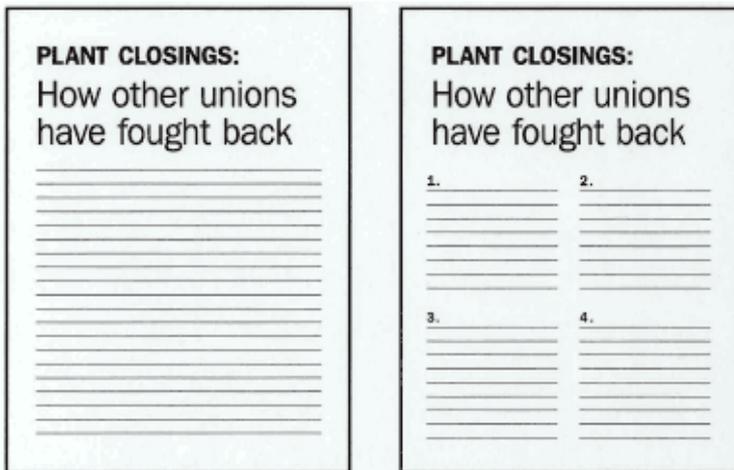
Try making points through union members from union members.



Use one central theme per leaflet.

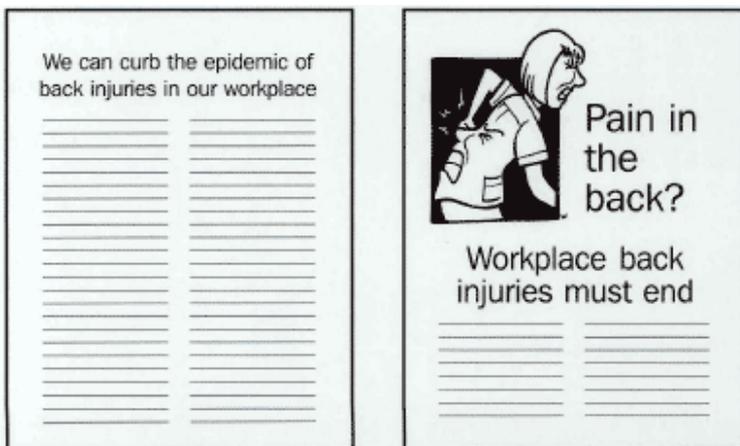
A leaflet is most effective when you stick to one major theme. If you have other major points to cover, consider doing separate leaflets for them.

When doing several leaflets on the same subject or in the same campaign, vary the design but tie them together with a common type style, logo, colour, style of illustration or repeated slogan.



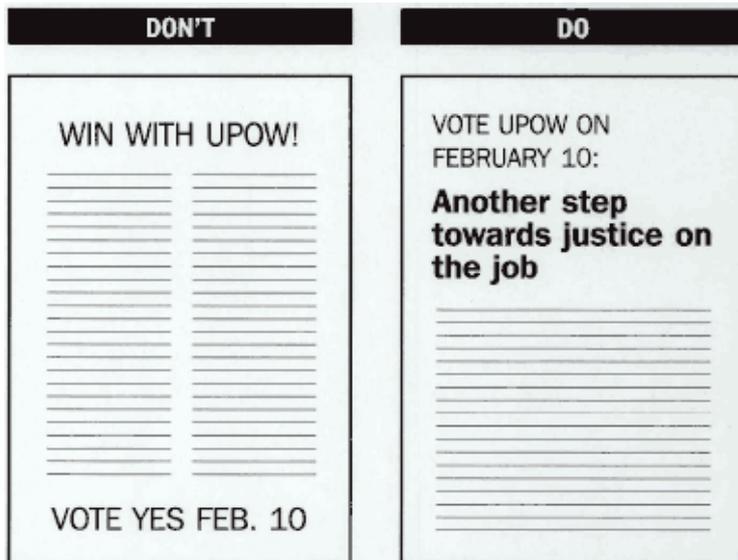
Don't use too much text.

The whole idea of a leaflet is that it is inviting to read because it is short and to the point.



Use cartoons, photos, charts or other illustrations.

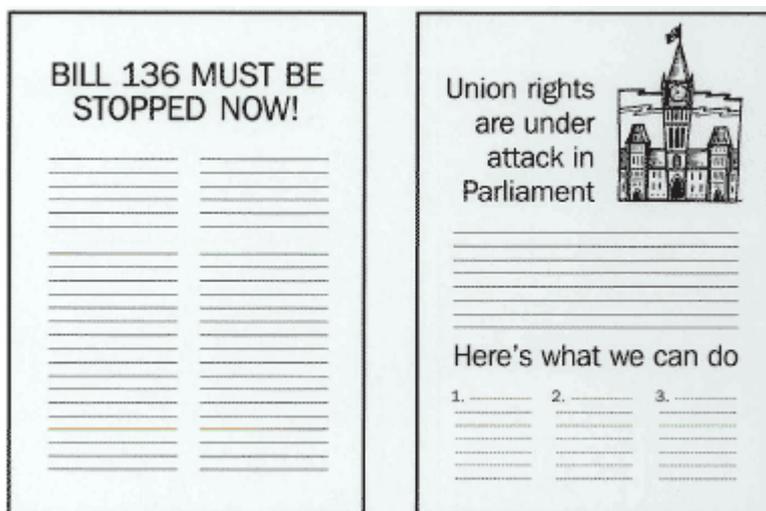
They can make the leaflet more attractive and help get the point across.



Remind readers of your long-term goal.

Give the reader the new information you have - about plans for a meeting, the filing of a grievance, or whatever - but work in references to how this new development fits into the drive for a larger goal. A leaflet on voting in a representation election should remind workers that the overall goal is to build a strong local union to fight more effectively for improvements on the job.

A grievance may be the focus of a leaflet, but remind readers that the long-term solution may be better language in the contract.



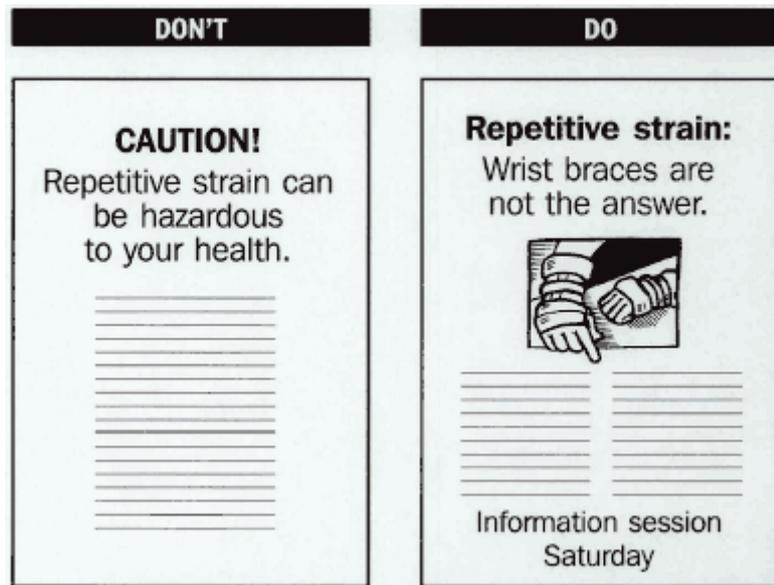
Avoid jargon or details most people don't care about.

If you are active in the day-to-day battles you may forget that other people don't know as much about the situation as you do. The numbers of the contract clauses or of proposed bills before the legislature or the technical words that have become second nature to you, may be foreign to others.

The leaflet should highlight the principles involved and the way the outcome will affect the reader. If you feel that the reader needs to know some of the jargon, be sure to explain it fully.

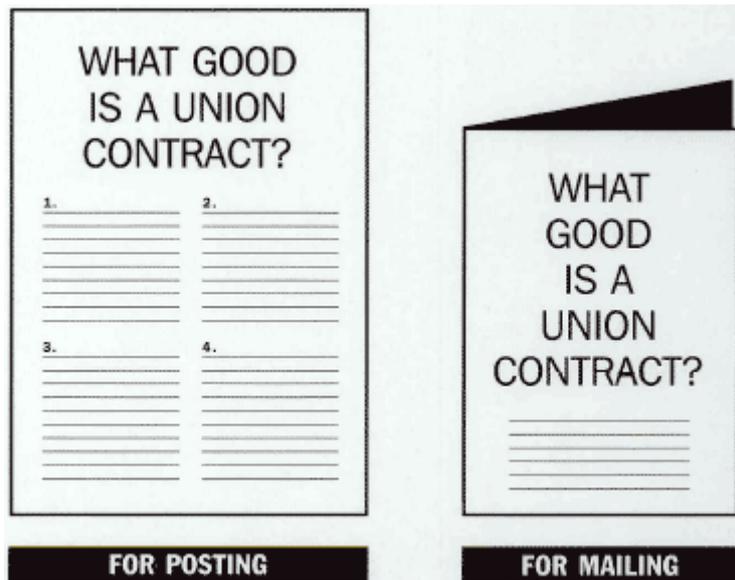
Indicate clearly what readers can do about the situation the leaflet describes.

In most cases, a leaflet isn't merely explaining - it is also urging some action. Use the headlines or bold type to let readers know they can help by coming to a meeting or demonstrating, signing a petition, contributing time or money, etc.



When designing a leaflet, consider how it will be used.

If it might be posted, just use one side of the paper. If it might be folded and mailed, use an outside panel for an eye-catching message that will make people want to see what's inside.



Adapted from: **Leaflets That Work**

- American Labour, American Labor Education Center, Washington, D.C., No. 17, 1982

Making it clear

Clear language involves thinking, planning, writing, designing, testing and revising. With every writing project, you should consider the following checklist of questions.

Your Reader

- who do you want to read your materials?
- why do you want them to read it?
- what do you want your reader to do?

Document Organization

- how will readers find the information they want?
- how will readers know what information is important?

Content

- will readers be able to see how this material relates to them?

Words to Use and Words to Avoid

- do you use concrete, active, positive words?
- do you avoid jargon, abbreviations, idioms and nouns made from verbs?

Sentence Length and Structure

- do you use simple, concise sentences?
- do you vary the sentence length, with only one new item of information per sentence?

Tone

- are you talking with the readers or at them?
- do you sound bossy or helpful, distant or warm?

Design

- will your material attract the readers' attention?
- is your main body of text in a serif typeface?
- is the type size appropriate for your audience?
- is the length of the line comfortable to read?

- is there space on each page to break up the text? Do you use a ragged right margin?
- do you highlight important information?
- do you use illustrations to help your readers understand, remember and become interested?
- is the paper and ink colour combination easy to read?

Reread, Test and Revise

- did you check for words and information that can be left out?
- did you change any complex sentences?
- did you test your draft material with people who represent your audience?
- did you do several drafts?

Workshop overheads

INTRODUCTION

The following pages in this section are overheads for the discussion parts of the workshop. Simply copy them from these master pages onto overhead transparencies.



OVERHEAD 1 – CLEAR LANGUAGE

BEFORE: ARTICLE 18 – HOLIDAYS

18.01 (b) As an alternative to three (3) days at Christmas as scheduled by the Employer an Employee who is a follower of a non-Christian religion may schedule, in lieu of three (3) days at Christmas, up to three (3) days at other times for recognized religious and/or cultural holiday observance purposes consistent with his/her bona fide religious and/or cultural practices. Such Employee must give the Employer written notice at least one (1) month in advance of his/her request to take such a holiday for religious and/or cultural observance purposes. It is understood, however, that the Employer retains the right to decide which of its programs shall continue to operate during Christmas holidays (as well as other times) and to schedule and reassign Employees to perform such work as is required and available.

AFTER: ARTICLE 18 - HOLIDAYS

18.01 (b) If you are a non-Christian, instead of 3 days at Christmas, you may take 3 days at other times to observe your religious or cultural holidays. You must give your Employer at least 1 month's written notice asking for this time off.

The Employer has the right to decide which of its programs will continue to operate at any time, including Christmas, and to schedule and reassign Employees to do the work needed.

- Collective Agreement between St. Christopher House and the Canadian Union of Public Employees and its Local 3393, Apr. 1, 1994 - Mar. 31, 1997, followed by clear language version.

OVERHEAD 2 – TECHNICAL WORDS

AVOID TECHNICAL WORDS AND LONG SENTENCES

BEFORE

With respect to the processing, disposition and/or settlement of any grievance initiated under the Grievance Procedure Section of this Agreement, and with respect to any court action claiming or alleging a violation of this Agreement or any local or other agreement amendatory or supplemental hereto, the Union shall be the sole and exclusive representative of the employee or employees covered by this agreement.

AFTER

The Union is your bargaining and grievance representative in all areas covered by the contract.

OVERHEAD 3 – WORDS AND IDIOMS

AVOID WORDS WITH OVERLAPPING MEANINGS*ask the question*

ask

mandatory requirement

requirement

AVOID ENGLISH IDIOMS AND WORDS FROM OTHER LANGUAGES*give someone a hand*

help someone

modus operandi

way of doing things

OVERHEAD 4 – ABBREVIATIONS

AVOID ABBREVIATIONS

i.e.

that is

e.g.

for example

AVOID NOUNS MADE FROM VERBS***BEFORE***

To effect a proper *utilization* of time, ensure that *preparation* of an agenda has been accomplished before the meeting.

AFTER

Make an agenda before the meeting. This will help you *use* your time better.

OVERHEAD 5 - CLAUSES

**Write sentences with no more than one or two clauses to a sentence.
Present only one new item of information per sentence.**

BEFORE

In response to the Action Plan, the Canadian Labour Congress is working with the Canadian Health Coalition to make the public aware that corporate greed is threatening Medicare, and to build public demand for an end to the monopoly enjoyed by giant drug companies.

AFTER

In response to the Action Plan, the Canadian Labour Congress is working with the Canadian Health Coalition. We are working together to make the public aware that corporate greed is threatening Medicare. We are helping to build public demand for an end to the monopoly enjoyed by giant drug companies.

OVERHEAD 6 - TONE

USE A FRIENDLY CONVERSATIONAL TONE

BEFORE

Laid-off members are required to telephone the main office before their first visit. They will be directed to the action centre nearest to their home.

AFTER

Please phone the main office before your first visit. We will send you to the nearest action centre.

OVERHEAD 7 – TYPE STYLES

USING TYPE STYLES

Serif type has a "hook" on the letters, like the type we are using in this text.

This is New Century Schoolbook, a serif type style. It is an easy text type to read.

This is Helvetica, a sans serif type style. Sans serif has no hook. It is not as easy to read.

Avoid complicated type styles.

OVERHEAD 8 – UPPER AND LOWER CASE

UPPER AND LOWER CASE

Lower case letters are easier to read than capital, or upper case letters. They give the reader more visual information about the characteristics of each letter.

WORDS MADE UP OF CAPITAL LETTERS ARE SEEN AS BLOCKS AND ARE HARD TO READ, ESPECIALLY IN A PASSAGE OF TEXT.

However, short subheadings in capital letters can be used to good effect (like the headline above).

OVERHEAD 9 – ALIGNMENT

ALIGNMENT

Text that has a ragged or uneven right margin is easier to read than text that has a justified or full margin. A justified right margin creates unequal spaces between words and hyphenates many words at the end of lines. Hyphenated words are hard to read, so turn off "hyphenation" when you use a word processor. This paragraph was typed with an uneven right margin and no hyphenation.

Text that has a justified or full margin. A justified right margin creates unequal spaces between words and hyphenates many words at the end of lines. Hyphenated words are hard to read, so turn off "hyphenation" when you use a word processor. This paragraph was typed with a full margin and hyphenation.

Text that is centred or ragged on both sides doesn't show the reader where sentences begin and end. It looks like each line is a sentence in itself.

OVERHEAD 10 – LISTS

BREAK LONG SENTENCES INTO LISTS***BEFORE***

You can qualify for benefits under Section 43 if you are sixty-four or older and unable to work, and that section also provides benefits in the event that you are blind in one eye, or both eyes, or are permanently disabled in the course of your employment.

AFTER

You can qualify for benefits under Section 43 if you meet anyone of the following conditions:

- you are 64 or older and are unable to work, or
- you are blind in one eye or both eyes, or you are permanently disabled in the course of your employment.

OVERHEAD 11 – LAYOUT

LAYOUT: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

- don't use too many design elements on a single page
- too many elements can confuse readers and make it hard to pick out information
- don't start something new at the bottom of a page



OVERHEAD 12 – HIGHLIGHTING

HIGHLIGHTING

- bold
- bullets
- colour
- boxes

Be sure that information in a box makes sense all by itself. Readers may read only this information

Resources

Further information about clear language

BOOKS AND OTHER PRINT RESOURCES

The CALM Handbook for Union Editors, by Art Kilgour, Canadian Association of Labour Media, Ottawa, 1996.

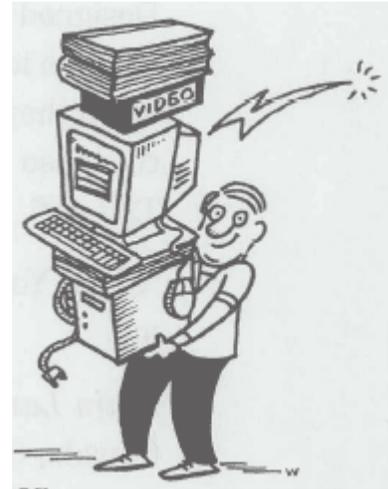
CALMideas: *The How-to Newsletter for Union Editors*, Canadian Association of Labour Media, published four times a year.

Canadian Law Information Council Guidelines for Writing, Editing and Designing, by Richard Darville and Gayla Reid, 1985.

Clear Lines: How to Compose and Design Clear Language Documents for the Workplace, rev., by Gord W.E. Nore and Corinna Frattini, Frontier College Press, Toronto, 1997.

Clear Writing and Literacy by Ruth Baldwin, Ontario Literacy Coalition, Toronto, 1990. Currently out of print but revised edition expected in 1999. Order from Ontario Literacy Coalition, 365 Bloor St. E., Ste. 1003, Toronto M4W 3M7, fax 416-963-8102.

Get to the Point: A Strategy for Writing Clearly at Work, by Rose Grotzky, Toronto, Praxis Adult Training and Skills Development Inc., 1999. This 96-page guide presents a case for using a plain language approach to communication in the workplace and marketplace. Aimed at businesses and labour groups, it describes how organizations worldwide have used plain language to help them succeed. *Get to the Point* also includes techniques for creating more readable and understandable information, with examples that illustrate each technique.



How to Do Leaflets, Newsletters and Newspapers: All New and Updated, by Nancy Brigham, with Maria Catalfio and Dick Cluster, PEP Publishers, Detroit, 1991. A great reference book, written from a union perspective.

Literacy Audit Kit, Alberta Association for Adult Literacy, Calgary. Designed for service organizations who work with the general public. The kit helps to identify and remove barriers facing adults with low literacy skills when they deal with your organization. \$40 (includes the audit manual and the video *Literacy Matters*). Order from 605, 332 - 6 Ave. S.E., Calgary, AB T2G 4S6.

"Make Your Message Clear," Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy, Toronto, n.d.

Plain Language: Clear and Simple, Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada, Ottawa, 1991.

Plain Language: Clear and Simple - Trainer's Guide, National Literacy Secretariat, Ottawa, 1994.

Working Design: A Primer in Publication Design, by Kris Klaasen, Canadian Association of Labour Media, Ottawa, nd.

"Writing Agreements in Plain Language," by David C. Elliott, *Dispute Resolution Journal*, March 1994.

Writing on Our Side, Progressive Literacy Group, Vancouver, 1986.

VIDEOS

The Clear Writers Hit Squad, 15.5 min., Frontier College, 35 Jackes Ave., Toronto M4T 1E2, \$89.95, e-mail orderstosdrummonds@frontiercollege.ca

The following two videos focus on service organizations working with the general public. They include tips on clear language in oral and written communication.

Face to Face: A Video Guide on Clear Communication for Professionals, 1996, Acadia Health Education Coalition, Maine, distributed in Canada by the Canadian Public Health Association, Ottawa, \$50, e-mail orders to hrc/ [cgs@cpha.ca](mailto:cds@cpha.ca), Order #H0256

Literacy Matters, 15 min., part of the Literacy Audit Kit (see above), Alberta Association for Adult Literacy.

WEBSITES

www.web.netl-raporter/

Plain Language Online Centre: a terrific site, includes online training in plain language as well as links, resources, articles.

www.torque.netl-schalp/clad/clad.htm

St. Christopher House Adult Literacy Program: tips for clear language and design.

www.nald.ca

National Adult Literacy Database: adult literacy information network including resources, services and links.

www.alphaplus.ca

AlphaPlus Centre: Ontario's literacy and language training resource centre includes an extensive collection of clear language and design resources. Online catalogue and free lending service. Service streams include the Anglophone, Francophone, Deaf and Native communities.

www.abc-canada.org

ABC Canada: includes clear language tips, clear language in the workplace and a directory of clear language providers (within the workplace education section).

WRITING FOR THE WEB

www.sun.com/styleguide

Sun Microsystems' Web Style Guide

www.sun.com/980713/webwriting

The Official Sun Microsystems Guideline Booklet: Writing for the Web

www.gooddocuments.com

Good Documents: includes techniques and samples.

ORGANIZATIONS

CALM

Canadian Association of Labour Media is a national organization of union communicators. CALM provides members with a monthly news and cartoon service, a quarterly graphics package and a quarterly newsletter, CALMideas. CALM also holds workshops on writing, design and computers for union editors. 2841 Riverside Dr., Ottawa, ON K1V 8X7

Editor: Rosemarie Bahr, 76 Westmount Ave., Toronto, ON M6H 3K1 (416) 656-2256 or 1-888-290-2256

www.calm.ca

Labour contacts

Call your labour council, provincial federation of labour, regional office of the Canadian Labour Congress or your union's regional or national office. They may know labour resource people for clear language and design. You can also contact the Workplace Literacy Project of the Canadian Labour Congress, 2841 Riverside Drive, Ottawa K1V 8X7, (613) 521-3400

Literacy organizations

Literacy organizations are usually good contacts for clear language and design consultants. For your local literacy organization, look in the Yellow Pages under *Learn*.

Learning Disabilities Association of Canada

323 Chapel St., Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7Z2

(613) 238-5721

edu-ssl0.educ.queensu.ca/ -Ida

email: Idactaac@fox.nstn.ca.