

## Tips for Writing Plain Language Summaries

### Content

- ✓ **Answer the questions:**
  - Why was the study done?
  - What did the researchers do and find?
  - Who took part in the study?
  - What do the results mean?
  - What were the main conclusions?
  - Why are the findings relevant to, and how do they affect, the PLS/PLSP target audience?
  - What is the objective influence on the wider field?

*Please note that these questions do not need to be used as headings; they are provided to help authors determine what information to include in PLS/PLSPs.*

- ✓ **Keep statements factual and avoid providing opinions or speculation** on the study's findings and significance.
- ✓ **Ensure statements accurately reflect the information and data within the original article**, and there are no statements that could be considered misleading or misrepresentative.

### Composition

- ✓ **Use short, clear sentences and phrase sentences in neutral language**, remaining as objective as possible.
- ✓ **Use the active voice** rather than the passive voice (for example, "Dr Smith's team report several improvements" rather than "Several improvements were reported by Dr Smith's team").
- ✓ **Use language that aligns with preferences of the patient community**. For example, use person-centered language rather than focusing on the condition/illness or disability; however, alternative preferences may exist.
- ✓ **Avoid jargon, complex grammatical structures, and abbreviations**. If you need to use a technical term or abbreviation, explain it the first time you use it.

### Content Review

- ✓ **Assess the ability of the audience to understand the PLSP** by having a writer/editor with plain language experience and/or a patient/patient advocate review the PLSP prior to submission.
- ✓ **Readability tools can assist in evaluating ease of understanding**; however, readability scores should be interpreted alongside other feedback and review comments provided.

### Other Considerations

- ✓ **Review available guidance** on plain language writing for science.
- ✓ **Consult plain language glossaries** to assist with translating complex science into plain language.



## Plain Language & PLS Resources

### *Plain Language Summary Guidance*

Envision Pharma **Plain Language Summaries (PLS) Toolkit.**

<https://www.envisionthepatient.com/plstoolkit>

ISMPP/Envision Pharma **Plain language summaries of publications of company-sponsored medical research: what key questions do we need to address?**

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03007995.2021.1997221>

Open Pharma **Recommendations for Plain Language Summaries of Peer-Reviewed Medical Journal Publications.**

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03007995.2021.1971185>

Patient Focused Medicine Development (PFMD) **How-to Guide for the development and dissemination of plain language summaries of peer-reviewed publications and conference presentations.**

<https://pemsuite.org/How-to-Guides/WG5.pdf>

### *Plain Language – General*

Center for Plain Language. <https://centerforplainlanguage.org/>

Plain Language Commission. <https://clearest.co.uk/>

Plain Language Association International. <https://plainlanguagenetwork.org/>

Readable.com. <https://readable.com/>

Hemingway App. <https://hemingwayapp.com/>

### *Plain Language – Medical*

EUPATI Glossary. <https://toolbox.eupati.eu/glossary/>

Health Literacy – Plain Language Materials & Resources.

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/developmaterials/plainlanguage.html>

NIHR Glossary. <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/about-us/glossary.htm>

NIHR Plain English Summaries. <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/plain-english-summaries/27363>

plainlanguage.gov. <https://www.plainlanguage.gov/>

Plain Language at NIH. <https://www.nih.gov/institutes-nih/nih-office-director/office-communications-public-liaison/clear-communication/plain-language>

Plain Language Medical Dictionary. <https://apps.lib.umich.edu/medical-dictionary/>

Plain Language Thesaurus for Health Communications. <https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/11500/>

Universal Patient Language. <https://www.upl.org/about>

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