# Creating Instructional Materials using Plain Language

# Topics

Plain language for literacy

Choosing text to edit for instruction

Case study

# Plain Language for Literacy

## Headings

- Do they identify the main ideas?

## Simple Sentences

- Shorter sentences of 15 words or less

- Only one conjunction (ex. and, but, or ...)

## Words

- More common words

- Fewer syllables

- Fewer prefixes or suffixes

- Simple present or past tense verbs more often

# Choosing Text
# to Edit
# for Instruction

Focus on what interests learners

Find a reputable source:
- Magazines
- Newspapers
- Books
- Government websites

Try not to use self-published sources like blogs or social media.

Choose shorter articles of about 500 words

Find articles that have headings, already, and shorter paragraphs and sentences so you don't have to do as much editing

Avoid articles with too much jargon or technical language

## Your turn:

What topics interest your learners?

Where are some good sources for articles on those topics?

# Case Study

This excerpt is a clear language adaption of an original article from Forbes online: **How To Use The 4 Ds Of Effective Time Management** by Bryan Collins.

https://www.forbes.com/sites/bryancollinseurope/2018/06/14/effective-time-management/?sh=1141968e1938

## Original Text

## Plain Language Edit

**Delegate**

**Delegate: Give work to someone else**

If you're new to delegation, you might find it disconcerting when the results are somewhat different than when you complete the work yourself.

When you delegate, others may not work the same way you do.

That doesn't mean you should stop delegating! Delegation is a great way to better leverage your day.

Still delegate! It is a great way to save time.

To delegate effectively, create a playbook breaking down a project or task step-by-step and detailing what the outcome looks like.

To delegate well, make a checklist of all the project tasks step-by-step and explain the outcome.

# Case Study

## Original Text

This way, the result is less dependent on the person completing the tasks and more on the quality of your checklist. This approach is particularly useful if you're using outsourcing sites like Upwork.

In The Checklist Manifesto, Atul Guwande wrote, "[Checklists] not only offer the possibility of verification but also instill a kind of discipline of higher performance."

That said, smaller tasks you want to delegate don't necessarily need a checklist.

Instead, consider if your time is spent more effectively by delegating or doing. For example, you might want to delegate paying a supplier and prioritize phoning an unhappy customer.

## Plain Language Edit

Then it doesn't matter who completes the tasks. Anyone will be able to use your clear checklist.

Checklists help you keep track of who is working on a task. And it can help people stay on track, too.

You don't need to put small or easy tasks on a checklist.

You can delegate a small task that is quick and easy to do. And you can do a more difficult small task yourself. For example, you can delegate paying a supplier, but phone an unhappy customer yourself.