

# Writing and Reviewing Documents

People are in a hurry - they don't read, they scan for the information they need. Use this checklist to make it easy for people to find what they're looking for.

## Audience and Task

- Who is my audience? What is their task? What do they need to know to accomplish their task? Users are goal oriented and are unlikely to spend time trying to understand difficult content.

## Purpose

- Does this information help my audience? Did I make my point up front - in the first sentence or paragraph?

## Format

- Did I use the correct format? In most cases, post content as HTML. Only post PDF content if it is intended to be printed.

### If PDF is necessary

Include a descriptive summary of the resource so users don't have to download the PDF to find out what it contains.

Create separate files to break long PDFs into chapters and chunks. Provide an option to download the entire PDF.

## Contacts

- Did I use a general email address? e.g. contact\_us@company.com. Personal email addresses become outdated.

## Structure

### HEADINGS

- Did I use simple, descriptive headings? Divide long content into sections. Carefully consider headings - lead with keywords.

#### Examples

How we collect and enforce child support

Collection and Enforcement

### BULLETED LISTS

- Did I use bullets to organize information? Bullets encourage skimming.

### NUMBERED LISTS

- Did I need a numbered list? Use these when the order of the list matters, e.g. steps in a process.

### LENGTH

- Did I use short sentences? Short paragraphs? With ordinary, familiar words? Readers skip long, jargon-filled sentences.

### HYPERLINKS

- Do hyperlinks tell the user what they will get if they click? If the user only reads the links, do they make sense?

#### Examples

"See the infographic"

"Click here"

## Organizing Content

*"Put the bottom line up front"*

Prioritize your content using the inverted pyramid principle.

