

NARA PLAIN WRITING CHECKLIST

Is the tone appropriate for the audience? Did you...	Yes	No
Write for the reader (average reader or subject matter expert)?		
Are ideas organized logically? Did you...	Yes	No
Start with the main point?		
Organize to serve the reader's needs?		
Use headings and subheadings consistently?		
Include correct, unbroken links if document is a web communication, and didn't use "click here"?		
Does the document use the right words? Did you...	Yes	No
Use active voice?		
Use the simplest tense possible (present tense is best)?		
Use "must" to express requirements and avoid the use of "shall"?		
Use everyday words (consider the audience)?		
Use pronouns ("we" and "you") to speak to the reader?		
Omit unnecessary words?		
Use short sentences?		
Place words carefully?		
Are the spelling and grammar correct? Did you...	Yes	No
Spell and capitalize words correctly?		
Make subjects and verbs agree?		
Use correct punctuation?		
Is the document formatted for readability? Did you...	Yes	No
Use informative headings and subheadings if the document is lengthy?		
Use white space for easy scanning?		
Use lists and tables to simplify complex material?		