

# Writing in the plain style

1

Use as your default sentence one that:

- has the subject at or near the start of the sentence
- has the verb straight after, or very near to, the subject
- has a single main clause.

2

Recognise that it's acceptable – desirable, even – on occasion to insert a very short sentence (of, say, 3–6 words).

3

Keep adjectives to a minimum.

4

Ditto, adverbs.

5

Be wary of beginning sentences with subordinate clauses (for example, ones beginning 'While', 'Although', or 'Despite').

6

Be even wary when the sentence is the first one in the paragraph.

7

Be consistent: seek to avoid attaching different labels to the same thing. For example, decide whether something is a 'theory' or a 'model' or a 'framework' – and then stick to your decision.

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## Resources

The Plain English Campaign ([www.plainenglish.co.uk/](http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/))

Ernest Gowers, *The complete plain words* (Penguin, 2015)  
– this edition revised and updated by Rebecca Gowers

Martin Cutts, *Plain English* (OUP, 2013)

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