Agenda

→ Next week

→ Plain Language Concerns

→ Working on Infographics

Online Resources
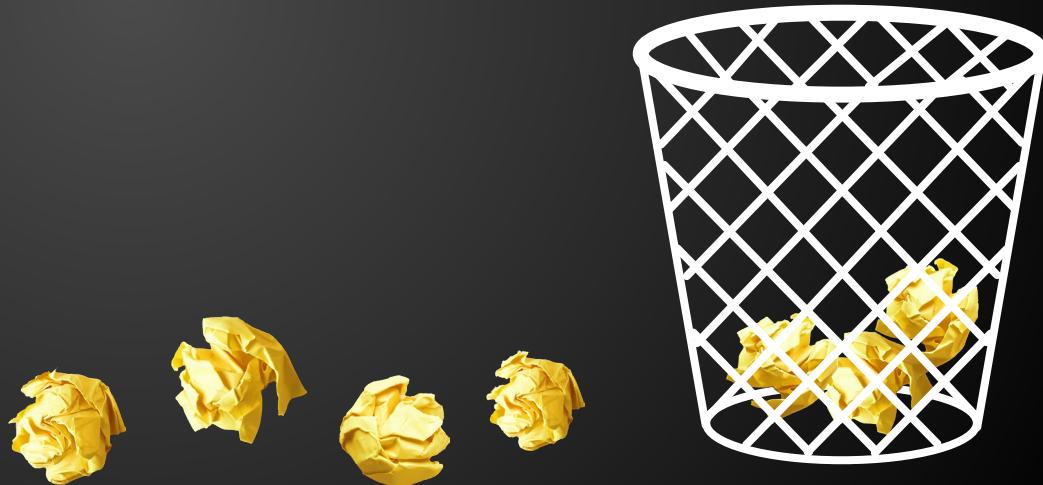
There are excellent plain language resources available online:

plainlanguage.gov
Center for Plain Language

Plain language is the cornerstone of technical communications.

Plain Language Allows Your

- Find what they need

- Understand what they find

- Use what they find to meet their needs*

*from plainlanguage.gov

Tech Comm involves relaying complex, difficult information to an audience that is usually non-expert. Following plain language guidelines allows you to communication to your audience clearly and concisely.

Write for your audience!

- 💡 Don't dumb it down/patronize
- 💡 Tell them why it's important *for them*
- 💡 Ask yourself:
    - 💡 Who is my audience?
    - 💡 What does my audience already know?
    - 💡 What questions will they have?
    - 💡 What's the best outcome?

Organize the information

💡 Start by stating your purpose & the bottom line (for your infographic, your technical definition should accomplish this job!)

💡 Use a logical progression – make it easy to follow

💡 Remember HATS (heading, access, typography, & space)

💡 Use your design knowledge to help you

Choose your words carefully

💡 Remember when I said, "communication is a political act"? It's all about privilege and access. **Words matter.**

💡 Avoid confusing jargon.

💡 Use a consistent writing style.

💡 Be concrete, not abstract.

💡 Use language familiar to your audience.

💡 Use strong, simple words: remember to use active voice.

Be Concise

- Long, complex sentences can confuse your reader.
- Challenge every word: do you need it? Can you say it simpler? Is it the best word for the job?
- Omit information your audience doesn't need.

Keep it conversational

- Your voice as the writer should be clear – it should read like you're standing there, talking to the reader.
- Use active verbs.
- Make sure it's clear *who* is doing *what*.

Practicing Plain Language

- Copies of tax returns must be provided.
- The team of researchers at the university were happy to speak with the president of the student body about a variety of issues.

- Provide copies of tax returns.
- The university researchers spoke happily with the student body president. They discussed many issues.