

PLAIN Principles of Plain Language Exercise Packet

Nouns and Pronouns
Pronoun exercise

Rewrite the following passages to speak more directly to the reader.

1. Copies of tax returns must be provided.

2. Loan applications will be reviewed to ensure that procedures have been followed.

3. Dietary patterns consistent with recommended dietary guidance are associated with a lower risk of mortality among individuals age 45 years and older in the United States.

4. The applicant will be the primary source of information regarding his or her circumstances for the purposes of determining eligibility and need.

5. To establish eligibility for a voucher, an applicant must show that the applicant has a low income and that the present housing of the applicant is substandard and inadequate.

6. Easy access to information and resources concerning long-term care issues for seniors and the disabled has been made available on a new website developed by the County Department of Community and Senior Services.

Organizing to Serve the Reader

Rearrange the following sections to flow logically

PART 2 - APPEALS FROM ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

- Sec.
- 2.1 Information collection.
 - 2.2 Definitions.
 - 2.3 Applicability
 - 2.4 Officials who may decide appeals.
 - 2.5 Appeal bond.
 - 2.6 Finality of decisions.
 - 2.7 Notice of administrative decision or action.
 - 2.8 Appeal from inaction of an official.
 - 2.9 Notice of an appeal.
 - 2.10 Statement of reasons.
 - 2.11 Answer of interested party.
 - 2.12 Service of appeal documents.
 - 2.13 Filing documents
 - 2.14 Record address.
 - 2.15 Computation of time.
 - 2.16 Extensions of time.
 - 2.17 Summary dismissal
 - 2.18 Consolidation of appeals.
 - 2.19 Action by Area Directors and Education program officials on appeal.
 - 2.20 Action by the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs on appeal.
 - 2.21 Scope of review.

Pronouns and Active Voice

Use pronouns, active voice, and any other technique to improve these passages. You may have to invent a subject for some of the sentences.

1. The scientific report was used to develop the Dietary Guidelines jointly between the two Departments and forms the basis of recommendations that will be used by USDA and HHS for program and policy development.

2. Consumer messages have been developed to educate the public about the Key Recommendations in the Dietary Guidelines and will be used in materials targeted for consumers separate from this publication.

3. Recently, it was reported that dietary patterns consistent with recommended dietary guidance were associated with a lower risk of mortality among individuals age 45 years and older in the United States.

4. These two similar eating patterns are designed to integrate dietary recommendations into a healthy way to eat and are used in the *Dietary Guidelines* to provide examples of how nutrient-focused recommendations can be expressed in terms of food choices.

Sentences and Paragraphs Exercise

Rewrite the following sentences to improve them. Break them into multiple sentences if that's the best solution.

1. Applicants may be granted a permit to prospect for geothermal resources on any federal lands except lands in the National Park System, unless the applicant holds valid existing rights to the geothermal resources on the National Park System lands listed in the application.

2. The initiative works to educate specific underserved communities to recognize and report intolerance and hate crimes, to assist victims in accessing culturally and linguistically appropriate services, and to advocate on behalf of victims for institutional changes that can reduce hate crimes.

3. In most cases, your California Small Business certification or Non-Profit registration will be completed online in one business day or less when you have at hand the necessary information from your tax returns and business documents to enter into the online system.

4. No approval of any noise compatibility program, or any portion of a program, may be implied in the absence of the agency's express approval.

Making Lists

Use lists to simplify the material below. Don't rewrite the sentences! Just put a colon where you need to, insert item numbers, and make one or two minor word changes.

1. Failure to file an answer within the 30-day period may be treated as consent to the award requested, unless the Department or other agency requests an extension of time for filing or files a statement of intent to negotiate under paragraph (b) of this section.

2. The Superintendent or Area Director will provide you a written notice specifying the action that we will take under this part and explaining the reason(s) for the action. The notice will be delivered to you by certified mail or in person. The notice will include your appeal rights under § 70.10.

3. If you determine the value of your oil under this subpart, you must retain all data relevant to the determination of royalty value. You must be able to show how you calculated the value you reported, including all adjustments for location, quality, and transportation, and how you complied with the requirements of this subpart.

Making Tables

Use the information in the paragraphs below and the table outlines to create “If—Then” tables.

1. If the estimated stumpage value of the forest products offered does not exceed \$50,000, the advertisement shall be made for not less than 15 days; if the estimated stumpage value exceeds \$50,000 but not \$250,000, for not less than 30 days; if the estimated stumpage value exceeds \$250,000, for not less than 60 days.

2. If an action or decision on your request was made by an Agency Superintendent, you should appeal to the Area Director. If an action or decision on your request was made by an Area Director, you should appeal to the Commissioner. If an action or decision on your request was made by the Commissioner, the action or decision is final and you may not appeal.

Applying plain language to a letter - Before

This “before” version of a letter is filled with too much information. It overwhelms the reader with too many ideas and the layout doesn’t help the reader to focus on the main points.

Dear Medicare Beneficiaries:

Recent legislation included Medicare+Choice, which will result in changes to the Medicare program. These changes have helped to preserve the financial health of the Medicare trust fund for another 10 years. Importantly, you now have new preventive health benefits and new patient protections. In addition, starting in 1999, Medicare will offer new health plan choices. You may want to look at these choices.

To help you understand these changes, we have revised *Your Medicare Handbook* and given it a new name – *Medicare & You*. It includes a description of the new preventive benefits available to you (see page 8), the new rights you have as a patient (see page 28), and the new health plan options available to you (see pages 9-18). It will help you identify some of the important questions you will want to ask and includes a list of important resources for you to use to get more information (see pages 19a-d). Medicare information is also available on the Internet at www.medicare.gov. If you don’t have a computer, your local library or senior center may be able to help you access the Medicare website.

As you read this handbook, it is very important for you to remember that if you are happy with the way you get your health care now, you don’t have to do anything. The choice is yours. No matter what you decide, you are still in the Medicare program and will receive all the Medicare-covered services.

It is also important to remember that Medicare doesn’t pay for everything, and Medicare doesn’t cover everything. To get more coverage, you may purchase a Medicare Supplemental Insurance Policy (see pages 29-30), or you may consider joining a different health plan which may provide extra benefits.

If you are interested in changing the way you receive your care, one of the new choices may be right for you. Changing the way you receive your health care is an important decision. It should be made carefully and with the help of your family, friends, or your doctor. If you or your spouse has health care coverage that supplements Medicare through a former employer or union, contact your benefits representative before you make a new health plan choice. If you have Medicaid coverage, do not make changes until you contact the State Medical Assistance Office.

Whether you are new to the Medicare program or not, we want you to know of our deep commitment to keep Medicare working for you.

Applying plain language to a letter - After

In the revised version, we chose only a few points to emphasize and used headers and bullets to help the reader see the main ideas. Rather than tell the reader a lot about the larger Medicare document (as we did in the old letter), we now rely on the table of contents to do that. This revised letter chooses a few ideas and emphasizes them so that the reader leaves with a clearer idea of what's happening.

Dear Medicare beneficiary:

Why we're sending you this handbook

Medicare is changing. You will continue to have Medicare protection, but there are new benefits, new protections for you, and new choices that you can make. We've written this handbook to explain your basic benefits under Medicare and to tell you about the new changes.

What you need to do

You should read this handbook carefully. As you read, remember that you have two choices:

- You can continue to receive your Medicare benefits just as you do now. In other words, if you are happy with the way you get your health care now, you don't have to do anything.
- You can change to one of the new benefit plans. In other words, if you want to continue your basic Medicare coverage but change the way you get your health care, you may want to change to a new Medicare plan. See pages 9 - 18 of this handbook for details of the new plans and information about how to change.

If you have more questions

We have designed this book to answer most of the questions you may have. If you need more information, you can either:

- Call us at 1-800-222-1234
- Visit our web site at www.medicare.gov

We hope that this handbook helps you to get the most from your Medicare benefits.

Review Exercises- Test what you learned today

Apply plain language techniques to improve the following.

1. The Committee was composed of scientific experts who were responsible for reviewing and analyzing the most current dietary and nutritional information and incorporating this into a scientific evidence-based report.

2. To maintain body weight in a healthy range, balance calories from foods and beverages with calories expended.

3. Efforts may be warranted to promote increased dietary intakes of potassium, fiber, and possibly vitamin E, regardless of age; increased intakes of calcium and possibly vitamins A (as carotenoids) and C and magnesium by adults; efforts are warranted to increase intakes of calcium and possibly magnesium by children age 9 years or older.

4. Development of Authoritative Statements: The content of this website is not appropriate for use in the development of authoritative statements, as provided for in the Food and Drug Administration Modernization Act. This content has been developed based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2005, which has the potential to provide authoritative statements. Only statements included in the Executive Summary and Key Recommendations boxes of the Dietary Guidelines can be used for identification of authoritative statements.

Plain Language Document Checklist

- ___ written for the average reader
- ___ organized to serve the reader's needs
- ___ uses question-and-answer format
- ___ uses "you" and other pronouns
- ___ uses active voice
- ___ uses short sections and sentences
- ___ written to one person, not a group
- ___ uses the simplest tense possible
- ___ uses "must" instead of "shall" to indicate requirements
- ___ places words carefully (exceptions are last, subjects and verbs are together)
- ___ uses lists and tables
- ___ avoids confusing words and constructions
- ___ uses no more than two or three subordinate levels

Rewriting a Short Rule: Step by Step

Old Rule

Some problems:

- Material is buried far down in a section
- Paragraph (3) covers more than travel restrictions, although the title doesn't say that
- Who would look for the material in paragraph (vii) under the heading "Travel restrictions"?

(3) Travel restrictions. The operation of a motor vehicle on oversand routes is subject to all applicable provisions of this chapter, including part 4 as well as the specific provisions of this section.

(i) Route limits.

(a) On the beach, a vehicle operator will drive in a corridor extending from a point 10 feet seaward of the spring high tide drift line to the berm crest. An operator may drive below the berm crest only to pass a temporary cut in the beach, but will regain the crest immediately following the cut. Delineator posts mark the landward side of the corridor in critical areas.

(b) On an inland oversand route, a vehicle operator will drive only in a lane designated by pairs of delineator posts showing the sides of the route.

(ii) An oversand route is closed at any time that tides, nesting birds or surface configuration prevent vehicle travel within the designated corridor.

(iii) When two vehicles meet on the beach, the operator of the vehicle with the water on the left will yield.

(iv) When two vehicles meet on a single-lane oversand route, the operator of the vehicle in the best position to yield will pull out of the track only so far as necessary to allow the other vehicle to pass safely, and then will move back into the established track before resuming the original direction of travel.

(v) When the process of freeing a vehicle that has been stuck results in ruts or holes, the operator will fill the ruts or holes created by such activity before removing the vehicle from the immediate area.

(vi) The following are prohibited:

(a) Driving off a designated oversand route.

(b) Exceeding a speed of 15 miles per hour unless posted otherwise.

(c) Parking a vehicle in an oversand route so as to obstruct traffic.

(d) Riding on a fender, tailgate, roof, door or any other location on the outside of a vehicle.

(e) Driving a vehicle across a designated swimming beach at any time when it is posted with a sign prohibiting vehicles.

(f) Operating a motorcycle on an oversand route.

(vii) Boat trailering and launching by permitted ORVs in designated open route corridors is permitted.

Rewriting a Short Rule: Step by Step

Step 1 - Divide rule into more logical units

✓ One group for general travel restrictions (where you are allowed to go)

(3) Travel restrictions. The operation of a motor vehicle on oversand routes is subject to all applicable provisions of this chapter, including part 4 as well as the specific provisions of this section.

(i) Route limits.

(a) On the beach, a vehicle operator will drive in a corridor extending from a point 10 feet seaward of the spring high tide drift line to the berm crest. An operator may drive below the berm crest only to pass a temporary cut in the beach, but will regain the crest immediately following the cut. Delineator posts mark the landward side of the corridor in critical areas.

(b) On an inland oversand route, a vehicle operator will drive only in a lane designated by pairs of delineator posts showing the sides of the route.

(ii) An oversand route is closed at any time that tides, nesting birds or surface configuration prevent vehicle travel within the designated corridor.

✓ One group for special rules of the road (what to do when you meet others)

(iii) When two vehicles meet on the beach, the operator of the vehicle with the water on the left will yield.

(iv) When two vehicles meet on a single-lane oversand route, the operator of the vehicle in the best position to yield will pull out of the track only so far as necessary to allow the other vehicle to pass safely, and then will move back into the established track before resuming the original direction of travel.

✓ One group for what to do when you get stuck

(v) When the process of freeing a vehicle that has been stuck results in ruts or holes, the operator will fill the ruts or holes created by such activity before removing the vehicle from the immediate area.

✓ One group for prohibitions (what you can't do)

(vi) The following are prohibited:

(a) Driving off a designated oversand route.

(b) Exceeding a speed of 15 miles per hour unless posted otherwise.

(c) Parking a vehicle in an oversand route so as to obstruct traffic.

(d) Riding on a fender, tailgate, roof, door or any other location on the outside of a vehicle.

(e) Driving a vehicle across a designated swimming beach at any time when it is posted with a sign prohibiting vehicles.

(f) Operating a motorcycle on an oversand route.

✓ Highlight the special permitted activity by putting it by itself (it doesn't fit with anything else)

(vii) Boat trailering and launching by permitted ORVs in designated open route corridors is permitted.

Rewriting a Short Rule: Step by Step

Step 2 - Retitle new units and move them up as high as you can

- Each unit is now a section - headings make material stand out for the user
- Logical headings help user find specific material
- Citations are now much more compact (former § 7.525(a)(3)(vi)(A) is now § 7.528(a))
- In §§ 7.527 and .729, a new section aids users by highlighting a separate item

§ 7.525 Where can I drive on the beach?

~~(3) Travel restrictions.~~ The operation of a motor vehicle on oversand routes is subject to all applicable provisions of this chapter, including part 4 as well as the specific provisions of this section.

~~(i) Route limits.~~

(a) ~~(a)~~ On the beach, a vehicle operator will drive in a corridor extending from a point 10 feet seaward of the spring high tide drift line to the berm crest. **Delineator posts mark the landward side of the corridor in critical areas.** *[This sentence moved here from below.]*

(b) An operator may drive below the berm crest only to pass a temporary cut in the beach, but will regain the crest immediately following the cut. ~~Delineator posts mark the landward side of the corridor in critical areas.~~ *[This sentence moved above to be where it logically belongs.]*

(c) ~~(b)~~ On an inland oversand route, a vehicle operator will drive only in a lane designated by pairs of delineator posts showing the sides of the route.

(d) ~~(ii)~~ An oversand route is closed at any time that tides, nesting birds or surface configuration prevent vehicle travel within the designated corridor.

§ 7.526 What must I do when I meet another vehicle on the beach?

(a) ~~(iii)~~ When two vehicles meet on the beach, the operator of the vehicle with the water on the left will yield.

(b) ~~(iv)~~ When two vehicles meet on a single-lane oversand route, the operator of the vehicle in the best position to yield will pull out of the track only so far as necessary to allow the other vehicle to pass safely, and then will move back into the established track before resuming the original direction of travel.

§ 7.527 What must I do when I get stuck?

~~(v)~~ When the process of freeing a vehicle that has been stuck results in ruts or holes, the operator will fill the ruts or holes created by such activity before removing the vehicle from the immediate area.

§ 7.528 What activities are prohibited?

~~(vi)~~ The following are prohibited:

(a) ~~(a)~~ Driving off a designated oversand route.

(b) ~~(b)~~ Exceeding a speed of 15 miles per hour unless posted otherwise.

(c) ~~(c)~~ Parking a vehicle in an oversand route so as to obstruct traffic.

(d) ~~(d)~~ Riding on a fender, tailgate, roof, door, or any other location on the outside of a vehicle.

(e) ~~(e)~~ Driving a vehicle across a designated swimming beach at any time when it is posted with a sign prohibiting vehicles.

(f) ~~(f)~~ Operating a motorcycle on an oversand route.

§ 7.529 May I launch a boat from a designated open route corridor?

~~(vii)~~ Boat trailering and launching by permitted ORVs in designated open route corridors is permitted.

Rewriting a Short Rule: Step by Step

Step 3 - Replace passive voice with active voice, add pronouns, simplify language

- In § 7.526(b), one long sentence is split into three shorter sentences
- In § 7.526(c), eliminating lots of excess words makes the sentences shorter and easier to read

§ 7.525 Where can I drive on the beach?

You must follow The operation of a motor vehicle on oversand routes is subject to all applicable provisions of this chapter, including part 4 as well as the specific provisions of this section.

(a) On the beach, **you must** a vehicle operator will drive in a corridor extending from a point 10 feet seaward of the spring high tide drift line to the berm crest. Delineator posts mark the landward side of the corridor in critical areas.

(b) **You may** An operator may drive below the berm crest only to pass a temporary cut in the beach. **You must** but will regain the crest immediately following **after you pass** the cut.

(c) On an inland oversand route, **you must** a vehicle operator will drive only in a lane designated by pairs of delineator posts showing the sides of the route.

(d) **You must not drive on** an oversand route is closed at any time that **when** tides, nesting birds or surface configuration prevent vehicle travel within the designated corridor.

§ 7.526 What must I do when I meet another vehicle on the beach?

(a) **If you** When two vehicles meet **another vehicle** on the beach, **you must yield if** the operator of the vehicle with the water **is on your** on the left will yield.

(b) **If you** When two vehicles meet **another vehicle** on a single-lane oversand route, **you must** the operator of the vehicle in the best position to yield **if you are in the better position to yield. When yielding, you must:**

(1) **will** Pull out of the track only so far **enough** as necessary to **let** allow the other vehicle to pass safely; **and**

(2) **and then will** Move back into the established track before **you drive on** resuming the **in your** original direction of travel.

§ 7.527 What must I do when I get stuck?

(e) **If you** When the process of **make a hole while** freeing a **stuck** vehicle that has been stuck results in ruts or holes, **you must** the operator will fill the rut or hole created by such activity before removing **you drive away** the vehicle from the immediate area.

§ 7.528 What activities are prohibited?

You must not:

(a) **Drive** Driving off a designated oversand route.

(b) **Exceed** Exceeding a speed of 15 miles per hour unless posted otherwise.

(c) **Park** Parking a vehicle in an oversand route so as to obstruct traffic.

(d) **Ride** Riding on a fender, tailgate, roof, door or any other location on the outside of a vehicle.

(e) **Drive** Driving a vehicle across a designated swimming beach at any time when it is posted with a sign prohibiting vehicles.

(f) **Operate** Operating a motorcycle on an oversand route.

§ 7.529 May I launch a boat from a designated open route corridor?

You may launch a boat ~~trailing and launching by permitted ORVs in~~ **from a** designated open route corridor ~~is permitted.~~ **You must have an NPS permit for the vehicle that you use to haul your boat.**

Rewriting a Short Rule: Step by Step

The finished product -- a plain language rule!

§ 7.525 Where can I drive on the beach?

You must follow all applicable provisions of this chapter, including part 4, as well as the provisions of this section.

(a) On the beach, you must drive in a corridor extending from a point 10 feet seaward of the spring high tide drift line to the berm crest. Delineator posts mark the landward side of the corridor in critical areas.

(b) You may drive below the berm crest only to pass a temporary cut in the beach. You must regain the crest immediately after you pass the cut.

(c) On an inland oversand route, you must drive only in a lane designated by pairs of delineator posts showing the sides of the route.

(d) You must not drive on an oversand route when tides, nesting birds or surface configuration prevent vehicle travel within the corridor.

§ 7.526 What must I do when I meet another vehicle on the beach?

(a) If you meet another vehicle on the beach, you must yield if the water is on your left .

(b) If you meet another vehicle on a single-lane oversand route, you must yield if you are in the better position to yield. When yielding, you must:

(1) Pull out of the track only far enough to let the other vehicle pass safely; and

(2) Move back into the established track before you drive on in your original direction.

§ 7.527 What must I do when I get stuck?

If you make a hole while freeing a stuck vehicle, you must fill the hole before you drive away .

§ 7.528 What activities are prohibited?

You must not:

(a) Drive off a designated oversand route.

(b) Exceed a speed of 15 miles per hour unless posted otherwise.

(c) Park a vehicle in an oversand route so as to obstruct traffic.

(d) Ride on a fender, tailgate, roof, door or any other location on the outside of a vehicle.

(e) Drive a vehicle across a designated swimming beach at any time when it is posted with a sign prohibiting vehicles.

(f) Operate a motorcycle on an oversand route.

§ 7.529 May I launch a boat from a designated open route corridor?

You may launch a boat from a designated open route corridor, but you must have an NPS permit for the vehicle that you use to haul your boat.

Note: This rule does not appear in the Code of Federal Regulations in this form. We have modified it to make it fit onto one page and to better illustrate in a small space several features of plain English.