



Are Your Materials Easy to Read? 20 Questions

As health educators, we strive to use materials that are easy to read, but in my work as a social marketing and health communications consultant, I still encounter confusion about how to assess materials for literacy. Here are 20 questions you can ask yourself as you are reviewing materials for your audiences and remember, even folks who are highly educated and have no problem with literacy want something concise and easy to read!



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ACMA Social Marketing recommends that you use health education materials that are written at 6th grade level or lower.

Ask yourself these questions to help you decide if your materials are easy to read. If you answer “no” to more than 3 of these questions, consider using some other material.

1. Is the educational material written at 6th grade level or lower?
2. Does the material focus on only one or two educational/behavioral objectives?
3. Is the material written in the active voice?
4. Does the material clearly tell the reader what to do?
5. Has the material been field-tested with the intended audience?
6. Does it avoid the use of jargon?
7. If it uses jargon, does it explain it clearly and directly?
8. Does the material use advance organizers and headers?
9. Is there plenty of white space?
10. Is the material written in short and natural sentences? (“Short” means less than 10 words.)
11. Is the material written in upper and lower case as opposed to all caps?
12. Has the use of Italics been avoided?
13. Does it use bold letters or underlining for emphasis, instead of all caps?
14. Does the material use serif type?
15. Does the material use a 12pt type or larger?
16. Is the material written with dark ink on light background for maximum contrast?
17. Are illustrations, photos and drawings culturally relevant and appropriate to the intended audience?
18. Is background clutter and design kept to a minimum?
19. Can the reader follow the text from left to right?
20. Is the material respectful and not condescending?

For more information on how ACMA Social Marketing can help you create easy to read, and entertaining educational materials, call 505-466-8817! You can email us at fotonovela@aol.com or visit our website at www.acmasocialmarketing.com