NARA PLAIN WRITING CHECKLIST
(See NARA 120, Plain Writing at NARA)

Use this checklist during your plain language review to ensure plain language compliance in your external and internal (print and online) communications. **SPECIAL NOTE: For all Internal NARA Policy drafts, Authors or their Policy Liaisons must complete and sign the checklist for each draft,** then submit the checklist and the policy draft together to the Strategy Division.

* If you mark 'No', please explain in comments section on next page

	Yes	No *
Is the tone appropriate for the audience? Did you…		
1. Write for your reader (average reader or subject matter expert)?		
Are ideas organized logically? Did you…		
2. Start with the main point?		
3. Organized to serve the reader's needs?		
4. Use headings and subheadings consistently?		
5. 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…		
6. Uses active voice?		
7. Uses the simplest tense possible (present tense is best)		
8. Use "must" to express requirements and avoid the use of "shall"?		
9. Use everyday words (consider the audience)?		
10. Use pronouns ("we" and "you") to speak to the reader		
11. Omit unnecessary words?		
12. Use short sentences?		
13. Place words carefully?		
Are the spelling and grammar correct? Did you…		
14. Spell and capitalize words correctly?		
15. Make subjects and verbs agree?		
16. Use correct punctuation?		
Is the document formatted for readability? Did you…		
Readability Instructions Activate the Readability Statistics feature on your computer as follows: Open Word, Click on the Office Globe Icon at the top of the Word screen, Click on 'Word Options' at the bottom of the window, Click on 'Proofing', and Click on 'show readability statistics.' Then press 'OK.' The next time you type a document, click on the spell check feature in Word. At the end of the spell check process, a readability dialog box will automatically open displaying the results. Desired results are as follows: (1) Passive sentences should be less than 10%; (2) Readability score should be 30 or higher; (3) Grade level should be 10 or lower; Exceptions may be made for certain types of documents (examples: technical documents, documents for targeted audiences.).		
17. Use informative headings and subheadings if the document is lengthy?		
18. Uses white space for easy scanning?		
19. Use lists and tables to simplify complex material?		

Passive Sentences = [   ]
(< 10%)

Ease of Reading = [   ]
(> 29)

Grade Level = [   ]
(10 or less)

Comments

If you marked 'No' for any item on the previous page, please list the number and a brief explanation in the space below.

Name of Office Contact Who Completes This Form: