



## WRITING THAT WORKS

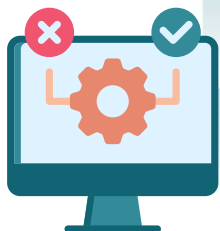
# *A Health Literacy Checklist*

### What is health literacy?

Health literacy is how well people can find, understand, and use health information to make good decisions for themselves and their families.

### What is plain language?

Plain language means using clear, simple words and structure so people can easily understand the message the first time they read or hear it.



#### KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Write for real people, not experts. Example: First-time parents may feel excited and anxious—use plain language to empower them.

#### ORGANIZE LOGICALLY

Put key info first or arrange steps in order so it is easy to follow.

#### USE ACTIVE VOICE

Example: “Call your doctor” is clearer than “A call to your doctor is recommended.”

#### ENGAGE WITH PRONOUNS

Speak directly: use “you,” “your” to make it personal.

#### CHUNK WITH HEADINGS AND LISTS

Break text into small sections with clear headings and bullets or numbers.

#### KEEP SENTENCES SHORT

Aim for fewer than 10 words per sentence.

#### REPLACE JARGON

Use everyday words. Example: say “baby heart rate” instead of “fetal heart rate.”

#### INCLUDE A CLEAR CALL TO ACTION

Tell readers exactly what to do next.

#### ADD VISUAL ANCHORS

Use headers, bullets, and images near related text.

#### TEST YOUR WORK

Use tools like the Health Literacy Advisor to check readability.