Clear Writing Checklist

Language and Tone

1 Talk directly to your reader! Use the 1st (I, we) and 2nd (you, your) person.

Original Applicants are encouraged to contact the agency for further information.

Better Please call us if you have any questions.

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2 Explain difficult words and avoid using jargon.

Original Every season, your sprayer should be calibrated.

Better Every season you should calibrate your sprayer. Do this by measuring the output of each nozzle. This will make sure that each one is putting out the same amount of spray.

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3 Avoid using acronyms.

Original PPE is required.

Better Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is required.

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4 Use the active voice - the subject does the action.

Original The task should be completed by Friday.

Better Complete the task by Friday.

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5 Use a positive tone.

Original If you haven't glanced over the new policies, you may want to do so to be aware of some new changes and additions.

Better Read the new policy for changes and additions we've made.

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Ontario

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Clear Writing Checklist

Layout and Design

1 Use bold or larger text to highlight information.

Original Avoid using *italics*, underlining, shading or ALL CAPITAL LETTERS.

Better **Avoid** using italics, underlining, shading or all capital letters.

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2 Use fonts that are clear and easy to read.

Original *Weekly health and safety meeting today.*

Better Weekly health and safety meeting today.

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3 Always justify the body of the document to the left.

Original Remember to always wear your Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) on a job site.

Better Remember to always wear your Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) on a job site.

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4 Make sure that there is enough contrast between text colour and the background.

Original Caution: Wet paint

Better Caution: Wet paint

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5 If printing materials, use matte or low-gloss paper.

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6 Use appropriate graphics – make sure they're relevant and not behind text (click here for an example).

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Clear Writing Checklist

Organization

1 Use bullet points to pull out key information.

Original Qualifications include grade 12 diploma or equivalent, bachelor's degree or 2-3 year college program, successful completion of an apprenticeship program and a valid driver's license.

Better Qualifications include

- grade 12 diploma or equivalent
- bachelor's degree or 2-3 year college program
- successful completion of an apprenticeship program
- valid driver's license

2 Write instructions in the order they need to be done.

Original Clock out after you finish your task.

Better Finish your task, then clock out.

3 Use clear and specific headings to summarize text.

Original Attention!

Better Information on New Government Grants

4 Write sentences that are short and simple (15 words max).

Original A viable agricultural base strengthens the rural community and likewise, agriculture benefits from close ties to the community, business, education, social and recreation facilities.

Better A strong agricultural base strengthens the rural community. Agriculture benefits from close ties to community, business, education, social and recreation facilities.

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Organization

5 Get to the point - start with your main point, then explain details.

Original	On February 1, 2023 you wrote your exam. To pass you need at least 70% on each individual test. Your scores for each subject area were over 70%. Congratulations – you passed your test.
Better	Congratulations – you passed your test! On February 1, 2023 you wrote your exam. To pass you need at least 70% on each individual test. Your scores for each subject area were over 70%.

Click here to see an example of a flyer that has been edited to follow Clear Writing Guidelines.

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