

A Student Sample of the Assignment on Using Plain English

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My Favorite Assignment

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Part I: Summary and Reflection on Plain English

Summary: Action verbs are more engaging and professional. For example, “Police stopped traffic today” as opposed to “Traffic was stopped by police today.” Sentences are kept short, usually no more than 15 to 20 words. Plain text documents also utilize appropriate word choice. This word choice goes along with the use of “you and “we” to personally address the readers. Instructions keep the reader focused and engaged in the writing. Lists are used to maintain the overall flow of a Plain English document. By using lists, information is given to the readers efficiently and quickly. Plain English documents also avoid nominalizations, which can make the writing dull.

Reflection: While I was aware of using action verbs, I had not considered mixing short and long sentences. In my previous experience, I used action verbs often, but sometimes found myself tempted to include nominalizations. Now I know to avoid them completely. While I have previous experience with instruction, this reading reminded me of the power of lists and how they can be used effectively. Using “you” and “we” more often for a Plain English document was also something that enlightened me.

Part II: Plain English Scenario and Written Response

The self-created scenario: Company Picnic Announcement

Response to the Scenario: an Email

Dear employees,

This Friday is the company picnic at Redbud Park. We will meet at 4:00 p.m. Food and drinks will be provided. Please view the attached sign-up sheet, if you would like to bring a specific dessert. Scheduled activities and games include:

- Bingo
- Frisbee
- Volleyball
- Fireworks
- Musical performance by the Jacob Smith Band

Please stop by my office at Room 101 or call me at (405)-457-8972, if you have any further questions or concerns.

Sincerely,
Ted Reeves

Part III: Peer Response

You appear to have a strong grasp of the concept and material. Your summary was well written, and hit on all of the major points included in the article itself. Plain English is one of those concepts that seems to have a basic meaning, but when understood and written about as you have here, clearly contains a deeper nature than what is on the surface.

Your scenario was well thought out. I could see that you put a good effort into fitting in all of the material covered in the article. The sentence structure was concise, without being too empty, and you made good use of active verbs to make the writing kick. A great job overall.