

# Communication of projects

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(A number of slides based on a previous presentation by Nicola Harman & Heather Bagley, University of Liverpool)



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When might we be communicating with the public about our research?

How might we communicate with the public about our research?

# Literacy

**17% of the world's adult population is not able to read or write (2/3rds of these are women)**

# Percentage of adults between 16 and 65 years with literacy difficulties (Europe)

- **Average 16.4**

- Austria 15.6
- Czech republic 11.9
- Denmark 15.8
- Estonia 13.1
- Finland 10.6
- France 21.7
- Germany 17.8
- Ireland 17.5

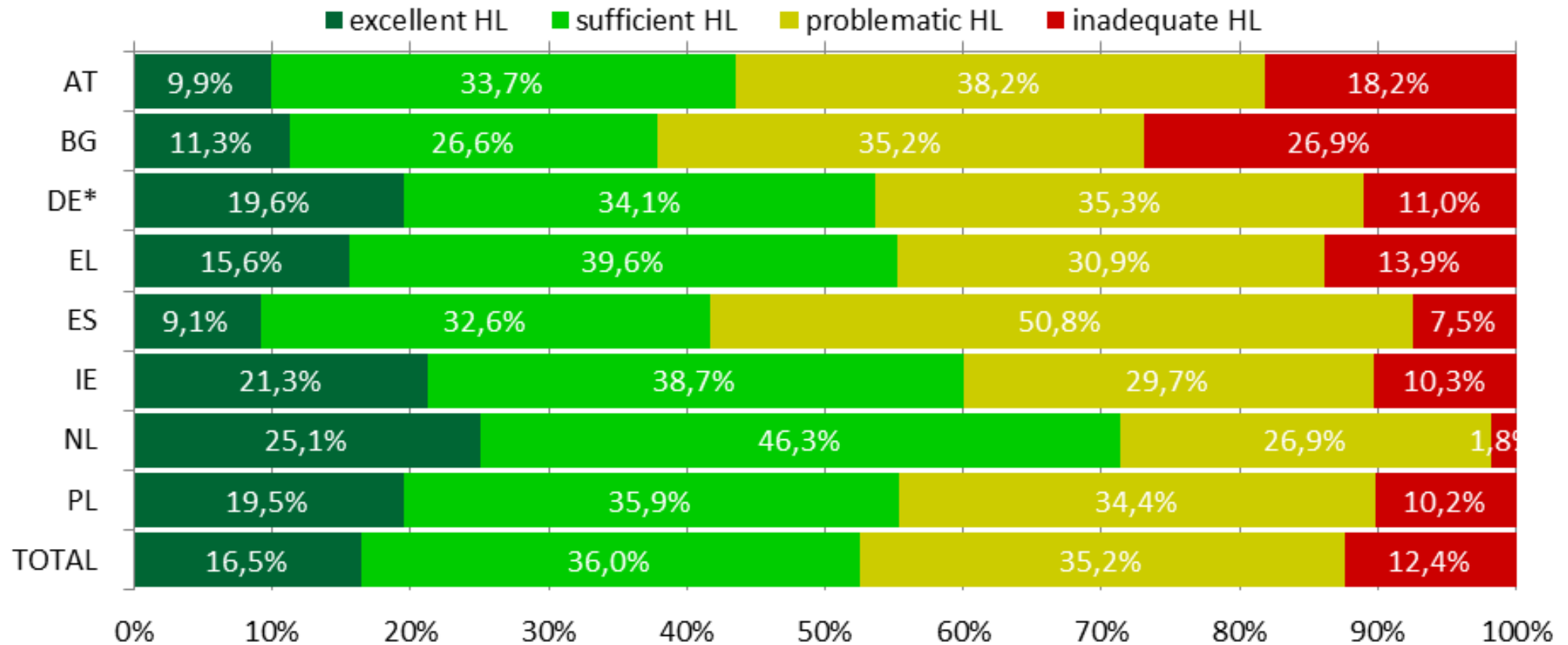
- Italy 27.9
- Netherlands 11.9
- Norway 12.5
- Poland 18.8
- Slovak republic 11.7
- Spain 27.7
- Sweden 13.3
- Flanders (Belgium) 14.8
- England and Northern Ireland 16.6  
(5.1 million adults in England, have literacy levels at or below those expected of an 11-year-old)


# Health Literacy

“the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions”.

Healthy People 2010 and the Institute of Medicine (IOM).

# The European Health Literacy Project (2009 - 2012)





Don't  
patronise, just  
make it clear



# Center for Plain Language – 5 step checklist



<http://centerforplainlanguage.org/5-steps-to-plain-language/>

- Step 1. Identify and describe the target audience.
- Step 2: Structure the content to guide the reader through it
- Step 3: Write the content in plain language
- Step 4: Use information design to help readers see and understand
- Step 5: Work with the target user groups to test the design and content

# Step 1. Identify and describe the target audience

- “Where possible, define the target groups that will use the document or website”

## Step 2: Structure the content to guide the reader through it

- “Organize the content so that it flows logically
- Break content into short sections that reflect natural stopping points
- Write headings that help readers predict what is coming up”

# Step 3: Write the content in plain language

- **Use short sentences (max 15 – 20 words)**
- **James Joyce – Ulysees – sentence 3687 words!!**
- **Use short words (cut out useless words)**

Topics for this presentation identified through:

<http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/free-guides.html>

# Use active verbs

- ACTIVE – “Nic ate the doughnut” or
- PASSIVE – “The doughnut was eaten by Nic”

**Active = subject / verb / object**

**Passive = object / verb / subject**

# Using 'you', 'we' and commands

“Advice for participants is available from” ....

*or*

“You can get advice from...”

“Your questionnaire should be returned to..”

*or*

“Please return your questionnaire to ...”



Keep it clear!



# Avoid nominalisations!

Complete / completion

Provide / provision

Investigate / investigation

Eg

- “We had an investigation of the breach”

**Or**

- “We investigated the breach”



# Using the right language

Consider:

- Are the words are appropriate?
- What will the public associate with this word?



# Tools to help you check your language

National Literacy Trust – Guidance on readability tools and interpreting the output from them eg. SMOG:

<http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/about/faqs/710> how can i assess the readability of my document or write more clearly

# Plain English Campaign Summary

Stop and think.  
Make a note of the points you want to make in a logical order

Prefer short words.  
Long words won't impress anyone!

Use everyday language.  
Avoid Jargon.  
Explain technical terms.

Keep sentences to about 15-20 words.  
Stick to one main idea in a sentence.

Imagine you are talking to your reader. Be sincere, personal and use the right tone of voice.

Use active verbs as much as possible.

Be concise

Writing should be:

- Clear
- Helpful
- Human
- Polite

**Step 4: Use information design to help readers see and understand**

# General tips for information layout

- Use left justified text, it's easier to read
- Keep paragraphs to about 4 or 5 sentences maximum.
- Divide your information into sections of related information
- Use boxes to highlight key information e.g. contact details
- Choose a solid, plain font that is easy to read.

# Using images

- Are they appropriate?
- Do they add anything?
- Do they mean the same thing to your public as they do to you?

# Step 5: Work with the target user groups to test the design and content



# Lay Summary

“A plain-English summary of a science article is sometimes referred to as a ‘lay summary’ as it is aimed at an audience that is not expert in the ideas or methodologies described in the original article. These summaries provide a concise and informative way to share research findings with a wider, non-specialist audience”

<http://www.access2understanding.org/guidance/part-one-the-basics/#sthash.pQ9qH7St.dpuf>



# A lay summary should:

- “be written in an understandable way. (Make sure it is easily read and understood as a stand-alone piece by the intended audience).
- set the context (Define the who, what, why, when, where and how of the research).
- describe the research accurately (You don’t need too much detail, jargon or any patronising language).
- It should be balanced (You need to reflect the merits and caveats (specific conditions or limitations) of the research in an honest and objective way).
- It should be interesting This is – of course – subjective but you should aim to engage your reader whenever possible”.

<http://www.access2understanding.org/guidance/part-one-the-basics/#sthash.pQ9qH7St.dpuf>

# Resources

## Finding the right words:

- Medical words  
<http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/files/medicalguide.pdf>
- Everyday Words for Public Health Communication (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Office):  
<https://www.cdc.gov/other/pdf/everydaywords-060216-final.pdf>
- Plain Language Alternatives for Patient Information and Consent Materials. Sharon Nancekivell. (2008):  
<http://www.healthcommunications.org/resources/Plain%20Language%20Alternatives%20for%20Patient%20Information%20and%20Consent%20Materials.pdf>
- EUPATI glossary - <https://www.eupati.eu/glossary/>

## Writing for people with sight problems

- <http://http://www.euroblind.org/resources/guidelines/nr/88www.changepeople.org/Change/media/Change-Media-Library/Free%20Resources/How-to-make-info-accessible-guide-2016-Final.pdf>

## Writing for People with additional needs:

[http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110601212422/http://www.valuingpeoplenow.dh.gov.uk/webfm\\_send/377](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110601212422/http://www.valuingpeoplenow.dh.gov.uk/webfm_send/377)

<http://www.changepeople.org/Change/media/Change-Media-Library/Free%20Resources/How-to-make-info-accessible-guide-2016-Final.pdf>

## Writing in plain English

Plain English Campaign  
<http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/>

European Commission – How to Write Clearly  
[http://bookshop.europa.eu/is-bin/INTERSHOP.enfinity/WFS/EU-Bookshop-Site/en\\_GB/-/EUR/ViewPublication-Start?PublicationKey=HC3212148](http://bookshop.europa.eu/is-bin/INTERSHOP.enfinity/WFS/EU-Bookshop-Site/en_GB/-/EUR/ViewPublication-Start?PublicationKey=HC3212148)