



## Plain Talk Review Worksheet

This worksheet is a tool you can use to review documents. It can identify where you can apply Plain Talk Principles to make the document easier to read for the target audience.

### Step 1: Collect the information below from the primary contact for this document.

Name of document: \_\_\_\_\_

Audience: \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose: \_\_\_\_\_

Action expected: \_\_\_\_\_

Will it need to be translated into a language other than English? (A public involvement/outreach specialist, Translation/Interpretation Team)

Does it need AAG review?

### Step 2: Answer the Plain Talk criteria questions below for each document on your prioritized list.

<b><i>On the first read can you:</i></b>	Yes	No
1. Identify the primary audience?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Identify the purpose?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Understand what Ecology expects the recipient to do? <i>(Note: Even if you are not familiar with the content of the document, you should be able to identify the purpose of the document the first time you read it.)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b><i>Content and Organization</i></b>		
Is information presented in a logical sequence that is easy to follow?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the organization of the document make it clear what the purpose of the document is?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there the right amount of information to make the purpose or expected action clear? (review for too much information or too little information)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the document use examples or illustrations to explain difficult points?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does text flow with smooth transitions between paragraphs and sections?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b><i>Style and Tone</i></b>		
Is the document written in an active voice?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are words used consistently? <i>(Think about whether or not they are misused, or have multiple meanings)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do paragraphs only have 7 – 10 sentences on average?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do sentences have an average of 17 words or less?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there definitions for agency jargon?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are acronyms spelled out, at least once, or explained in the document?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Are the grammar, spelling, and punctuation correct?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the tone appropriate for the target audience?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>-Continue on next page-</i>		

<b><i>Layout and presentation</i></b>	Yes	No
Does the document contain sufficient white space?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the appearance encourage your readers to read?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there headings to help your reader find information?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b><i>Effectiveness</i></b>	Yes	No
Does the message get through?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the writing reflect the reader's needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does it hold the reader's attention?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Would you want to read this if you were the reader?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the writing achieve the goal?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Step 3: Review your answers and apply the Plain Talk Principles to make the document clear.**

References:

- Ecology's Plain Talk Team, "Plain Talk Principles".
- Editor Software (UK) Ltd – StyleWriter "Editing Checklist".