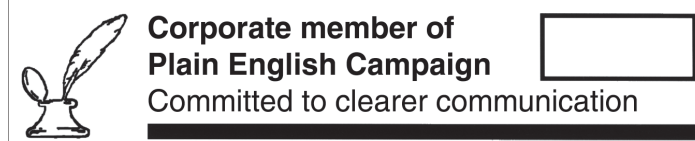




Plain English Campaign



Our editing and training services



Plain English Campaign

How to contact us

✦ **By post**

PO Box 3
New Mills
High Peak
SK22 4QP

✦ **By phone**

01663 744409

✦ **By fax**

01663 747038

✦ **By e-mail**

info@plainenglish.co.uk

✦ **On our website**

www.plainenglish.co.uk

How we can help

At Plain English Campaign we have been helping businesses to improve the clarity of their communications since 1979.

We have worked with most local authorities, large organisations and government departments in the UK. We have also worked with many organisations abroad, such as IBM in New York, the United Nations in Geneva, the EU in Brussels, and AMP Insurance in New Zealand.

We have a wealth of experience in working with all types of organisation. We can either edit your documents to make them clear and understandable, or train your people to write in plain English so they can write or edit your documents for you.

We are happy to work within a wide range of budgets and timescales. We can work with your existing house style or help you to develop a fresh approach. We can always find a successful solution to your written communication problems.

Either way, you can be sure that your documents will become easier to read and understand, giving you a marketing advantage over your competitors, and making your business more efficient.

This booklet describes the services we offer. In it, you are certain to find the right combination of editing and training to suit your organisation's needs.

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Editing services

Our editing service can transform your documents so that people can easily read and understand them. Our approach has brought success to many organisations' products and services

Our editing charges vary according to the complexity of the document. For example, a document with a high legal content will be more expensive to edit than a marketing brochure. Please see our 'Services and prices' leaflet for details of our charges.

You can send us a copy of your document by post, fax or e-mail. Within one working day of receiving your document we will give you a firm price for editing it. You can then decide whether or not to go ahead.

We reduce our editing charges if you ask us to edit more than one document at a time. Also, because of our minimum charge, it makes economic sense to send us a series of documents, rather than to have them edited one by one.

If you want your document edited in 'Word', so you can see the tracked changes we have made, there is an extra charge of 20%.

We can normally complete the first edit of a document in five working days. If you want a faster turnaround of three working days or less, we will charge an extra 30%.

Once you have looked at our first edit, you may want to discuss some of the changes we have made. In that case, you can talk directly to the editor who has worked on your document so that you can arrive at a satisfactory compromise.

For further details, or to get an estimate for editing your documents, please contact Tony Maher or Sylvia Woodall on 01663 744409, or visit www.plainenglish.co.uk/crystal_mark

The Crystal Mark

The Crystal Mark is our seal of approval for the clarity of a document. It now appears on over 17,500 different documents in the UK, the USA, Australia, Denmark, New Zealand and South Africa. It is the only internationally-recognised mark of its kind.

Launched in 1990, the Crystal Mark has now become firmly established as the standard organisations aim for if they want to provide the clearest possible public information.

Documents must be as clear as possible if they are to gain the Crystal Mark. But as each document deals with a different subject for different readers, it is impossible to set a precise standard. We do not expect a document about a complicated topic to be as easy to understand as one about a simple topic. But we do expect each document to be as clear as possible for its intended readers.

Things we look for include:

- the use of 'everyday' English;
- consistent and correct use of punctuation and grammar;
- an average sentence length of 15 to 20 words;
- plenty of 'active' rather than 'passive' verbs;
- explanations of technical terms;
- the use of lists;
- words like 'we' and 'you' instead of 'the Society' or 'the applicant';
- clear, helpful headings, which stand out from the text; and
- a good typesize and a clear typeface.

You may want our help to bring your documents up to Crystal Mark standard. On the Crystal Mark application form you can ask us for an estimate for the cost of any necessary editing or design work.

There is a fee for the Crystal Mark unless you are a corporate member. We may be able to give you a discount if you send in several related documents because this reduces our administration costs.

We provide a separate Crystal Mark for each document we approve (other than standard letters). Each Crystal Mark has its own identification number in the top left-hand corner. This helps us to identify your document if we are contacted by a member of the public.

Your organisation's name may appear in our list of Crystal Mark holders. We send this list to everyone who asks for information about us.

To see an up-to-date list of Crystal Mark holders, or to get more information, please contact Barry Soames or Tony Maher on 01663 744409, or visit www.plainenglish.co.uk/crystal_mark



The 'Approved by Plain English Campaign' logo

This logo is similar to the Crystal Mark, but is intended for documents such as magazines, where the contents change regularly. Like the Crystal Mark, it is individually numbered. It shows readers that you always aim to reach a high standard of clarity.

Before we can issue the logo for a publication, we need to look at the last three issues to make sure they show a commitment to clarity, both in the wording and the design.

Once you have received the logo, you must send us one copy of every future issue of the magazine so we can make sure it still meets our requirements.

There is an annual charge for using the 'Approved by Plain English Campaign' logo. The charge depends on the number of pages your publication contains.

If you are a corporate member, we will reduce the charges.



The Internet Crystal Mark

We can assess your website, suggest ways to improve its clarity, and regularly review its contents. It will then qualify to carry our Internet Crystal Mark. Like our other marks of approval, this carries an individual number, unique to your website.

We charge £200 + VAT for our initial assessment of your site. There is an annual fee for the Internet Crystal Mark which includes our regular review of the site. The size of the charge depends on the size and complexity of your website.

For further information on the 'Approved by' logo and the Internet Crystal Mark, please contact Barry Soames or Tony Maher on 01663 744409, or visit www.plainenglish.co.uk/crystal_mark




Corporate membership

If you become a corporate member of Plain English Campaign, you can put our corporate membership logo on all your documents. Being ‘committed to clearer communication’ doesn’t mean that every document you produce becomes clear overnight. But by using our logo, you are showing your clients that you understand the need for clear communication and that you are in the process of improving your documents. And if your organisation is a corporate member, you can benefit from significant reductions in the costs of our services.

- We will reduce editing charges by up to 25%.
- We will give each of your documents which reach Crystal Mark standard a free Crystal Mark.
- We offer some free training for your staff each year.
- We have various types of corporate membership to suit different sizes of organisation— from a single department of a local authority to a multinational company. The table gives details of the membership schemes and the free training that goes with them.

Type of membership	Training provided
Life membership	A free in-house training course for up to 20 people in the first year, followed by 50 free places on any of our on-line training courses every year after that.
Full membership (for a whole council, government department or large company)	A free in-house training course for up to 20 people each year.
Small business membership (for a small business with fewer than 50 employees)	Three free places on any of our open courses each year.
Single department membership (for a single council department)	One free place on any of our open courses each year.
Partnership membership (for sole traders and partnerships with a turnover of less than £500,000 a year)	Two free places on any of our on-line courses each year.

For further details and prices, please contact Tony Maher or Margaret Griffiths on 01663 744409, or visit www.plainenglish.co.uk/corpmemb.html



**Corporate member of
Plain English Campaign**

Committed to clearer communication

Training

We offer a wide range of training courses, many of which can be tailored to meet your organisation's needs. The following pages give details of our:

- on-line courses;
- one- and two-day in-house courses;
- open courses; and
- writing for websites course.

All our courses aim to help people to:

- understand the need to write clearly and accurately;
- hold their readers' attention by writing in an 'active' way;
- recognise and avoid bad writing habits; and
- write and design information effectively.

For further details about any of the courses, please contact Helen Mayo or Terri Schabel on 01663 744409.

On-line training courses

If you cannot attend one of our training courses in person, we offer on-line training courses which allow you to learn the basics of either plain English or English grammar in the comfort of your own home or office.

Both courses are on a password-protected website. Your fee gives you unlimited access to the course for two weeks. If you ask us to, we will send you a certificate when you have successfully finished the course.

You can also buy a site licence so you can put the courses on your company intranet for all employees to use.

✦ The Plain English course

This course is based on the popular open courses we run all over the country. The course, which has over 100 pages, covers the principles of plain English and how to apply them.

There are two versions of the course to choose from. One concentrates on writing letters and the other covers writing reports.

✦ The Grammarcheck course

Some of the areas covered in the course are:

- parts of speech (verbs, adverbs, nouns and so on);
- punctuation (full stops, commas, apostrophes and so on);
- sentences, paragraphs, lists and bullet points, capital letters, subjects and objects; and
- confusing words (such as principal and principle).

'In-house' training courses

One of our trainers can visit your organisation to run a training course over one or two days. The course goes through all the principles of plain English. It then shows delegates how to apply these principles to letters, leaflets, forms, reports, and even legal documents.

We can change the content of the course to suit your needs if, for example, you would like to spend more time working on your organisation's own documents. If you want to do this, we ask you to send us examples of your documents three weeks before the course.

The advantage of the two-day course is that it allows more time for delegates to:

- have 'one-to-one' tuition time;
- examine examples of their own writing;
- study plain English techniques in more detail; and
- take an active part in discussions.

If you let us know beforehand, we can also include sections on, for example, medical information and form design.

❖ The one-day programme

- Introduction to the course.
- Is the information as clear as possible?
- Is the style appropriate for the audience?
- Shortening sentences.
- Suggestions for clear writing.
- Being active about passives.
- Righting some writing wrongs.
- Revealing hidden verbs.
- Using lists.
- Setting out and organising good letters.
- Planning and drafting a complete letter.

❖ The two-day programme

The first day usually covers the same topics as the one-day course. The topics covered on the second day are usually as follows.

- Summary of the first day and an explanation of the topics being covered on the second day.
- Some myths destroyed.
- Restructuring and rewriting.
- Organising and planning reports.
- Towards clearer legal English.
- Rewriting some of your organisation's own documents.
- Punctuation.
- Plain English in the electronic age.
- Summary and conclusion.

‘Open’ training courses

If you have only a few people to train, you may prefer our one-day open courses. We run these regularly in cities such as London, Birmingham, Manchester, Edinburgh and Glasgow. The course content is much the same as that of a one-day in-house course. Because it is an open course, it does not analyse examples of your organisation’s own documents.

Anyone who writes to customers or colleagues will benefit from this course. Report writers, sales staff, customer service teams, managers, civil servants and local government workers have all found the day stimulating and profitable.

The course shows you how to spot bureaucratic and stodgy writing, and explains techniques to make your writing clearer and more effective. You’ll learn how to choose the right style of writing for your audience and how to save time and money.

The cost includes a buffet lunch, refreshments and all the course materials, which you can keep to refer to in future.

If you want to reserve a place on one of our open courses, please phone us on 01663 744409. You will then need to fill in the booking form to confirm your place.

✦ The open course programme

- Introduction to the course.
- Is the information as clear as possible?
- Is the style appropriate for the audience?
- Shortening sentences.
- Suggestions for clear writing.
- Being active about passives.
- Righting some writing wrongs.
- Revealing hidden verbs.
- Using lists.
- Setting out and organising good letters.
- Planning and drafting a complete letter.

The Plain English Diploma course

This one-year course is designed for organisations who want to build their own plain English teams. Our aim is to pass on all the skills your staff need to bring them as close as possible to the standard of our own writers and editors.

The course is a mixture of coursework and residential workshops. All the coursework can be done at home or at work. The assignments are flexible so that you can do work that benefits your organisation. The course takes an average of four hours' work a week, over the year. This includes time for research, private study and preparing assignments.

We are looking for motivated people who have good management and communication skills. We want them to be able to pass on what they have learnt to their colleagues. We also provide full tutor support throughout the year—help is only a phone call away.

Please contact us if you would like more detailed information about the topics covered on the Plain English Diploma course and the marking of assignments.

❖ The diploma course programme

- You start with a two-day residential workshop. Your tutor will explain what you are expected to do during the next 12 months, and will cover plain English principles and the basics of grammar. It also includes individual and group exercises.

- Next, you work on your five assignments, each of which is made up of three exercises. We mark your assignments and let you know how you are progressing. During this time, you will also work on your presentation assignment. This is a 30-minute presentation you put together to explain the benefits of plain English to your colleagues.
- You then make your presentation at the second residential workshop. The trainer and other members of the group will give you feedback. You will then have one month to put the finishing touches to your presentation. You will also have the opportunity to discuss with your tutor any ideas you have for your main assignment.
- The final six months is spent working on your main assignment, which must represent at least 60 hours' work. It must be written in plain English and be of practical use to your organisation. For example, it could be:
 - + writing or revising a set of standard letters;
 - + designing or revising a set of forms;
 - + writing a policy document;
 - + writing a set of regulations;
 - or
 - + writing an annual report.

For further information, please contact Margaret Griffiths or Terri Schabel on 01663 744409.

The ‘Grammarcheck’ course

The English language has great richness, variety and flexibility. But many people do not have a clear understanding of the ‘nuts and bolts’ of the language, which makes it difficult for them to use it accurately and confidently when they write.

Some people were not taught the basics at school. Others were, but have since forgotten most of what they learnt.

This lack of understanding can often lead to a writing style that is weak, unsure of itself, and prone to mistakes. Many writers lack confidence because they feel they do not have a firm enough grasp of the basics of the language they use every day.

This can lead to embarrassment, criticism from colleagues and even complaints from customers.

This course examines, in a straightforward, step-by-step way, the basics of grammar, punctuation, spelling and other related areas.

At the end of the course, delegates often feel that they have learnt more in one day than they learnt over many years at school. They have had the opportunity to ask questions, and clear up areas of doubt or confusion.

All our trainers have a detailed understanding of the language, and are committed to helping delegates improve their writing skills and their knowledge of the English language.

All the sessions are a mix of theory and practice. Throughout the day, delegates will be asked to work on a series of exercises to reinforce what they have learnt.

We run both ‘in-house’ and ‘open’ Grammarcheck courses.

✦ The Grammarcheck programme

- Introduction to the course.
- Parts of speech: verbs, adverbs, nouns, pronouns, adjectives, conjunctions, prepositions and articles.
- Punctuation: full stops, question marks, exclamation marks, commas, colons, semicolons, inverted commas, apostrophes, brackets, dashes and hyphens.
- Sentence structure: sentences, paragraphs, lists and bullet points, capital letters, subjects and objects.
- Wordcheck exercise: principal or principle?
- Spellcheck exercise: unnecessary?
- Other topics such as ‘who or whom?’ and ‘will or shall?’
- Summary and close.

Writing for websites course

This increasingly popular course is intended for the growing number of people who write for their organisations' websites. This has become much easier to do with the development of content management systems.

The first half of the course lays out the principles of plain English writing. The second half of the programme then shows how to develop these principles further to produce material which is suitable for a website.

✦ The course programme

- Is the information as clear as possible?
- Is the style appropriate for the audience?
- Shortening sentences.
- Suggestions for clear writing.
- Active writing.
- Righting some writing wrongs.
- Revealing the action.
- Using lists.
- Writing for websites.
- Special types of writing for websites.
- Privacy notices.
- Legal disclaimers.
- How design can help.
- Forms.
- Home pages.

Plain English course for lawyers

Many lawyers still believe that plain English and the language of the law don't mix. This is usually because they have misconceptions about what plain English legal drafting means.

It is not easy to draft law texts in plain English and it is not easy to express clearly the language of the law to the general public—but it can be done.

Our legal courses explain the techniques of plain English drafting and how they can be applied to everything from complex law texts to the letters you write to clients.

✦ The course programme

- The importance of language.
- Oddities of legal language.
- Legalese: unnecessary words, phrases and formality.
- Plain English and its advantages.
- Exclusivity, expertise and expense: reasons for legalese.
- Keeping things as they are: precision and certainty, 'tried and tested in the courts'.
- Debunking the myths.
- What to do about those who prefer legalese.
- Drafting in plain English.
- The right style for the audience.
- Being active about passives.
- Righting some writing wrongs.
- Putting theory into practice: case studies.

Training materials

Many of our clients prefer to have their own staff handle all their training. So we have developed two training packages that allow them to run our courses. One package covers the plain English course, and the other covers the 'Grammarcheck' course.

They both use the same materials that we use on our courses and are suitable for most organisations.

Your training staff don't need to be experts on writing or grammar to run these courses, but they do need to have an interest in language. And they must be committed to improving one of the most important assets your staff possess—their writing ability.

The packages contain enough materials for four courses. Each course lasts one or two days and can train 12 people. We can also supply top-up materials for further courses. The packages have everything you will need, including a step-by-step trainer's guide and either slides for an overhead projector or a CD with the slides as a PowerPoint 2003 presentation.

You can tailor the courses to suit your own needs by choosing the most relevant exercises for your staff. We can even arrange to train your trainers to help them get the most from the packages.

If you would like to examine the training materials, please phone us on 01663 744409. We can arrange for you to look through the materials at one of our open courses.

