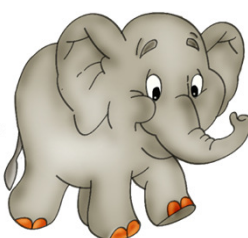# Plain language
– The guidelines

Interreg Finance Management Camp
06-09 November 2018 I Florence, Italy

Linda Ring, Interact Programme

European Regional Development Fund

The 🐘 in the room

INTERact 🇪🇺

Opinions

Using Plain Language saves time for both the reader and the writer.

How you write in your mother tongue has a big influence on how you write in another language – and that can be a hard habit to break.

INTERact 🇪🇺

Opinions

Plain language is clear proof of the writer's poor language skills.

It is not easy to change over to using Plain Language after years of writing in a more complicated way.

INTERact

Opinions

Plain Language makes the writer seem less knowledgeable about his or her subject.
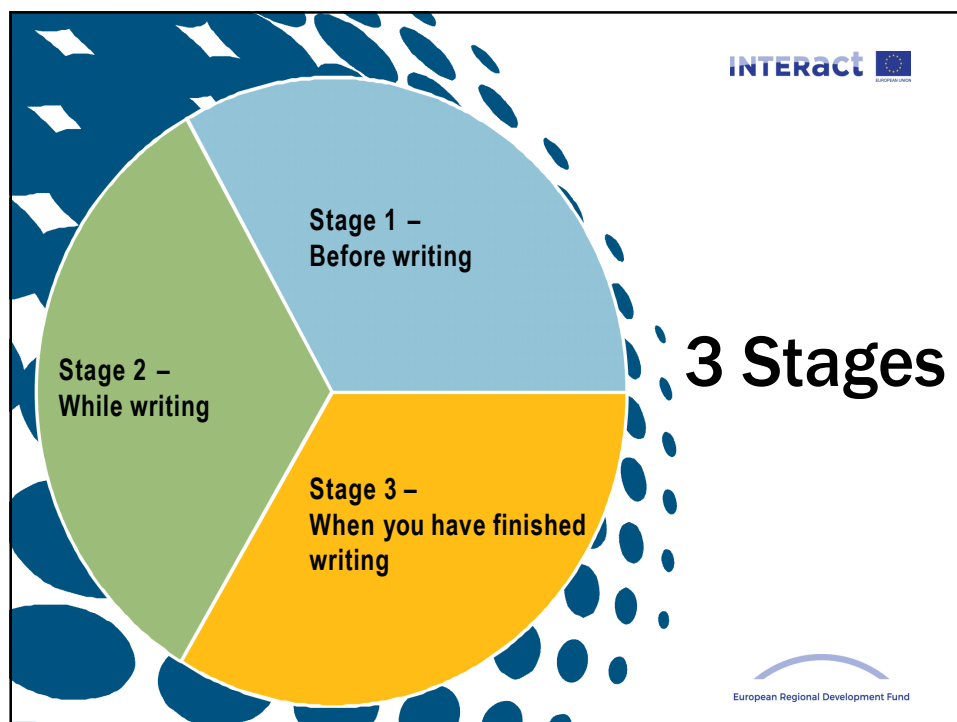
Plain Language is unprofessional.

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Opinions

When you write in Plain Language you have to leave out all the profession terms your readers recognize and understand.

Plain Language makes the reader think "This writer thinks I am not clever enough to understand a complicated text".

Slide 1

3 Stages

Stage 1 –
Before writing

Stage 2 –
While writing

Stage 3 –
When you have finished
writing

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Slide 2

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Stage 1 – before writing

The reader

Who?

Background?

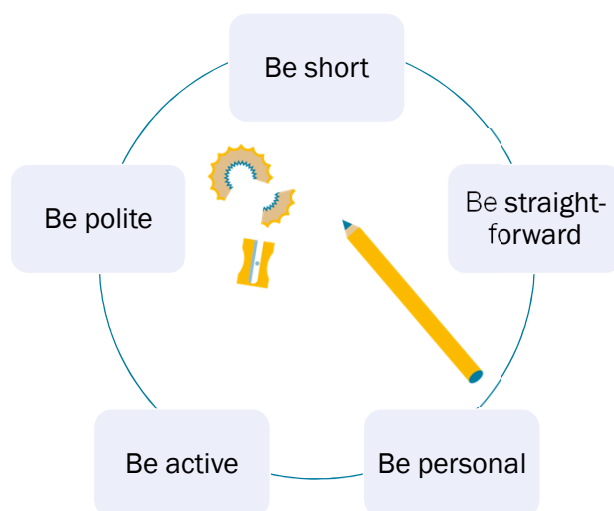Information needed?

Glossary?

You

I want my reader to …

I want/have to …

How to make the information
obvious to my reader?

How to best lead my reader
through my text?

How to avoid losing my reader
mid-text?

Stage 2 – while writing

Be short

Be polite

Be straight-forward

Be active

Be personal

Be short

Shorter sentences

One sentence – one point

Early "hook"

Intro = "who, what, why, where, when and how"

Be straightforward

Everyday words

No jargon

No buzzwords/phrases

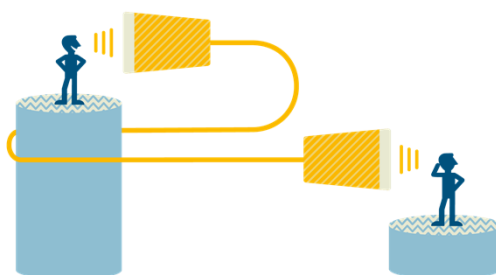Few abbreviations and acronyms

Be personal

Use "I, me, we, you, us, our, your"

Avoid group nouns – create a better connection between you and your reader

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Be active

Out with passive (<u>what</u> is being done)

In with active (who is doing it)

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Be polite

Add words such as "please" and "kindly"

Keep a humble tone

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Stage 3 – When you have finished writing

Read your text aloud for yourself

Do a "5 B" check

Make changes

Read your text to someone else

Make more changes (if needed)

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More help is available at ...

Interact's Translation Glossary

Updated regularly, living document, contains translations of terms and plain descriptions of those terms

The Plain English Campaign

Contains advice on plain writing, guides (e.g., The A to Z of alternative words), Drivel Defence text checker, and lots more

The 7 deadly sins of English

SHALL

CONCRETE

EXTENT
vs.
EXTEND

CONSEQUENTLY
vs.
SUBSEQUENTLY

IN THE SHOES OF

IN CASE OF

vs.

IN THE CASE OF

BRIEFLY

vs.

SHORTLY

INTERACT

Cooperation works

All materials will be available on:
www.interact-eu.net

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