Plain Language Training Resources

We at the Department of Agriculture (USDA) are committed to improving our service to you by writing in plain language. By October 13 2011, we will use plain language in any new or substantially revised document that:

- Provides information about any of our services and benefits;
- Is needed to obtain any of our benefits or services; or,
- Explains how to comply with a requirement that we administer or enforce.

We pledge to provide you with information that is clear, understandable, and useful in every paper or electronic letter, publication, form, notice, or instruction we publish.

Below is a list of resources to help get you and your office or agency started on plain language training. There are more resources available, but starting with this list should provide some training and exercises to become plain language writers.

Source	Material	Website
Plain Language.gov	OMB Guidance, many links and resources that other Departments use; training Power Points and guides; user manuals; and plain language writer's exercise. You may find plain language training classes as well as 'train the trainer' courses on this website.	http://www.plainlanguage.gov
Plain Language Resource page	Principles of Plain Language PowerPoint; Plain Language and Writing for the Web PowerPoint; and Hands on Exercises to use for practice or homework, or during training sessions.	http://www.plainlanguage.gov/resources
Federal Registers website	Making Regulations Readable; Drafting Legal Documents; and Rewriting a Short Rule: Step by Step; The plainlangue.gov website provides three separate technical writing links to Federal register regarding legal documents, regulations, and Federal Register notices in plain writing.	http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/write/plain-language/ http://www.plainlanguage.gov/usingPL/government/index.cfm
FAA Writing Standards document	This is an informative comprehensive guide on how to write in plain language. It teaches writing principles; word choice; and tables.	http://www.faa.gov/documentlibrary/media/order/branding_writing/order1000_36.pdf

Both the EPA and NIH	Plain Language Online Training (The Plain Train) - an online training module complete with plain language slides and exercises.	http://www.web.net/~plain/PlainTrain/index.html Copyright information: http://www.web.net/~plain/PlainTrain/About.html
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Tips	Top 11 tips to use while writing in Plain Language.	http://www.fws.gov/pdm/PlainLanguageTips.html
SEC Website	Handbook for legal and technical documents – scroll to the end is especially helpful.	http://www.sec.gov/pdf/handbook.pdf
	SEC and Wilbur document and handbook accompanying document that teach and explain plain language best practices.	http://www.wilbers.com/SecColumn.htm
	Exercises to use as training for plain language.	http://www.wilbers.com/sec.htm
Center for Plain Language	Website provides a list of links with information to the Plain Language laws, implementation and training resources.	http://centerforplainlanguage.org/resources/