

8 Plain language

The Government of Canada's communications policy calls for clear, objective and simple communications with the public. Such communications use straightforward, familiar vocabulary. The table below gives a few examples. Consider using the word on the right instead of the expression on the left.

prior to	before
at the present time, at this point in time	now or today
in the absence of	without
give consideration to	consider
in the event that	if
due to the fact that, for the reason that	because
until such time as	until
in order to	to
a large number of	many
it would appear that	apparently

Plain language is also about organizing your ideas and structuring your sentences to convey your message effectively. Explain complex ideas. Avoid long strings of adjectives and nouns piled on top of one another. For example, "long-term departmental expenditure review statement" could be reworded as "statement on a review of the department's long-term expenditures." It takes more words, but the meaning is clearer.

A bibliography lists all of the works consulted during preparation of the text, as well as those you feel the reader will find useful. It may be limited to works actually cited in the text. A bibliography may also be associated with comments concerning the scope or usefulness of the publication listed.

In most cases, a straightforward alphabetical listing by authors' last names is sufficient.

Brown, Rita. "The Market and the Environment." Canadian Business Review, 25 3 (Winter 2001): 22-28.

*Pearson, Lester B. *Mike: The Memoirs of the Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson*. Vol. 5, 1957-1968. Edited by John A. Munro and Alex I. Inglis. Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1975.*