

QUALITY ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR PRINTED MATERIALS TARGETING SENIORS

How to Use the Tool

The Quality Assessment Tool consists of 26 questions, and a short readability test, which should be applied to print materials you've developed that target seniors. For any criterion marked as Pass/Fail, that criterion must be deemed to pass for the document to be considered acceptable. A failure of the document on any one pass/fail criterion should result in revision of the document, to bring it in line with the criterion.

For any criterion for which points are assigned—award the document the number of points indicated if it meets the criteria—partial points are not awarded, and each criteria is assessed on an all or nothing basis.

For example, Criterion 1, concerning ink and paper colours is worth 4 points. If the reviewer feels that the document meets this criterion, "*Is there always dark ink on a light background, without any reversals in colour or designed backgrounds that lower contrast?*" then the document is awarded 4 points, otherwise it is awarded 0.

In general, a document that has no failures on a pass/fail criterion can have a numerical rating assigned based upon its performance on the other criteria. The higher the numerical rating the more appropriate your print document is for a target audience of seniors. There are 68 total points available. In general, the following guidelines might be used to interpret your numerical rating.

58 or greater (85%+): **A**

48-57 (70%+): **B**

41-47 (60%+): **C**

It should be noted that the ultimate goal of the tool is not to give a numerical rating, or even a pass/fail decision for any given print resource. The real value of the tool is in identifying specific issues in your resource that could use improvement. Take a look at each criterion for which you didn't give yourself full marks, and think about how you might improve your materials in that way, regardless of any over-all score.

DESIGN

Contrast

1. Ink and paper colours

Is there always dark ink on a light background, without any reversals in colour or designed backgrounds that lower contrast? (4 Points)

2. Matte surfaces

Is there any shiny paper or metallic ink which causes glare, making the material harder to read? (4 Points)

3. Printing Quality

Is the quality of print sharp and crisp? (**Pass / Fail**)

Type

4. Type size

Is the type size between 12pt and 24pt font? (Pass / Fail)

5. Type style

Is the type style unnecessarily ornate? Is there excessive and continuous use of capitals? (4 Points)

Page Layout

6. Page margins

Is the right margin unjustified? (3 Points)

7. Type layout

Is no vertical type used? (3 Points)

8. Material format

Is the material too large, heavy or cumbersome for the target audience? (4 Points)

CONTENT ORGANISATION

9. Organisational theme appropriateness

Is the organisational format appropriate to the text? (ie. general to specific, most critical first, chronological) (4 Points)

10. Organisational clarity

Is the organisation made clear to introductions, headings, text groupings and/or topic sentences? (4 Points)

11. Purpose

Are the purpose and goals of the material made clear to the reader? (5 Points)

12. Important message identification

Are key messages easily identifiable through bullets, numbers, bolding, italicizing, judiciously used capitals, sidebars and/or other chunking methods? (Pass / Fail)

13. Important message clarity

Are important messages presented clearly and concisely? (Pass / Fail)

14. Use of examples

Are points illustrated through examples the target audience can identify with? (4 Points)

15. Summaries

Are summaries used to reinforce key messages? (3 Points)

16. Illustrations

Are any pictorial illustrations and/or figures appropriate for the audience and clearly labelled? (4 Points)

17. Jargon

Are abbreviations, acronyms and jargon avoided? (Pass/Fail)

READABILITY

18. Line length

Are excessively long sentences avoided? (5 Points)

19. Vocabulary

*Does the vocabulary used reflect words commonly used by the target group?
(Pass/Fail)*

20. Terminology

Are necessary health terms defined? (5 Points)

21. Voice

Is the active voice used and the passive voice avoided? (3 Points)

22. Gunning Fog test (measure of reading level) (4 Points)

Choose a passage of approximately 100 words, ending in a full stop, from the introductory part of the document. If this is not possible, choose another passage you consider representative of the language and layout of the document.

Determine the average sentence length by dividing 100 by the number of sentences in the passage.

Determine the number of long words (three syllables or more). Exclude (a) proper nouns, (b) combinations of easy words (eg. photocopy), (c) verbs that become three syllables when 'es', 'ing' or 'ed' are added and (d) jargon the reader would understand easily.

Determine the reading score by adding the average sentence length to the number of long words and multiplying this value by 0.4. A score of 12 or more represents the upper limit of readability for many elderly patients. For reference, a score of 15 or over is on par with that of the British Medical Journal.

CONTENT QUALITY

23. Accuracy

Is the content, to the best of your knowledge, accurate and correct? (Pass/Fail)

24. Action

Does the content focus on what the audience should do as well as know? (5 Points)

25. Current

Is the content current (3 years or less old)? (Pass/Fail)

26. Negative attitudes

Is the content free of any ageism, sexism, racism and/or stereotyping? (Pass/Fail)

27. Contact information

Does the material provide contact information in the case of any questions? (Pass/Fail)