

Guideline 6: Keep sentences and paragraphs short

Your document will be easier to read if you keep your sentences short. Try limiting them to fewer than 20 words and your paragraphs to fewer than six sentences.

How do I do this?

- **Cut out unnecessary words.** Revise your draft multiple times. Each revision will produce a more succinct message.
- **Make one point per paragraph.** Ideally, each paragraph should get across one main idea, and each sentence should cover one aspect of that idea.
- **Layer information.** Shorten documents and web pages by removing information that applies to only a few readers. Put the more specialized information in an attachment or link.

Why do this?

- It is easier for customers to absorb information when they read one idea at a time.
- The reader can more easily choose to read only the information they need.

Do	Don't
Your responsibilities are in the job description we gave you on your first day of work.	The parameters of your responsibility and duties are included in the job description and person specification you received on your initial day of work at the Department.
The regional managers most responsible for carrying out this policy do not seem to understand it well.	This policy does not appear to be well understood by service locations management in the regions, even though this group has primary responsibility for implementing the policy.

More Examples

- **Before:** Department stakeholders who have relevant issues to raise in our regular Wednesday meetings should verbally communicate their interest to us.
- **After:** Let us know if you would like to speak at our Wednesday meeting.