

# SIMPLE AS THIS

How to use  
Easy Language





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Easy Language

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Collaborators

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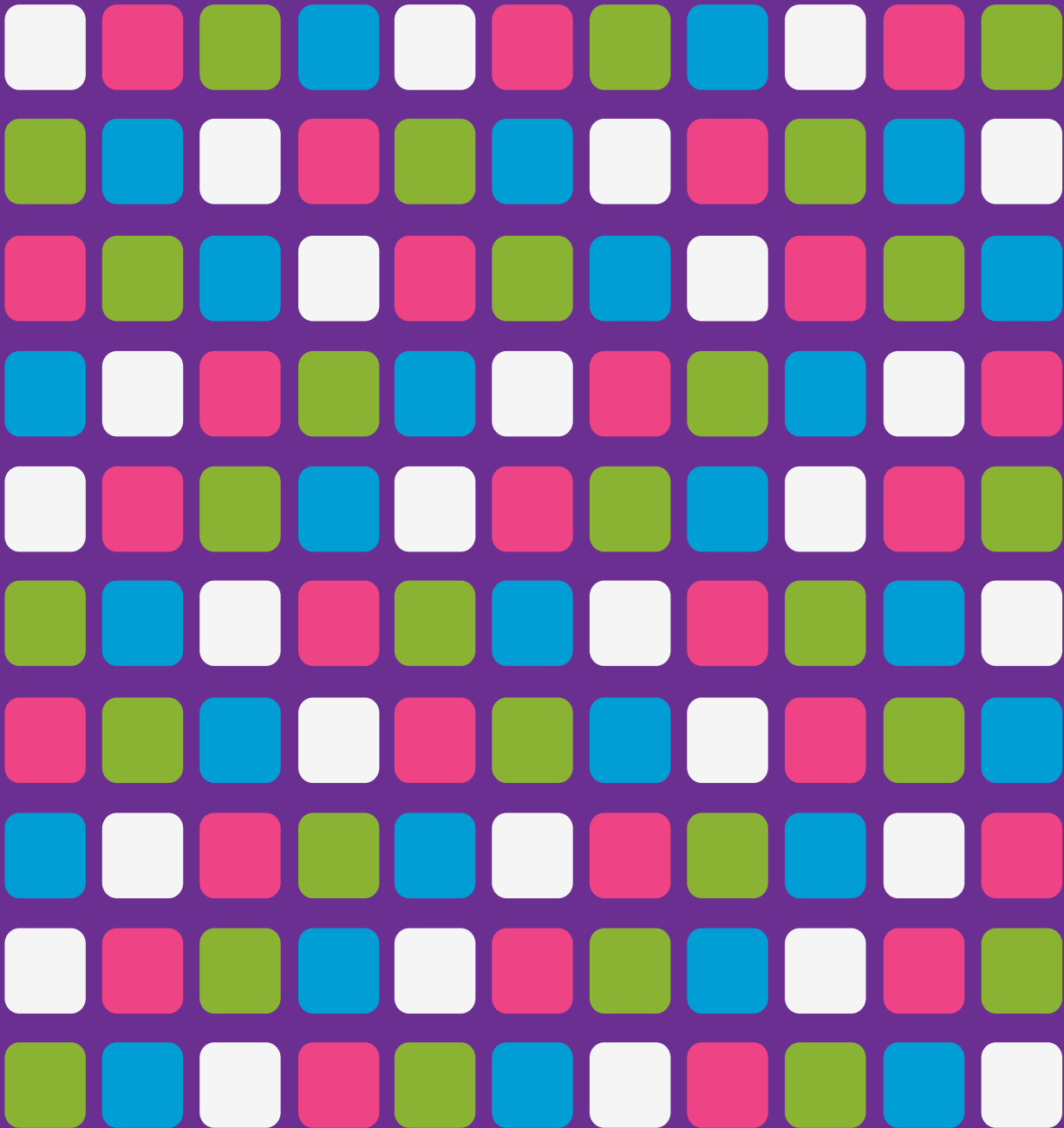
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# Easy Language



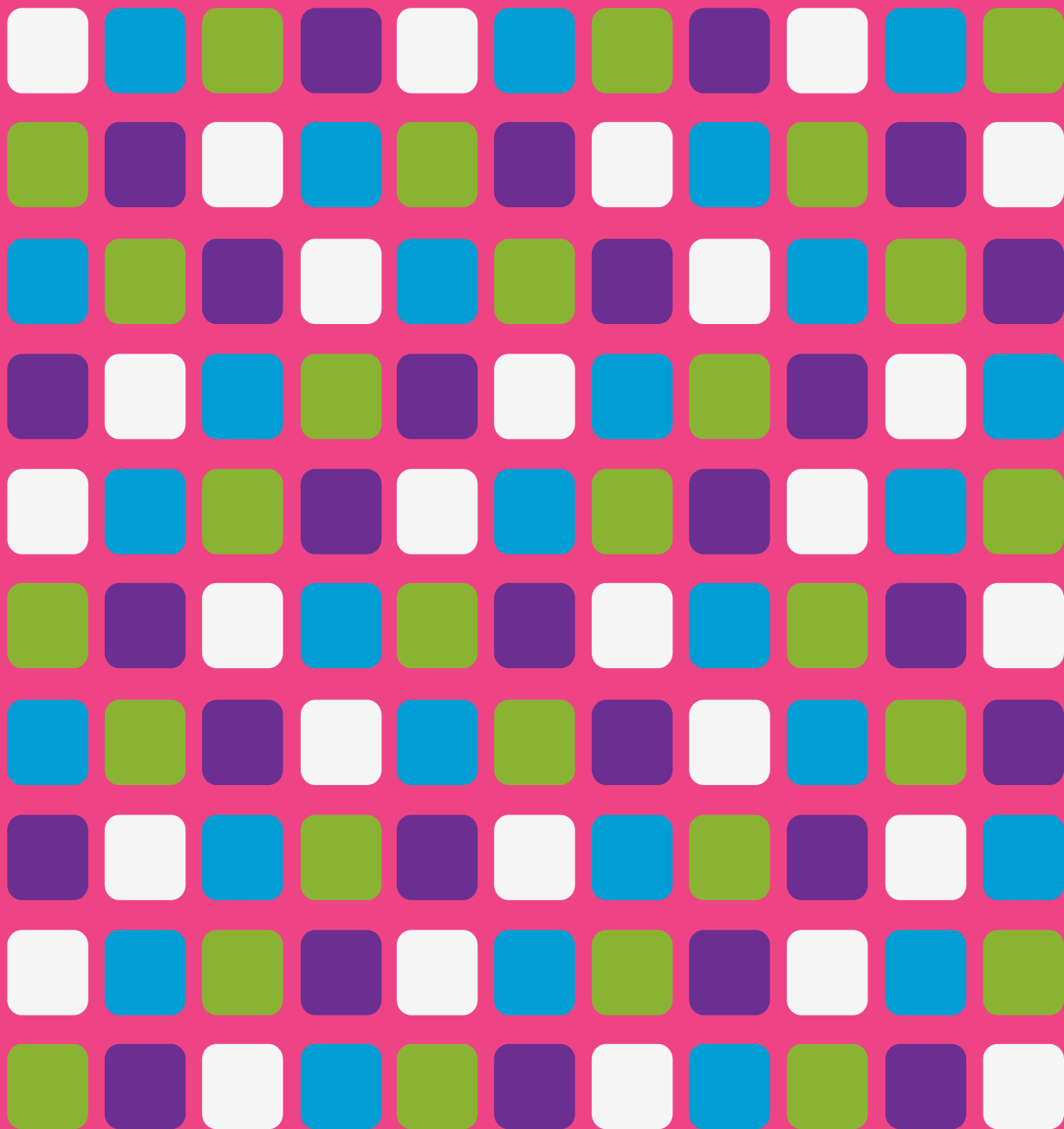
**Write Easy**



**Design Easy**



**Validate with your audience**



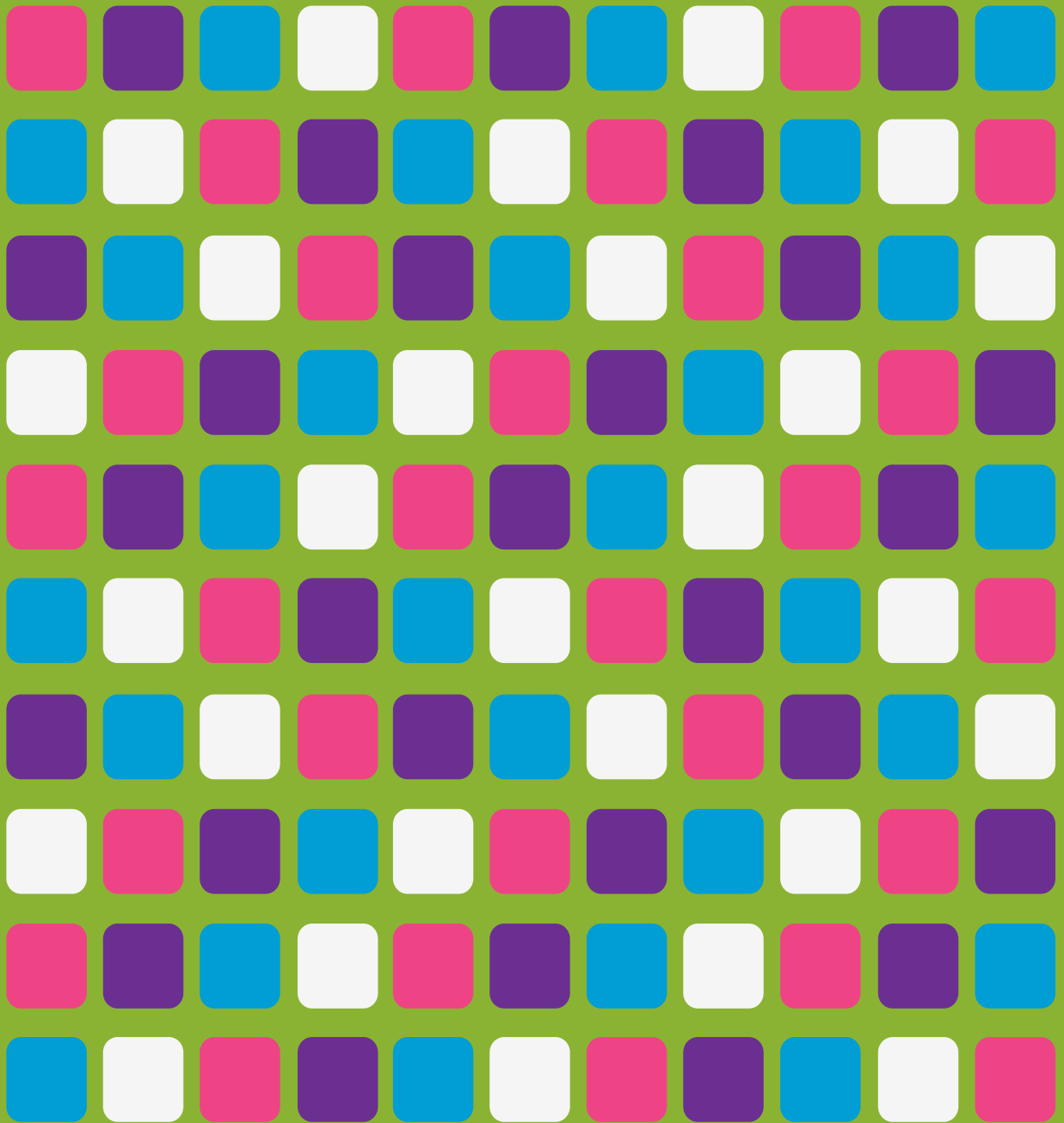


## Easy Language

is a resource that **facilitates access to information.**

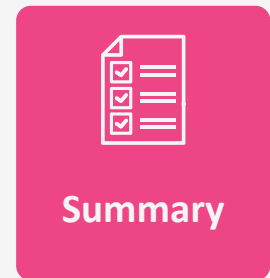
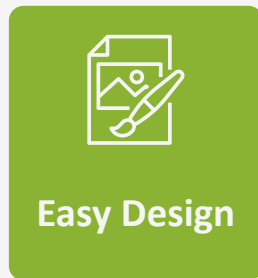
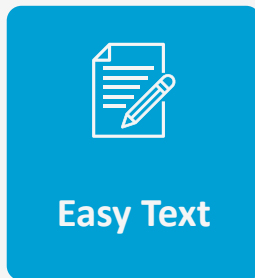
People should get information in a way that is easy to understand.

You will learn some tips on how to use Easy Language in this book.





# How to use this book

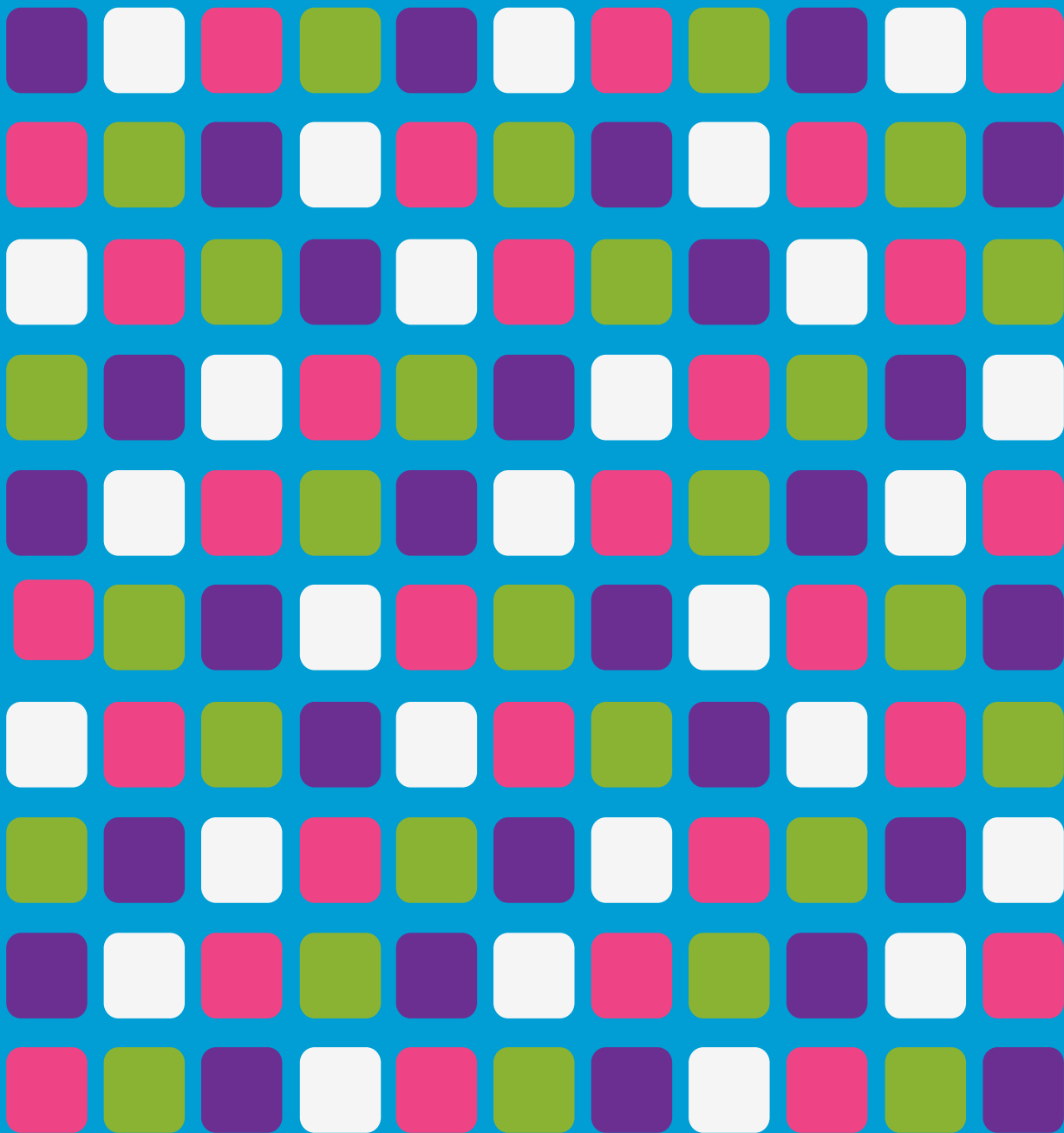
Each **chapter** is separated by **color** and **image**:



You will find the **symbols**:

 What to do

 What not to do



# Summary



**Easy Text**

p.14



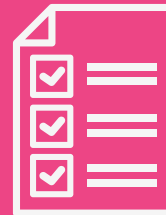
**Easy Design**

p.24



**Validation**

p.66



**Summary**

p.80



# Easy Text

In this chapter you will learn  
how to write in Easy Language.



## Easy Language - what to use

**Short, simple** sentences:



*The classes start on March 17th.*

Direct word order: **subject** + **verb** + **complements**:



*Three friends went on a trip.*

Write **as you speak**:



*We are open 7 days a week.*

**One idea** per phrase:



*The restaurant's owner has Italian parents.*



*He opened the restaurant 2 years ago.*

*The restaurant is thriving.*







### Use **everyday words**:

-  *The selection is done through exams and interviews.*
-  *The selection process consists of exams and interview rounds.*

### Words with **precise meaning**:

-  *Color*
-  *Tonality*

### If you need to use a **complex word**, **highlight it and explain the meaning**:

-  What is **gastric** emptying for? related to  
the stomach



## Easy Language - what not to use

Avoid **passive voice**:

⊗ *The drawing **was made** by the student*

Avoid sentences with **if**:

⊗ ***If** I had time, I would have travelled on the weekend.*

Avoid terms like **although, since, as long as, however** and **for that**:

⊗ *You will be entitled to the benefit **as long as** your payment is up to date.*

Avoid **impersonal sentences**:


⊗ ***It's been a while** since this happened.*



Avoid the use of symbols like **%**, **&**, **/**


 *Our store offers a 20% discount on all items.*


Write **dates in full**:

 *7th Monday, November 2023*  *07/22/2023*

Avoid **too many commas**:

*It's better to use a period and start another sentence.*

 *Increased amounts of trash, particularly plastics and lost or discarded fishing gear, are finding their way into the ocean, creating a threat of entanglement or ingestion for countless marine animals.*

 *We can find a lot of trash in the ocean.  
Fishing nets are a threat to sea animals.  
These nets can choke them.  
Animals can eat pieces of this net and become sick.*



## Easy Language - what not to use

Avoid **abbreviations** and **acronyms**:

⊗ *The **UN** is an international organization.*

Avoid **fractions** and **roman numerals**:

⊗ *I ate  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the pizza.*      ⊗ *The event of **XX** century.*

Avoid **technical words** and **figures of speech**:

⊗ *In non-Hodgkin's **lymphoma**, **lymphocytes** grow **abnormally**.*

⊗ *He has **a heart of stone**.*

Avoid **foreign words**:

⊗ *I had a feeling of **déjà vu** when I saw the movie.*




Avoid using **verbs as nouns**:


 *Walking is hard.*

Use **appropriate language** to reach your target audience.  
*Avoid childish language if you are not talking to children.*

 *Do you need to go potty?*

Use markers like **dots or dashes** to list more than 3 things:

 *Grocery list: rice, beans, flour, egg*

 *Grocery list:*

- *rice*
- *beans*
- *flour*
- *egg*

Do not **rely on previous knowledge** on the topic.

# Summary

- ✔ Use direct, clear sentences.
- ✔ Write as you speak.
- ✔ Avoid complicated words and symbols.







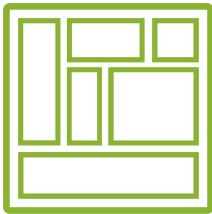
# Easy Design

In this chapter  
you will learn  
how to organize  
information  
in an easy way.



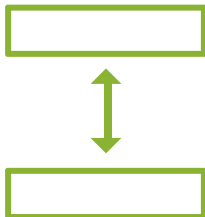
# Easy Design

We use 4 principles in Easy Design:



## Organization

How to plan and organize the text and what to highlight.



## Spaces

How and where to place information.



## Readability

How to provide an easy-to-understand reading



## Images

How to use images with the text.



# Easy Design

## ⊗ Before:

IF YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT  
SIMPLE DESIGN, **DON'T MISS THIS LIVE!**

Simple Design  
LET'S TALK ABOUT IT?

**LIVE**

**RIO**  
PREFEITURA

PESSOA COM DEFICIÊNCIA  
E TECNOLOGIA

**10AM  
MART  
10TH**

LIVE TRANSMISSION ON  
SMPD YOUTUBE CHANNEL SMPD

**A LEITURA DO MUNDO DIGITAL É FEITA ATRAVÉS DO DESIGN. O  
DESIGN SIMPLES DEVE SER CLARO, OBJETIVO E HARMÔNICO  
PARA AUXILIAR O ENTENDIMENTO DO CONTEÚDO.**

**Acessível  
em Libras**  
Língua Brasileira de Sinais

[www.youtube.com/smpdrio](http://www.youtube.com/smpdrio)

Cecilia Quental - social designer  
activist designer, visual artist

Patricia Almeida - Journalist, Easy Language  
Specialist




**After:**

The poster is set against a white background with a light green dotted pattern. At the top right, it features the logo for 'Rio PREFEITURA' (a blue crown over the word 'Rio' and 'PREFEITURA' below) and 'SMPD' to its right. Below the logos, the title 'Simple Design' is written in a large, bold, dark blue font. Underneath the title, the text 'Let's talk about it?' is written in a smaller, red font. To the right of the title is a blue icon of a hand with fingers spread. Below the title and text are two square portrait photos. The first photo is of Cecilia Quental, a woman with glasses and a dark top. Below her photo, her name 'Cecilia Quental' is written in red, followed by her titles 'Social Designer', 'Activist Designer', and 'Visual Artist' in blue. The second photo is of Patricia Almeida, a woman with dark curly hair and a dark top. Below her photo, her name 'Patricia Almeida' is written in red, followed by her titles 'Journalist', 'Easy Language Specialist' in blue. At the bottom left, the text '10AM, March 10th' is written in red. At the bottom center, the word 'Live' is written in blue inside a rounded rectangular button, followed by the URL 'www.youtube.com/smpdrrio' in blue.

**Rio** | SMPD  
PREFEITURA

# Simple Design

Let's talk about it?



**Cecilia Quental**  
Social Designer  
Activist Designer  
Visual Artist



**Patricia Almeida**  
Journalist  
Easy Language  
Specialist

**10AM,  
March 10th**

**Live** [www.youtube.com/smpdrrio](http://www.youtube.com/smpdrrio)



# Easy Design - Organization



The way you organize the information is important to the readers.

Write first what is most important. We call this **hierarchy of information**.



*Most important information*

*Complementary information*

*Additional information*



*Additional information*

*Complementary information*

*Most important information*



In case of doubt about the priority of information,ask yourself:

**what, who, when, how, where, and why:**

*These questions do not always apply to the content.*

**What** →

**Who** ←

**Who** →

**When** →

**How** →

**Simple Design**  
Let's talk about it?

**Rio** | SMPD  
PREFEITURA

**Cecilia Quental**  
Social Designer  
Activist Designer  
Visual Artist

**Patricia Almeida**  
Journalist  
Easy Language  
Specialist

**10AM,  
March 10th**

**Live** [www.youtube.com/smpdrrio](http://www.youtube.com/smpdrrio)



# Easy Design - Organization



Use size, thickness, and color to **highlight the priority of information:**

✔ **Title**

*Subtitle*

Text Text Text Text Text  
Text Text Text Text Text  
Text Text Text Text Text

*Caption*

✘ Title

Subtitle

Text Text Text Text Text  
Text Text Text Text Text  
Text Text Text Text Text

Caption





Make an **introduction** explaining each section or chapter:



*Introduction describing what the section is about.*

**Summarize** by listing the main points of each chapter:



*Make partial summaries by theme or by chapter to help retain what was explained.  
Summarize necessary concepts for the next chapter.*



# Easy Design - Organization



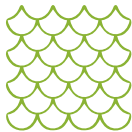
Use a **comparative table** to summarize and compare the main topics:

*It helps to define ideas and to organize categories.*



## **Body covering**

*Animals have their bodies covered by:*



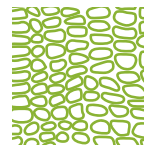
*Scales*



*Fur*



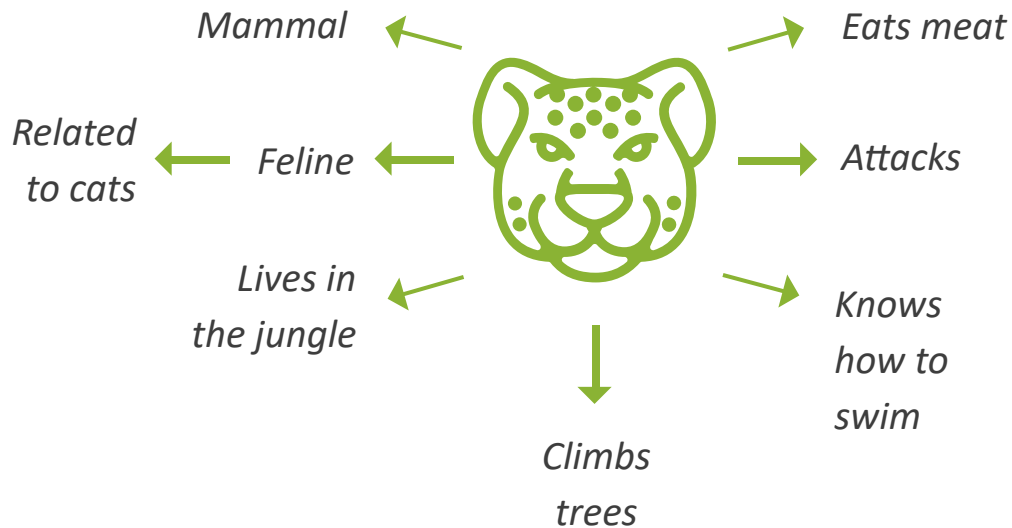
*Feathers*



*Hard scales*



Use a **concept map** to show the relationship between concepts:





# Easy Design - Organization



Avoid **charts** and **infographics** with a lot of information:





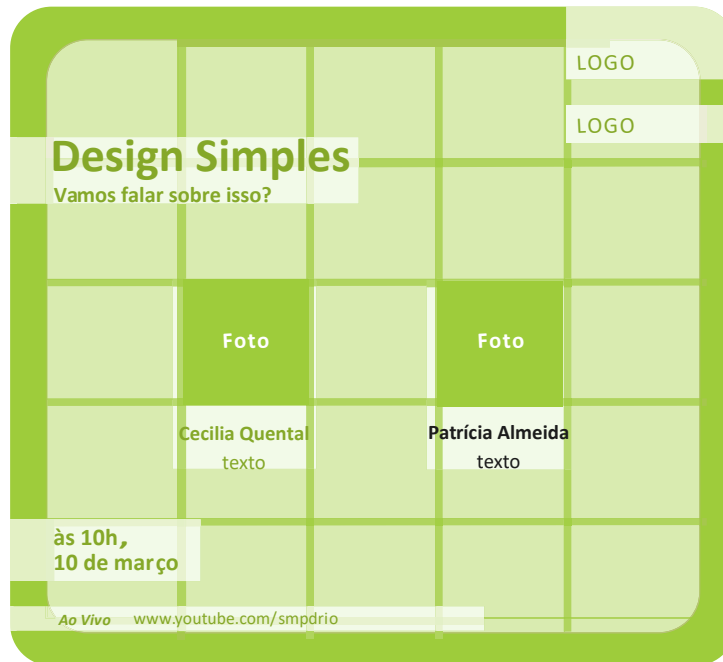


# Easy Design - Spaces



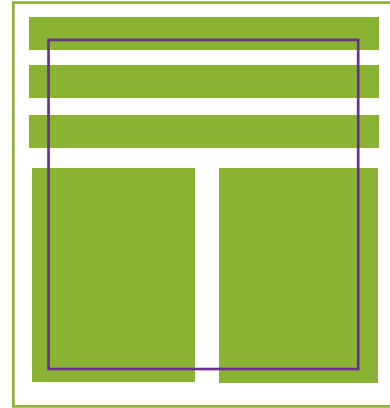
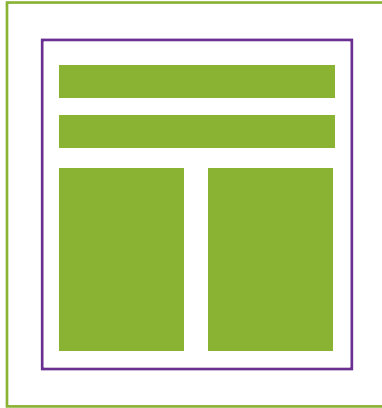
Avoid placing **information everywhere**:

*This generates visual pollution  
and it is distracting for the reader.*





Use **margins** and respect them:



Leave **space between the information** and the info box:



Hictisquam aut et  
omnimilique poriae ea  
velitam et hiligen tenime  
ne qui tem. Neque volor  
ma nonsequid exeriamus  
doluptiisin corero occatibus  
rem faccus.  
Elici officiis dolorum volore  
venihil mintiustem dolorum  
eturibus quiaessim quis



Epserenius, Catquodienis  
ignatre cupplin none portelus,  
C. Quonicae, ut ia ductantrorio  
es! Ibusquam cote apere fui  
patus pares niurnum orum  
auc inpri sulus licauc fue  
proximorum ma, signatu  
sunimendam. Do, faciostr  
ribus, erratquam host? Maio,  
que adhuid confic faci illa rei  
inatquam, nicaet verudam



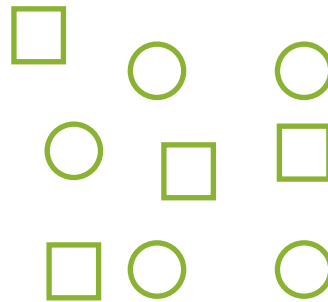
# Easy Design - Spaces



Use spaces to **group**

**similar and different information:**

*Things grouped together seem more related than if they are spaced apart.*



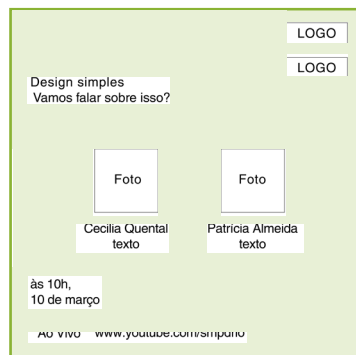
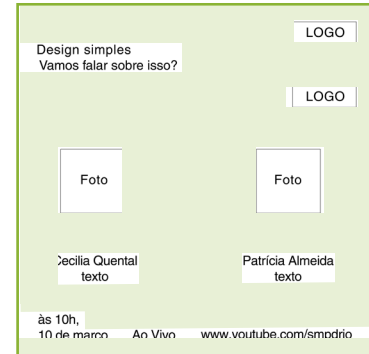




## Avoid spacing information too much or too little:

*Things that are too spaced apart seem to be less related to each other.*

*Things that are spaced too closely can generate discomfort.*





## Easy Design - Readability



The font you choose can **affect readability**:

*Not all fonts are easy to read.*



Helvetica

Arial

Calibri

Gill Sans

Tahoma

Verdana



EXAMPLE

EXAMPLE

EXAMPLE

EXAMPLE

Example

Example



Avoid **serif fonts**, which have details at the end:

*Sans serif fonts are easier to read.*



**Aa**

*Sans serif (without serif)*



**Aa**

*Serif (with serifa)*

Avoid **cursive fonts** like those used in invitations:



*Example*

*Example*

*Example*

*Example*

*Example*

*Example*



# Easy Design - Readability



## Font size

Use the **minimum size 12**

Size 14 is most commonly used:

*Use sizes 16 to 24*

*for people with low vision*



12 14 16 18 20 24

Avoid **more than 2 lines in uppercase.**

*For some people, uppercase is easier to read.*

*For others, it may be more challenging.*

*Find out what works for your target group.*



ALL TEXT

ALL CAPS

All text

Upper case and lower case



ALL text

ALL caps

All text

lower case



Avoid *italics* or underlining as a highlight:

- ❌ I want to highlight this *word* because it is very important.
- ❌ I want to highlight this word because it is very important.

Use capital letters, **bold** or **colors** to highlight a word or section.

- ✅ I want to highlight this WORD because it is so important.
- ✅ I want to highlight this **word** because it is so important.
- ✅ I want to highlight this **word** because it is so important.
- ✅ I want to highlight this **word** because it is so important.



# Easy Design - Readability



Avoid **altering the spaces** between letters or words:

*This makes it difficult to read.*



*Reading*



*Reading*

Use **1.5 spacing** between sentences:



*Mary went to the station  
to pump gas in her car.*



*Mary went to the station  
to pump gas in her car.*



If necessary, use **2 spaces between words** and double spacing between sentences:

*Check with your validation group.*



*Mary went to the station  
to pump gas in her car.*

Use **2 spaces between paragraphs.**



*Mary went to the station  
to pump gas in her car.*



*Mary arrived at the station and realized  
she forgot her wallet at home.*



# Easy Design - Readability



Avoid **separating words** with hyphens:

-  *Teachers are central to the inclusive teaching process, that is why they must reflect on their job and what skills they need to have in order to cope with the most different situations.*
  
-  *Teachers are central to the inclusive teaching process, that is why they must reflect on their job and what skills they need to have in order to cope with the most different situations.*





Avoid **breaking words** at the end of the sentence:

*Avoid breaking sentences between one or more lines  
and between pages.*

*If you do that, make sure each part makes sense,  
like a poem or verse.*



*improve to deal with the most different situations  
in the classroom. It is necessary to know which posture  
to adopt to meet the educational needs of different  
profiles of*



*Teachers need to improve themselves  
to deal with the most different situations in the classroom.  
It is necessary to know which posture to adopt  
to meet the educational needs of different students.*



# Easy Design - Readability



Leave **space** between columns:

*If it's not possible, use a line to separate them.*



*Teachers are central to the inclusive teaching process. That is why they must reflect on their job and what skills they need to have in order to cope*

*with the most different situations in the classroom. It is necessary to know which posture to adopt to meet the educational needs of different student profiles.*



*Teachers are central to the inclusive teaching process. That is why they must reflect on their job and what skills they need to have in order to cope*

*with the most different situations in the classroom. It is necessary to know which posture to adopt to meet the educational needs of different student profiles.*



Use **left alignment** for better readability:

*Never use justified text, as it makes it harder to read.*



**Left Alignment**

*Sofia is getting ready to start  
her new job.*



**Right Alignment**

*Sofia is getting ready  
to start her new job.*



**Center Alignment**

*Sofia is getting ready to start  
her new job.*



**Justified Alignment**

*Sofia is getting ready  
to start her new job.*



## Easy Design - Readability



Use **colors related to the theme** and your audience:  
*Your audience may have difficulty reading depending on the color you use.*



*Topic: Christmas*



Use **colors that contrast** with each other:

*Light over dark or dark over light.*

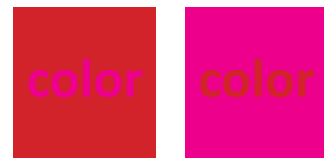
*Avoid using very strong overlapping colors.*



*Clear reading of the word*



*Vivid color on vivid color*



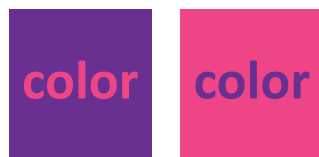
*Clear reading of the word*



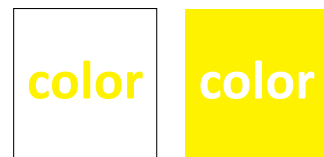
*Dark color on dark color*



*Clear reading of the word*



*Light color on light color*





## Easy Design - Images

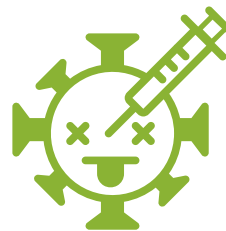


Use simple and **self-explanatory images**, illustrations, photos, or symbols, that clearly relate to the idea:



*Topic: vaccination*

Use **images according to your audience**:



*Audience: children*



Use **images that make sense**  
for the audience and its culture:



*Brazilian*



*North American*



*Topic: football*

Use **images according to** the audience:



*Audience: children*



## Easy Design - Images

Use the **same image every time** you need to present a concept.

*It is easy for readers to fix the meaning of the concept.*



*Topic: hand washing*

Avoid using the **same image** to represent **different things**:



*Use it for  
wash your hands*



*Do not use it for  
bathroom*





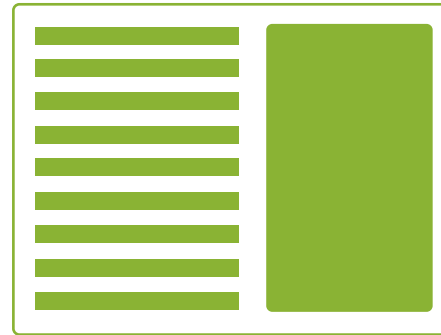


# Easy Design - Images



Place the **image to the left** of the text:

*Positioning is on a case-by-case basis  
depending on the image and amount of text.*





Avoid placing **text directly on top of the image**.





Avoid using **graphic elements for decoration.**

*Make sure you only add elements that will help the comprehension.*





# Easy Design - Images

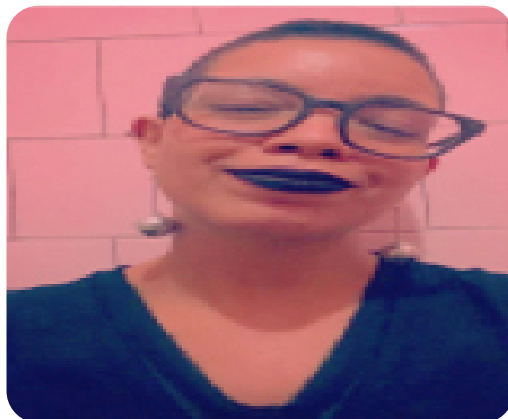


Use high-quality images at a size that is **easy to see and understand:**





Avoid using **distorted** or **low-quality images**.





## Easy Design - Images



Avoid **polluted backgrounds** with lots of information:





## Accessibility

Images and digital cards must have a description to be accessible to all.

Videos must have subtitles and sign language interpretation used by some deaf people.

# Summary

- ✔ Organize the content.
- ✔ Respect spaces.
- ✔ Use clear and simple images.







# Validation

In this chapter you will learn  
Easy Language rules and guidelines  
for validation.

We also give practical examples.



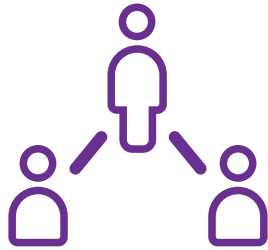
# Validation

## Basic rules of Easy Language:

Text validation involves **testing its practical comprehension.**

To do this,  
gather people  
who are part of **your target audience.**

Ask them to read and give you **feedback on the material.**



## Mediator

The mediator should develop the ability to ask questions that will give you ideas you can use to make the text easier to understand.



## Validator

The validator is the person from your target audience who will evaluate if the material is accessible.



# Validation

Here are some **guidelines**:



Validation is a **central step** of the writing process in Easy Language.



The **mediator leads** a validation session.



It can be in a **face-to-face or online meeting**. You can also **send the material** to be evaluated and **ask for contributions**.



Understanding the message includes **comprehending both the text and the image**.



Understanding the content involves comprehending:






- **words**
- **phrases**
- **design**
- **images**
- **message.**



# Validation - Validators



## Who are the validators:

-  *The **Comprehension Validators** are **people with the same characteristics as the end users** of the material.*
-  *They may have:*
  - ***intellectual disability***
  - ***low literacy***
  - ***other reading difficulties.***
-  *The **number of individuals** and the form of validation will **depend on the situation.***
-  ***At least two individuals** representative of your audience **need to approve the material.***
-  ***After listening** to the validators, **review the text.***



# Validation - Mediator



## Who is the mediator:



**Good communication**  
*is the most important skill  
for a mediator.*



*The mediator should:*

- **ask one question at a time**
- **work step-by-step**
- **check the comprehension carefully.**



*The questions should be specific,  
addressing parts of the text or illustrations.  
These questions usually start with*  
**What, Where, Who, When, and Why.**



*Questions answered  
with **yes or no** can be misleading.*





It is important to **listen carefully** and **provide feedback**.

The **text should be tested**, **not the validator**.

Ask validators to **read the text** or **specific words**.



Some words are **easy to understand**, but **difficult to read**.



Replace these words by **easier-to-read synonyms**.



Listening to the text aloud, the validator and mediator may realize that there are too many words in some lines.



# Validation - Mediator



## Rules for the mediator:

- ✔ **Respect:** even if you speak slowly and simply, do not address validators in a patronizing way.
- ✔ **Enough Time:** let validators reflect and speak at their own pace.
- ✔ Choose a **quiet place** to do the validation session.
- ✔ Speak **clearly and slowly.**
- ✔ **Use easy language** and short sentences.
- ✔ If the validator has a support person, **speak directly to the validator** and not to the support person.



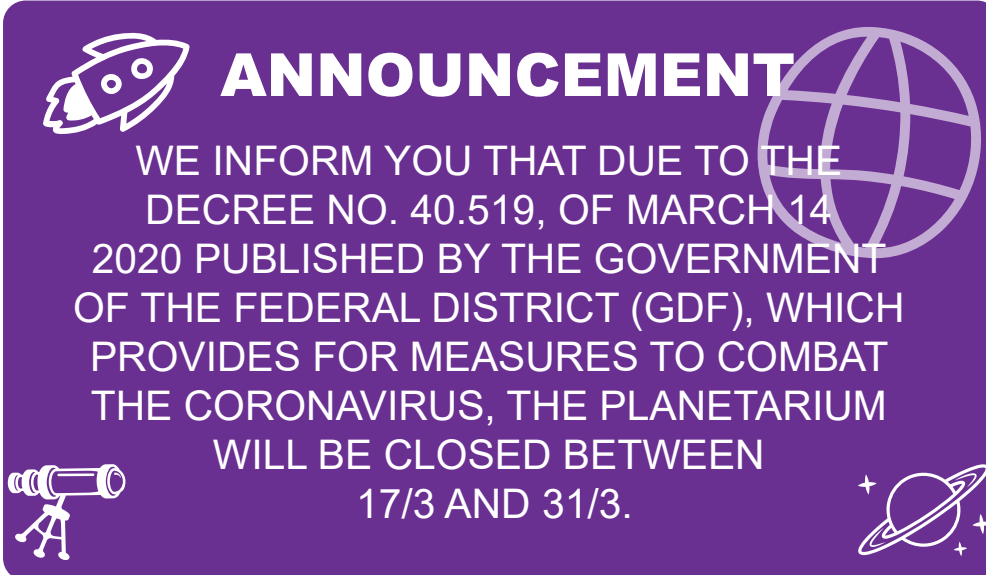
- ✔ Check that the **validator understands**.
- ✔ Check if the validator needs **devices to facilitate communication**.
- ✔ Focus on the validator's skills and always **give positive reinforcement**.
- ✔ If you don't **understand the validator, tell the validator so**.
- ✔ People usually **understand more than it seems**.
- ✔ **Rephrase** when necessary.
- ✔ Use **real-life examples**.
- ✔ **Repeat and summarize**.





# Validation



In short,  
it is about **filtering essential information**  
and communicating it  
in the easiest way possible.

 **Before:**



 **ANNOUNCEMENT** 

WE INFORM YOU THAT DUE TO THE  
DECREE NO. 40.519, OF MARCH 14  
2020 PUBLISHED BY THE GOVERNMENT  
OF THE FEDERAL DISTRICT (GDF), WHICH  
PROVIDES FOR MEASURES TO COMBAT  
THE CORONAVIRUS, THE PLANETARIUM  
WILL BE CLOSED BETWEEN  
17/3 AND 31/3.






After:

**THE PLANETARIUM WILL  
BE CLOSED**

FROM MARCH 17 TO 31

DUE TO THE PANDEMIC

# Summary

-  Present the information to your target audience.
-  Check the understanding of the message.
-  Rephrase the content according to the suggestions.







# Summary

In this chapter you can quickly access the Easy Language guidelines.



# Summary - Easy Text



## Easy Text:

- ✔ Make it **shorter**.
- ✔ Get **straight to the point**.
- ✔ Write **short, affirmative** sentences.  
*Avoid starting with no.*
- ✔ **One idea** per sentence.
- ✔ Use **direct Order**, avoid passive voice:  
*subject + verb + complements*
- ✔ Use **veryday words**.



Explain **difficult words.**

*using a “dictionary”  
on the side.*



You can **repeat the same word.**



Avoid **splitting sentences** and **separating words.**



Avoid:

- **acronyms**
- **foreign words**
- **adjectives**
- **adverbs**
- **abstract words**
- **semicolons**
- **%& # symbols**
- **roman numerals**



# Summary - Easy Design



## Easy Design:

- ✔ Use **sans serif font**.  
*Arial, Helvetica...*
- ✔ Large font size – **at least size 12**.
- ✔ Use **bold** to highlight.  
*Titles, important words*
- ✔ Use **1.5 spacing** between sentences
- ✔ Use **two spaces between paragraphs**.



**Left-aligned text**, without justification.



**Contrast** when using colors.

*Use light background and dark letter  
or dark background and light letter.*



Use **bullets** to list  
more than 3 things.

•, →, ▪, ◇, ○, ◦, □, ■



Avoid the **use of text over images**.



# Summary - Easy Design



## Imagens:

- ✔ Use **Image on the left, text on the right.**
- ✔ Use **clear, simple illustrations,** with few details.
- ✘ Avoid too many **graphic elements,** as they distract.
- ✔ Use clean and easy-to-understand **images and design.**



# Summary - Validation

## Validation

- ✔ **Present** to your audience.
- ✔ **Listen** to questions and suggestions.
- ✔ **Allow time** for validation.
- ✘ **Do not** question the validator.
- ✔ **Read** the text aloud.
- ✔ **Review** the text.

# Summary

- ✔ Easy language
- ✔ Easy design
- ✔ Validation





# What is Easy Language?


Easy Language makes **information accessible** to people who have **difficulties to read and/or understand**.

Easy Language makes information accessible to people who have **reading comprehension difficulties**.

**Easy Language is a right** guaranteed by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

*Easy Language addresses:*

 *Misinformation*

 *Inequalities*

*Easy Language promotes:*

 *Autonomy*

 *Rights*

# About Easy Language

Easy to Understand Language, or Easy Language for short, includes resources to make information easy to understand.

You can find other ways to refer to Easy Language:

- Plain language
- Simple language
- Easy to read
- Easy-to-understand communication.

All of them are useful to make information more accessible.

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Easy Access for Social Inclusion Training (EASIT)

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ELIN – Easy Language International Network

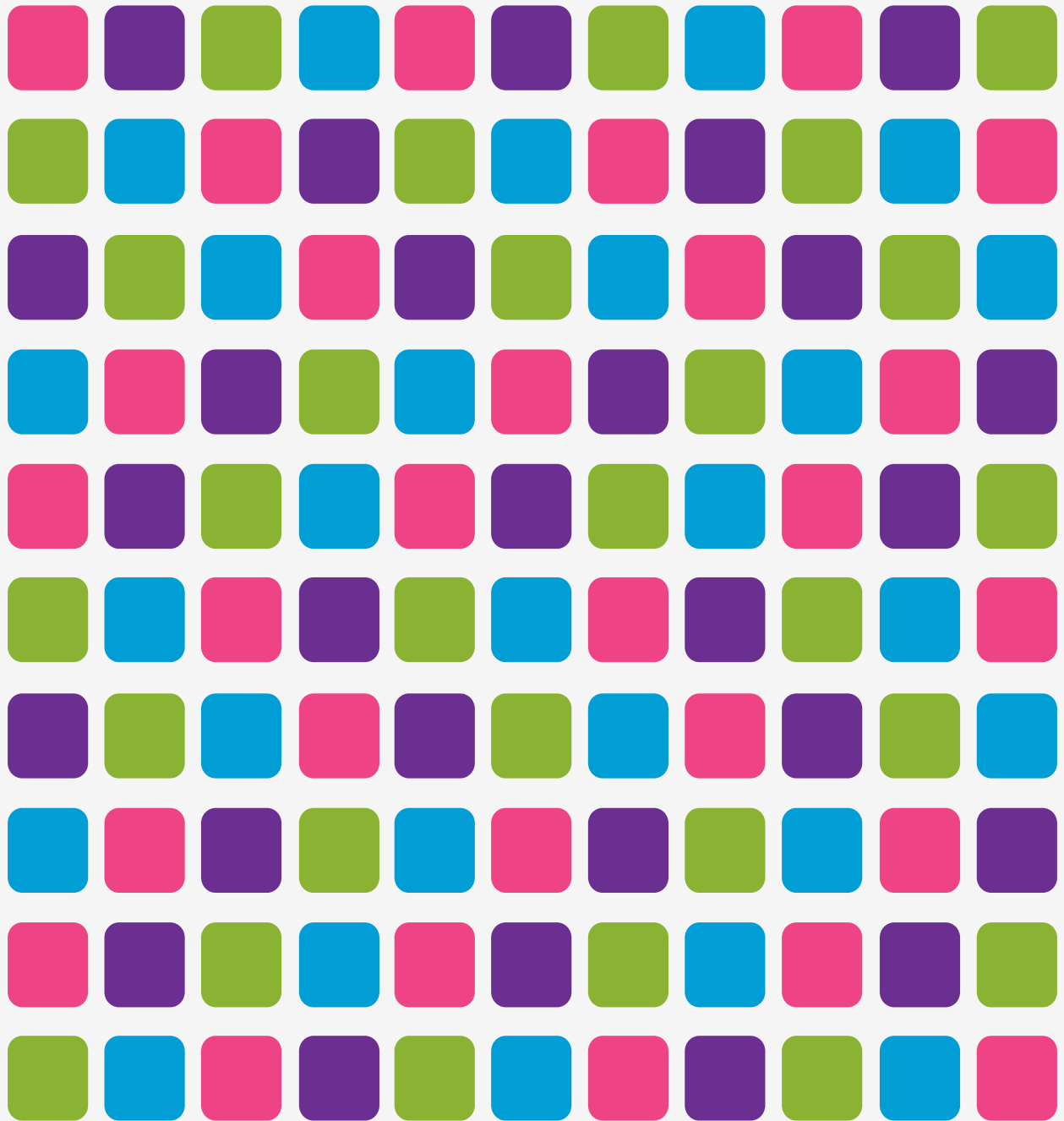
Easy Language is easy to read and understand for anyone

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# Support

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ASFOC

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Sérgio Arouca National School of Public Health

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