



# Supplement

## Easy-to-Read

### How to write easy-to-read information

#### Introduction

When the Puzzle-project was initiated, the starting point was guidelines for producing easy-to read text. There are persons with intellectual disabilities (ID) who are literate and can read. But, in order to understand they need a well-structured text in an easy-to-read language.

For the large number of persons with ID who cannot read, the project wanted to broaden the interpretation of “reading” to include communication with ears and fingers as well as with eyes. “To read” includes printed text, as well as sounds, pictures and videos. The concept of easy-to-read can be applied to all these different forms of communication and should be applied if you want to make the information easy-to-understand.

#### Easy-to-Read becomes Easy-to-Understand

Information must be easy to find, to read and to understand, no matter the media, the format or the user’s abilities. If it isn’t easy to understand, it isn’t accessible.

You have to know your reader and his/her communication needs. Even very simple text is often too difficult to understand for persons with more complex communication needs. The combination of images with text can significantly improve the accessibility of text for this audience. And, where individuals do not have reading ability, alternative media formats such as sound and video clips can convey information in ways that are Easy-to-Understand.

#### Content

The principles for writing easy-to-read state the importance of knowing your reader’s background knowledge and his/her interest in the subject of the information. This is just as important when you produce a text as when you make a video or a picture-based information. Regardless of media, the information must be relevant for the reader and be based on his/her reality. A text, as well as a video, must be well-structured and easy to follow.

## Language

In the learning material Easy-to-Read, a number of characteristics for easy-to-read language are listed - like the use of common words, no metaphors and to be concrete. These recommendations are just as important to follow when the communication method is other than a printed text. "To use common words" can be rephrased as "use common pictures". Written language, verbal language or figurative language – all of them must be easy to understand for the intended reader. No matter which form of "language" you use it has to be familiar to the reader, easy to interpret and based on his/her reality and knowledge.

## Pictures

The use of pictures has always been a recommendation when producing easy-to-read information. A picture should anchor the text, express the same thing as the text to help the reader to more easily understand the message. The picture itself must be easy to interpret or it will take focus from the information. When choosing pictures, they must be culturally familiar – a picture of a house should resemble what the houses look like in your area/region/country.

## Multimedia

Where individuals do not have reading ability, alternative media formats such as sound and video clips can convey information in ways that are easy-to-understand. Presented with simple messages in multiple media formats, individuals can choose their preferred mode of communication.

Multimedia production processes also provide a wider range of ways in which individuals can take part in the creation of accessible information. Persons with ID can participate in various roles as co-creators; as presenters, actors, interviewers, photographers etc.

It is a Human Right to have access to information in a way/format that is accessible for the reader. Bringing a multimedia-perspective to the production of information is important for making it as easy-to-understand as possible. There are some good examples of short videos produced by the Lithuanian organization in the Puzzle-project that combine pictures, sound and easy-to-read text.

## Finally...

Learn the basic principles of easy-to-read and apply them to different modes of communication, and you will have information that is Easy-to-Understand!

**Good luck!**

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