Easy English & Easy Read

They are different. There is no debate.

Access Easy English

Who is the audience?

Easy English

Any person with low literacy. The reason for their low literacy does not matter. The person may

- have a lifelong disability, e.g. intellectual disability, autism
- have an acquired disability, e.g. due to stroke, dementia, accident
- be Deaf (many use Auslan as a first language) or they are hearing impaired
- have had poor educational outcomes
- have mental illness
- be from a different cultural background
- be an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person
- be older.

It could be you, at any time. For example, you are

- overwhelmed
- unwell
- in an emergency
- time poor
- in trauma or post trauma.

Easy Read

Promoted as being for people with intellectual disability, and suggest other people can use it also. The published evidence for its development and use is weak. Research indicates it does not have a single agreed evidence-based methodology. There is no internationally recognised standard. Evidence suggests a reader of Easy Read requires

- some adequate reading skills
- high motivation for the topic
- to know something about the topic

  and critically
- a skilled communication partner to assist them to read, understand and know what the information means for themselves.[1]

Table 1: Easy English and Easy Read comparisons – a few examples

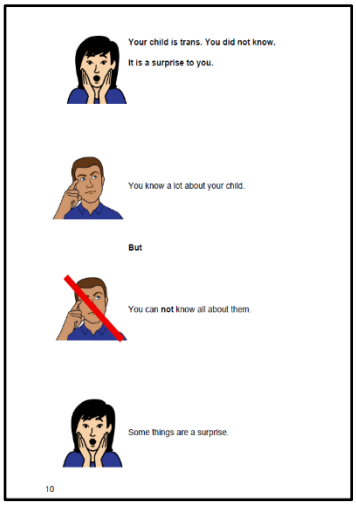
	Easy English	Easy Read
Frameworks	• Uses Universal Design principles • Follows ISO Plain Language 24495-1: 2023 Incorporates research from • speech pathology • language development • literacy development • reading comprehension • cognitive load • memory and learning • plain language • health literacy • public health, • content design • graphic design, etc.	• Does **not** use Universal Design principles • Does **not** follow ISO Plain Language 24495-1: 2023 **But** Australian Easy Read writers suggest Easy Read is • Plain Language with pictures Or • Follows some Plain Language principles with pictures. Note: Plain Language experts do **not** recognise plain language in Easy Read development. Wilson, 2026[2]: Not enough strong evidence it supports reader to understand & use it. Iacono, 2026[5]: Research is required to determine what does support comprehension and use.
Guidelines	Specific and measurable	Each writer interprets their guidelines differently. The research suggests they are nonspecific.[3, 5]
Content Development	Stand-alone & explicit information. Considers reader's everyday language and knowledge of topic. Supports understanding, decision making and independent use of information	States it is a summary of the original information. Often focuses on simplifying written text rather than ensuring comprehension and decision making.[5]
Measure of readability & range in Australia. (Flesch- Kincaid)[4]	Average (US) grade 1.5 years of reading skills. Range grade 0 to grade 3.	Average (US) grade 6.5 – 8.4 years of reading skills.[5] Range grade 4 to grade 12. Note: NDIS content has an average grade 7.8 years of reading skills.

	Easy English	Easy Read
Sentence Length	Average 5 to 8 words.	Average 12 to 14 words.
Complex Words	Does **not** include complex or hard words. All concepts & content is explained using the reader's known words.	Highlights complex concepts or **hard words** in the text with bold. Includes a short explanation of that word or concept, and continues to use it throughout the content.
Introduction page or 2 pages.	Never - not required. Stopped using in 2005. Consumers report - what has this got to do with this topic?	Nearly all the time, by all writers.
Use of 'if…then' statements	Never.	Usually. Often multiple use on a page or across a document.
Punctuation	Only 3 types of different punctuation used.	More than 3 different types of punctuation used. Different writers use a variety of different punctuation.
Images - Front page	Image is clear & highly guessable about what the content is about. Connects closely to the front page title.	Different developers may • use a generic nonspecific photo • use a generic picture • may have no image.
Images - Headings	**Every** heading has image support.	**No** headings have image support.
Images - Body of content	Maximum of 4 highly guessable and specific images per page. • no grammatical markers (eg ! or ?) • no other symbolic elements (eg speech bubbles) • no words in images • no numbers in images. Photos only of specific people or places mentioned in the text.	From 4 to up to 8 images per page. Many images require you to learn their meaning. Some development • only uses generic photos • only uses icons in the brand colour of that work. • mix generic photos with images &/or grammatical markers, and other interpretive markers the reader needs to learn.

	Easy English	Easy Read
	Note: Guessable images are images whose meaning can be understood without prior teaching or explanation.	
Length	Developed into short pieces of information. May have multiple fact sheets on specific topics created. Plan for less than 20 pages each.	Can be short, however documents are often 25 to 50 pages or more in length. They include a contents page but with **no images** support.

1. Buell, S. (2019) JARID. Vol 00: pp1-13.
2. Wilson, Irvine, Alexander and Mengoni. (2026) JARID. Vol 99. No. 4.
3.Chinn, D. (2019) JIDD. Vol 44. No.4 410 – 420
4. Flesch, R. (1948). JAP. 32(3), 221–233.
5. Iacono, T. (2026) RAPIDD. Vol 13 No. 1. 1-22.

Evidence - based best practice Easy English



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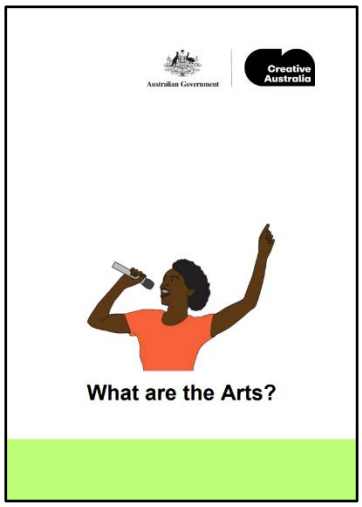
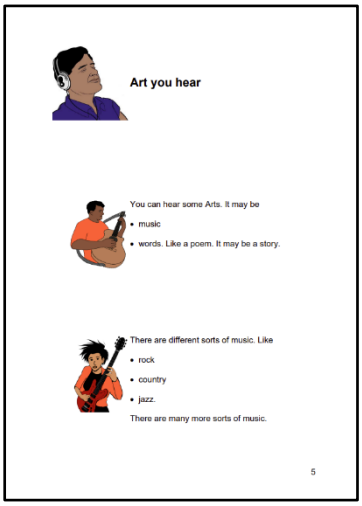
May 2026.
1 of 3 fact sheets with Transcend Australia.
1 further fact sheet in 2025.
https://transcend.org.au/resources/queensland-resources
Or
www.readee.com.au
Or
https://accesseasyenglish.com.au/transcend-australia-2026/





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May 2026.
In conjunction with
About the Arts. What do you think, 2025.
https://creative.gov.au/research/creative-transformations-results-national-arts-participation-survey
Or
www.readee.com.au
Or
https://accesseasyenglish.com.au/creative-australia/