

# Write for Every Brain: Summary

Many of your colleagues and clients think, process information and read in ways you may not expect. [One in 8 Australians](#) is neurodivergent. And while not all neurodivergent people face reading difficulties, many do. When you write without considering how different brains process language, you risk excluding readers.

This summary highlights the barriers readers face and the paths to avoid the barriers in the first place.

If you are unfamiliar with the ideas or words we've used, or want more detail about writing for every brain, read the full ebook [on our website](#).

Being neurodivergent means someone's brain naturally works differently to most people's. The most common types of brains (neurotypes) are:

- ADHN (ADHD, but we replace 'disorder' with 'neurotype')
- Autism
- dysgraphia
- dyslexia
- dyspraxia
- neuromajority
- sensory processing differences
- Tourette syndrome.

Traditional writing practices put up barriers for people with thinking differences. But plain language is a more inclusive writing practice. It frees up a reader's mental resources, so there's more capacity to focus on and understand the document.



## 🚧 Barriers

### Leaving out the summary

Readers waste mental energy trying to figure out what is important and what isn't, which leaves them with fewer mental resources for understanding your message.

### Burying what is important

Readers want you to get to the point fast. Don't make them:

- wait for the information they need
- remember lots of details while they hunt for the information they need to make sense of your document.

### Using vague or unhelpful headings

Poor or missing headings make life harder for readers. They force readers to mentally map the document's structure, which can lead to decision fatigue and disorientation within the document.

### Over- or under-designing your document

No visual cues to highlight content or structure make the document look like hard work. On the other hand, visual clutter can overwhelm readers, making it harder to focus on what is important.

### Using passive voice and few pronouns

Complex, abstract or passive writing makes sentences harder to process and feel impersonal and disconnected. This makes it harder to engage.

### Preferring long words and sentences

Long and unfamiliar words are harder to understand than short, familiar ones. Sentences with too many ideas overload working memory.

## 🏠 Pathways

### Starting with a clear summary

Summaries should be relevant and focussed, with the next steps up front. They create order and predictability, and help the writer guide the reader's understanding.

### Putting the most important points first

This reduces mental effort, so the reader is more likely to act on what they've read.

Even better, use templates to achieve a consistent structure, so the reading experience is predictable (in a good way).

### Adding information-rich headings

Consistent, information-rich headings:

- signal main ideas
- improve navigation
- help memory
- speed up information processing.

### Choosing clean, simple designs

Simple designs reduce mental fatigue, make understanding easier and increase the chance of positive engagement with the document because it seems more manageable.

### Aiming for more active voice and pronouns

Active voice is easier to read: it takes less brain power to process than passive voice. And personal pronouns make your text feel more human, so you can connect with your reader.

### Prioritising short words and sentences

Shorter words and sentences ease mental load. Avoid jargon, inference and idioms to make information easier to process.