

Module 1: How Readers Actually Read

Independent Practice

Name: _____ Date: _____

Scenario

You are a science journalist working for an international news agency. A research team has just published findings about a new respiratory virus. The lead scientist has provided you with a heavy and hard to read technical paragraph explaining the discovery.

Your editor needs you to rewrite this text to make it accessible to an intelligent adult, who may not be a scientist. They want the information presented clearly and efficiently so they can see why it matters. They are busy and need the key information immediately.

Your challenge is to adapt your writing to serve the reader.

Source Material

Below is the technical paragraph from the scientist. Read it carefully:

Source Paragraph (Technical):

"The identification of a new respiratory virus that spreads through the air has been made by a research team. The appearance of symptoms in infected individuals takes place following an incubation period of three to seven days, during which the transmission of the virus by people who feel completely healthy to those around them remains possible. The wearing of masks, maintaining a safe distance from others, and to avoid spending time in crowded indoor spaces has been shown by early studies to be effective in the reduction of transmission rates."

Your Task

Rewrite this information for the reader described above. Work through the four steps below. Each step prepares you for the next. Do not skip ahead.

Step 1: Identify the key terms and key verbs.

Key terms are the precise technical words you will need to keep in your rewrite. Key verbs are the actions, but look carefully because many of them are hiding inside nouns in the source paragraph. Extract them here and change them to verbs.

Key terms:

Key verbs:

Step 2: Identify where parallelism is missing.

Find the sentence in the source paragraph where a list of three items does not use the same grammatical form. Write the problem below, then write the corrected version.

The problem:

The solution:

Step 3: Fix the word order in each sentence.

Each sentence in the source paragraph puts new or unfamiliar information at the beginning, where the reader expects familiar information. Restructure each sentence so that familiar information comes first and new information comes last. Write your revised sentences below.

Sentence 1:

Sentence 2:

Sentence 3:

Step 4: Check your sentences against the five reader expectations.

Before you write your final version, work through the checklist below. Tick each box only when you are confident the sentence meets that expectation.

- ☐ Are the main actions expressed as verbs, not hidden in nouns?
- ☐ Does each sentence start with something the reader already knows?
- ☐ Does each sentence end with the most important or new information?
- ☐ Are the subject and verb close together in every sentence?
- ☐ Have you used the same grammatical form wherever items are listed?

Your Rewrite

Write your final version here. It should communicate all the key facts from the source paragraph clearly and efficiently for a non-specialist adult reader.

Success Criteria

Your work will be successful if:

1. Your rewrite communicates all the key facts from the source paragraph.
2. The main actions are expressed as verbs (discovered, appear, spread, reduce).
3. Each sentence starts with familiar information and ends with new information.
4. The three protective measures use the same grammatical form.
5. The subject and verb are close together in every sentence.
6. An intelligent non-specialist reader can understand it immediately.

Remember: When writing, you are acting in service to the reader. Readers should not have to work hard.