

Austrade writing and editing standards

Summary

Read government standards for style, readability, accessibility, and tone. Find tips on inclusive language, referencing and commonly used Austrade words.

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Style Manual – Austrade writing and editing standards

The [Australian Government Style Manual](#) is the APS standard for everyone who writes, edits or approves Australian Government content. Use it to create clear and consistent content that meets the needs of users.

Content must:

- have a suitable structure, including headings and bullet points
- have a Flesch-Kincaid readability score of at least 50/100
- be relevant to clients' needs.

Sometimes, the Style Manual does not cover all the details we need. In those cases, follow the standards below.

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Accessibility

Read the [Accessible web content page](#) for more information HTML content.

Learn how to [Create an accessible word document](#) suitable as a downloadable publication from the website.

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Write readable content

People read and comprehend differently when looking for information online. People in government agencies, businesses and ministers' offices are time-poor and task-oriented. They scan very quickly for information.

These techniques are proven to meet these needs:

- put the most important information at the top of the page
- use short, simple sentences of up to 15 words (never more than 25)
- break up longer sentences into very short and simple bullet points
- use no more 3 sentences in a paragraph
- break up sections of more than 3 paragraphs with sub-headings (H2s, H3s etc)
- write meaningful headings – users scan headings first
- use an [active voice](#)
- aim for a readability score between 60 – 70 [Flesch-Kincaid](#) available in Word. This means your content will be suitable for online readers.

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Check the readability of your content

Use the readability statistics function in Word to measure the readability by selecting:

1. All text in your document
2. File
3. Options
4. Proofing
5. Select Check grammar with spelling and Show readability statistics check boxes

6. OK

OR

Check the Readability statistics for your content in Word, select:

1. Review
2. Editor
3. Insights

- The readability statistics will display the [Flesch reading ease](#) score for your content. A score of 60 - 70 means content is easy to read and written in plain English.
- A Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level of 7 also means your content is suitable for online readers.

Email contentmanagement@austrade.gov.au who can run your content through the Visible Thread tool for you to help identify more accessible language options.

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Referencing sources

- When you use facts and statistics, you must show where the information came from. This is a legal requirement.
- More details on referencing sources are presented on the [Referencing guide](#) intranet page.
- Instructions for companies creating content commissioned by Austrade are available in this MSWord [Referencing_guide](#).

Referencing subscription services

Instructions for referencing subscription services is on the [Licence agreements for subscription services](#) page.

Voice and tone

A consistent voice gives a better user experience. Austrade's voice is:

- respectful
- clear and direct
- objective and impartial.

Inclusive language

Use language that is culturally appropriate and respectful of the diversity of Australia's peoples. Follow the [guidelines in the Style Manual](#).

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Spelling

Use [Australian English](#). For example:

- program not programme
- -re (kilometre) not -er
- -our (colour) not -or
- -ise (organise) not -ize.

Refer to the [Macquarie Dictionary](#) if you're unsure on a word.

Common words in Austrade

If you're unsure which version of a word to use, check our [commonly used words](#).

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Related information

- [Commonly used words](#)
 - [Referencing guide](#)
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Useful links



Austrade websites



Creating accessible web content



Create an accessible Word document



Australian Government Style Manual



Accessible and inclusive content

Need help?

Content team

Response within 24 hours

✉ ContentManagement@austrade.gov.au

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