

[WORKING DRAFT] COGA-Silver Clear Language Method 3:

Use a simple sentence structure and avoid double negatives or nested clauses

Silver breadcrumb:

Guideline: Clear and Understandable Language → Outcome: Clear and Understandable Language (written and audio) → Method: Use a simple sentence structure and avoid double negatives or nested clauses

About this document:

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Maps to [COGA Pattern 4.4.3: Avoid double negatives or nested clauses](#)

Reference documents:

- [☰ COGA Silver Structure draft](#)
- [Silver revised method template \(October 2021\)](#)
- [☰ Writing Testable WCAG 3.0 Outcomes](#)
- Earlier drafts:
 - [☰ Complete list of Clear Language methods and \(DRAFT\)](#)
 - [☰ \[From Lisa\] Use Clear Language Method](#)
 - [☰ \[ARCHIVED Nov 2021\] Use Clear Language Method](#)
- [Archive of COGA Github Issues](#) (May help with finding supporting research)

Introduction

Outcome {content usable term: objective}

This method supports the outcome **Clear and Understandable Language (written and audio)**, which belongs to the guideline, **Clear and Understandable Content** (reference: [COGA's thinking on structure](#)).

Other methods for this outcome:	Related outcomes
- Method 1: Use contextually established, familiar, and accurate words (COGA pattern 4.4.1) - Method 2: Use the tense and voice that is easiest to understand in context (COGA pattern 4.4.2) - Method 4: Use literal and concrete language and explain implied content (COGA pattern 4.4.4 and COGA pattern 4.4.12) - Method 5: Use clear, unambiguous formatting and punctuation, including language tags and the symbols and letters necessary to decipher the words (COGA pattern 4.4.6 and 4.4.7)	- Outcome 2: Chunked information and clear visual presentation - Outcome 3: Math concepts

Platform

- All, this method is platform independent

Technology

- All, this method is technology independent

Input aspects for testing

- *To be written after we reconnect with Silver. Unclear on how this should be answered in the context of this document.*

Summary {content usable term: what to do}

- Do not use a double negative to express a positive,
- Do not use clauses inside clauses, and
- Try to keep [sentence length to fewer than 25 words](#) (in English).

How it solves user need {content usable term: how it helps}

{Description of how method relates to the outcome}

Simple sentence structure benefits many people, including those with language impairments, dyslexia, or a memory impairment. Both double negatives and nested clauses can be confusing.

For example, more people will understand “You must get the agency’s approval before we can answer your claim”, rather than “No approval of any claims can be achieved without the agency’s approval.”

Simple language allows more people to understand. For example, a person with [early stage dementia](#) can manage their own affairs when the language is clear and understandable.

This is how far I (Rain) was able to get in creating this initial draft.

When to use {content usable term: more details (sometimes)}

{when the method should or should not be used}

Background

W3C Resources

- {related resources}

Non-W3C Resources

- {related resources}

Accessibility Support

{short paragraph on accessibility support considerations}

Assumptions

- [assumptions]

Examples

- {list of examples, unless using sub-sections, then delete this list}

Passed {content usable term: use}

{Example Name}

{Use a copy of this section for each example if not
using a bullet list of examples}

{explanation}

<

Failed {content usable term: avoid}

{Example Name}

{Use a copy of this section for each example if not
using a bullet list of examples}

{explanation}

Inapplicable

{Example Name}

{Use a copy of this section for each example if not
using a bullet list of examples}

{explanation}

Tests

(do at least of of the use, and do not do any of the avoid)

Also look at tests in github versions

Get Started

{Tips or link to information for beginners in testing.}

The following tests are specific to the English language only. Different tests may need to be determined for other languages, where grammatical structures may require different rules.

Test 1:

The sentence does not contain a double negative, such as the use of a verb negation and a modifier negation within a single sentence.

- Negations include: not, nor, neither, no, none, without, un-[word], etc.
- Verb negations include: **won't** bake, **can't** do, **do not** be, etc.
- Modifier negations include: **nowhere**, **noone**, **no** [items], **without** approval, **unclear**, etc.

Examples of passing and failing this test:

- Pass:

- No approval of any claims can be achieved without the agency's approval.
- Write clearly.
- Time is limited.
- Fail:
 - You must get the agency's approval before we can answer your claim.
 - Do not write unclearly.
 - Time is not unlimited.

Test 2:

Each sentence contains either

- one independent clause, OR
- two independent clauses linked by a conjunction, OR
- one independent clause and one dependent clause.

Examples of passing and failing this test:

- Pass:
 - I went to the blue store around the corner yesterday.
 - I went to the store, and I visited my mother.
 - I went to the store because I was hungry.
- Fail:
 - I went to the blue store yesterday, because I was hungry, and visited my mother.

Exception: When the clauses are independent items in a list, then there can be as many as belong in the list IF the list is formatted as a bulleted list (when supported). For example, the clauses in this test, as written, are each independent list items.

Test 3:

Parentheticals are not embedded within other parentheticals.

Exception: parentheticals are excluded from this test when they are used to follow accepted citation practices.

Examples of passing and failing this test:

- Pass:
 - [give an example with a citation]
 - I ate three fruits (oranges, kiwis, apples) yesterday.
- Fail:
 - I ate three fruits (oranges (my favorite), kiwis (my least favorite), apples) yesterday.

Ways to test:

- Employ a readability checker tool such as Grammarly, [the one Rain loves], Google Docs Spelling and Grammar checks, Ginger, Pro Writing Aid

Research:

- [English clause syntax – Wikipedia!](#)

Next time we meet, Becca to help us know more about the German levels and how they are different from English

Summary

Applicability

This outcome applies to any [element names] element that is [condition] and for which one of the following is true:

{excluded, ignored, exception}

[element]

Expectations

[detail of the expectation]

USER TESTs

User testing question

Glossary

Common words

definition

[term]

definition

Missing elements in revised method (these are in the outcomes):

Introduction

Functional categories

Critical errors