

# Checklist to Develop Easy-to-Read Informed Consent Documents

## Text

- Words are familiar to the reader. Any scientific, medical, or legal words are defined clearly.
- Words and terminology are consistent throughout the document.
- Sentences are short, simple, and direct.
- Line length is limited to 30-50 characters and spaces.
- Paragraphs are short. Convey one idea per paragraph.
- Verbs are in active voice (i.e., the subject is the doer of the act).
- Personal pronouns are used to increase personal identification.
- Each idea is clear and logically sequenced (according to audience logic).
- Important points are highlighted.
- Study purpose is presented early in the text.
- Titles, subtitles, and other headers help to clarify organization of text.
- Headers are simple and close to text.
- Underline, bold, or boxes (rather than all caps or italics) give emphasis.
- Layout balances white space with words and graphics.
- Left margins are justified. Right margins are ragged.
- Upper and lower case letters are used.
- Style of print is easy to read.
- Type size is at least 12 point.
- Readability analysis is done to determine reading level (should be eighth grade or lower).

### Avoid:

- Abbreviations and acronyms.
- Large blocks of print.
- Words containing more than three syllables (where possible).

## Graphics are:

- Helpful in explaining the text.
- Easy to understand.
- Meaningful to the audience.
- Appropriately located. Text and graphics go together.
- Simple and uncluttered.
- Images reflect cultural context.
- Visuals have captions.
- Each visual is directly related to one message.
- Cues, such as circles or arrows, point out key information.
- Colors, when used, are appealing to the audience.
- Avoid graphics that won't reproduce well.