

Your quick document checklist

Use these criteria to screen your documents for clarity. When you have answered ‘yes’ to all the questions, test your document with users.

Before you assess the document:

- List your readers
- Describe their context
- Write down questions that they will have
- Write the intended or ideal outcomes for this document

Now, mark each statement with a ‘yes’ or a ‘needs work’.

| Element | Criteria | Yes | Needs work |
|---------------------|---|-----|------------|
| Big picture | The purpose of the document is clear at the start | | |
| | The content supports the purpose of the document | | |
| | The structure of the document is clear and logical to the reader | | |
| | The headings signal the key content | | |
| Language | The paragraphs are mostly short and focused on one topic | | |
| | The sentences are mostly short and straightforward | | |
| | The words are precise and familiar | | |
| | The tone supports the purpose of the document | | |
| Presentation | The layout and presentation help the reader absorb the message quickly and easily | | |
| | The document is error-free and consistent with your style guide | | |

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