

A silver metal spiral binding is visible on the left side of the page, looping through a series of holes in the paper.

**Wydick's *Plain  
English for  
Lawyers***

# Plain English

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1. Omit surplus words.
2. Use base verbs,  
not nominalizations.
3. Prefer the active voice.
4. Use short sentences.

# Plain English

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- 5. Arrange your words with care.**
- 6. Use familiar, concrete words.**
- 7. Avoid language quirks.**

# Plain English

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Omit surplus words.

1. From the point of view of simplicity, an ordinary deed of trust would be the best.

# Plain English

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Omit surplus words.

1. For

simplicity, an ordinary deed of  
trust would be the best.

# Plain English

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Omit surplus words.

2. In terms of fairness, we should not apply the new rule retroactively.

# Plain English

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Omit surplus words.

2. In fairness, we should not apply the new rule retroactively.

# Plain English

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Omit surplus words.

**3. At such time as the judgment is  
entered . . .**

# Plain English

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Omit surplus words.

3. When the judgment is  
entered . . .

# Plain English

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Omit surplus words.

4. Arbitration is useful in some instances in which the parties . . .

# Plain English

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Omit surplus words.

4. Arbitration is useful

when

the parties . . .

# Plain English

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Omit surplus words.

4. Arbitration is useful

where

the parties . . .

# Plain English

Use base verbs, not nominalizations.

5. We are in agreement with your position, but if it is your intention to cause delay, we will stand in opposition to you.

# Plain English

Use base verbs, not nominalizations.

5. We agree with your

position, but if it is your intention

to cause delay, we will stand in

opposition to you.

# Plain English

Use base verbs, not nominalizations.

5. We agree with your position, but if you intend to cause delay, we will stand in opposition to you.

# Plain English

Use base verbs, not nominalizations.

5. We agree with your position, but if you intend to delay, we will stand in opposition to you.

# Plain English

Use base verbs, not nominalizations.

5. We agree with your  
position, but if you intend  
to delay, we will  
oppose you.

# Plain English

Use base verbs, not nominalizations.

6. **If there is a continuation of this breach, my client will effect an immediate termination of the contract.**

# Plain English

Use base verbs, not nominalizations.

6. If this breach continues,

my client will effect an

immediate termination of the

contract.

# Plain English

Use base verbs, not nominalizations.

6. If this breach continues,

my client will terminate

the contract immediately.

# Plain English

Prefer the active voice.

7. The ruling was made by the trial judge in favor of the claimant.

# Plain English

Prefer the active voice.

7. The trial judge ruled

in favor of the claimant.

# Plain English

Prefer the active voice.

8. This agreement may be terminated by either party by thirty days' notice being given to the other party.

# Plain English

Prefer the active voice.

8. This agreement may be terminated by either party by thirty days' notice being given to the other party.

# Plain English

Prefer the active voice.

8. Either party may terminate this agreement by giving thirty days' notice to the other party.

# Plain English

**Use short sentences.**

- 9. By establishing a technique whereby the claims of many individuals can be resolved at the same time, class actions serve an important function in our judicial system in eliminating the possibility of repetitious litigation and providing claimants with a method of obtaining enforcement of claims that would otherwise be too small to warrant individual litigation.**

# Plain English

Use short sentences.

9. By establishing a technique whereby the claims of many individuals can be resolved at the same time, (1) Class actions serve an important function in our judicial system. In eliminating the possibility of repetitious litigation and providing claimants with a method of obtaining enforcement of claims that would otherwise be too small to warrant individual litigation.

# Plain English

Use short sentences.

9. (2) They permit the claims of many individuals to be resolved at the same time. (1) Class actions serve an important function in our judicial system. In eliminating the possibility of repetitious litigation and providing claimants with a method of obtaining enforcement of claims that would otherwise be too small to warrant individual litigation.

# Plain English

Use short sentences.

9. (2) They permit the claims of many individuals to be resolved at the same time. (1) Class actions serve an important function in our judicial system.
- (3) This procedure avoids repetitious litigation and provides claimants a way to enforce claims that are too small for individual litigation.

# Plain English

Use short sentences.

9. (1) Class actions serve an important function in our judicial system. (2) They permit the claims of many individuals to be resolved at the same time. (3) This procedure avoids repetitious litigation and provides claimants a way to enforce claims that are too small for individual litigation.

# Plain English

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Use short sentences.

1. What
2. How
3. Implications

# Plain English

Arrange your words with care.

**10. The defendant, in addition to having to pay punitive damages, may be liable for plaintiff's costs and attorney fees.**

# Plain English

Arrange your words with care.

10. The defendant, in addition to  
having to pay punitive damages,  
may be liable for plaintiff's costs  
and attorney fees.

# Plain English

Arrange your words with care.

**10. The defendant may be liable for  
plaintiff's costs and attorney fees  
in addition to having to pay  
punitive damages.**

# Plain English

Arrange your words with care.

**10. The defendant may be liable for  
plaintiff's costs and attorney fees  
in addition to punitive damages.**

# Plain English

Arrange your words with care.

**11. The defendant was arrested for  
fornicating under a little-used  
state statute.**

# Plain English

Arrange your words with care.

11. The defendant was arrested under  
a little-used state statute for  
fornicating.

# **Plain English**

**Arrange your words with care.**

**Being ignorant of the law, the attorney argued that his client should receive a light sentence.**

# Plain English

Arrange your words with care.

Being ignorant of the law, the attorney argued that his client should receive a light sentence.

# Plain English

Arrange your words with care.

The attorney argued that his client  
should receive a light sentence  
because his client was ignorant of  
the law.

# Plain English

Use familiar, concrete words.

**12. The prisoner's aptitude for acclimatization to lack of confinement is one factor that must be taken into account in the deliberations of the Parole Board.**

# Plain English

Use familiar, concrete words.

12. The prisoner's ability to get used to freedom must be considered by the Parole Board.

# Plain English

Use familiar, concrete words.

- 13. All advance payments of rentals made hereunder shall be binding on any direct or indirect assignee, grantee, devisee, administrator, executor, heir, or successor to the lessor.**

# Plain English

Use familiar, concrete words.

13. All advance payments of rentals made hereunder shall be binding on any direct or indirect assignee, grantee, devisee, administrator, executor, heir, or successor to the lessor.

# Plain English

Use familiar, concrete words.

13. All advance payments of rent under this  
lease will be binding on

the lessor's successors.

# Plain English

Avoid language quirks.

**14. The first case was settled for \$20,000, and the second piece of litigation was disposed of out of court for \$30,000, while the price of the amicable accord reached in the third suit was \$50,000.**

# Plain English

Avoid language quirks.

14. The first case was settled for \$20,000, and the second piece of litigation was disposed of out of court for \$30,000, while the price of the amicable accord reached in the third suit was \$50,000.

# Plain English

Avoid language quirks.

14. The first case was settled for \$20,000,

the second

for \$30,000, and

the third

for \$50,000.

# Plain English

Avoid language quirks.

**15. The witness intentionally testified  
untruthfully about the cargo.**

# Plain English

Avoid language quirks.

15. The witness lied

about the cargo.

# Plain English

Avoid language quirks.

**16. Exposure to asbestos dust can result in very serious illness and can ultimately prove fatal.**

# Plain English

Avoid language quirks.

16. Exposure to asbestos dust can

cause grave injury or death.