

Agricultural Economics Society Annual Conference, 29th & 30th March 2021, Warwick and online

Workshop

Plain English and beyond: writing skills for agricultural economists

Time of Workshop

Tuesday 30 March 15:30 - 16:45

Location

Online

Motivation and objectives

As editor of Development Policy Review, I'm reminded every week that many articles submitted are not well written.

Moreover, mediocre writing seems to correlate with mediocre thinking. To write well, one needs to think clearly. Hence, learning to write well is not a grace note, but central to research.

This workshop aims to:

- Explain why writing matters
- Show how most writers can benefit from the principles of Plain English
- Outline the more advanced skills that lie beyond Plain English
- Run practical examples to demonstrate how to write better.

Format

A 75 minute workshop led by Steve Wiggins, with two short presentations lasting 15 minutes or less, leaving plenty of time for discussion and practical examples.

Who is this for?

For any agricultural economist who wants to improve or brush up on their writing skills

Presenter

Steve Wiggins is an agricultural economist who has engaged with agricultural and rural development in the Global South since 1972.

He runs writing course for colleagues at ODI.

He is lead editor of **Development Policy Review**.

Reading

If you'd like to know where the inspiration for this comes from, apart from practical experience, then here are some influences:

Plain English

Gowers E, 2014, *The complete plain words*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, Middlesex. Latest editions revised by Sir Ernest's granddaughter.]

Strunk, W. & E. B. White, 1979, **The elements of style**, Third Edition, Boston: Allyn & Bacon

Plain English <http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/>

DevSpeak: <https://oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/which-awful-devspeak-words-should-we-ban-your-chance-to-vote/>

More advanced writing skills

Harriss, Robert A., 2018, **Writing with clarity and style**, Second Edition, Abingdon: Routledge

Sword, Helen, 2012, *Stylish Academic Writing*, Harvard University Press. Kindle Edition.

Moran, Joe, 2018, *First You Write a Sentence*, Penguin