

Writing for the Web

Scannable, understandable, and concise.

Before you start writing, consider the following:

- 1 | Who is reading this?
- 2 | What information are they looking for?
- 3 | Is it quick and easy for them to find what they're looking for?



Plan for scanning.

People don't read online, they scan. Most readers scan the first few words in search of something specific. Here are some tips for writing content that is easy to scan:

- Put the most important words first.
- Use sub headings.
- Use bullet points instead of paragraphs where possible.

Use plain language.

There's a wide range of literacy levels in the LSS audience. This means it's especially important to write content that is easy to read and understand for people dealing with stressful situations. Writing towards this goal of inclusion will make your content better for all readers.

Try to:

- Use smaller, simpler words.
- Use words that are common in everyday speech.

Aim for understanding.

Legal subject matter is complex and intimidating for many. To make reading easier for your audience:

- Avoid abbreviations and jargon where possible.
- Always provide definitions for jargon and acronyms.
- Provide examples for confusing concepts.
- Use tooltips for all legal vocabulary.

Be concise.

Avoid overwhelming your audience by helping them focus on the task at hand. Edit ruthlessly and keep only what's necessary. Every word and sentence should serve a purpose. People will be able to read and understand your content faster if you:

- Use fewer words.
- Keep sentences short.
- Write in active voice.
- Be clear and provide examples as needed.
- Stick to what's relevant.
- Use visuals (grids, site maps) to reduce text.

Example LSS content:

Instead of this...

Can I apply for an undefended divorce in BC if my spouse lives outside of BC?

Yes. If you've been living in BC for at least one year and continue to live in BC, you can apply for a sole or joint undefended divorce in BC Supreme Court. The Canada Divorce Act states that a provincial court can deal with a divorce proceeding when either spouse has been living in the province for at least one year immediately before applying. If your spouse agrees to the divorce, you can use the step-by-step guide Do your own undefended (uncontested) divorce.

Try...

Can I apply for an undefended divorce in BC if my spouse lives outside of BC?

You can apply for a divorce even if your spouse doesn't live in BC. As long as one of you has been living in BC for at least one year before applying.



Tools to improve your writing:

1. **Readable.io** (PAID)

www.readable.com

Readable.io offers seventeen different tests to assign a readability score to your text.

2. **Hemingway** (PAID/FREE)

www.hemingwayapp.com

The Hemingway app highlights complex sentences, common errors, and provides a readability score.

3. **Readability Formulas** (FREE)

www.readabilityformulas.com/free-readability-formula-tests.php

Readability Formulas counts sentences, words, syllables, and characters to assign a reading level.