

Tips from Literacy Experts How to Get Your Message Across

Skilled Readers	Poor Readers	How to Get Your Message Across
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpret meaning • Read with fluency • Get help for uncommon words (may not be true for some patients) • Understand the context • Persistent • Problem-solving skills • Formulate questions • Perceive ideas correctly • Handle more than one piece of information at a time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take words literally • Read slowly, miss meaning • Skip over the word • Miss the context, problem solving, and synthesizing the information • Tire quickly • Poor problem-solving skills • Difficulty asking questions • Limited perception of ideas • Struggle with more than one piece of information at a time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the meaning • Use common words and examples • Use examples and review • Tell context first and use visuals • Use short sentences and easy to read layouts • Go through problem-solving process and teach this skill • Teach them how to ask questions about their health • Be concrete rather than abstract • Limit the amount of information given at one time and break down complex information into small segments.

Adapted from: Easy Does It! Plain Language and Clear Verbal Communication, National Literacy and Health Program, Canadian Public Health Association, Ottawa, Ontario, 1998