

LAYOUT AND DESIGN



Layout

- ∴ Provide as much white space as possible.
- ∴ Use margins that are at least 2.5 cm wide.
- ∴ Put titles in bold type that is 2 points larger than the font for the text.
- ∴ Leave one extra line space before and after titles, subtitles and paragraphs.
- ∴ Use 1.5 or 2.0 line spacing.
- ∴ Ensure that the titles and subtitles effectively introduce the content that follows.

Font

- ∴ Use a 12-point font.
- ∴ Use the same font throughout the document.
- ∴ Use a serif font such as Times New Roman.
- ∴ Only use bold type to emphasize a few words.

Justification

- ∴ Choose left justification.
- ∴ Avoid full justification of the text in order to avoid irregular spacing between words.

Illustration

- ∴ Use symbols that the target audience understands.
- ∴ Only incorporate images that are closely related to the text.

LANGUAGE



Vocabulary

- ∴ Choose common, everyday words.
- ∴ Choose words that have few syllables.
- ∴ Avoid using jargon, initialisms, acronyms and other abbreviations.
- ∴ Cut out unnecessary words (adverbs, for example).

Verbs

- ∴ Use simple tenses.
- ∴ Only use one conjugated verb per sentence.
- ∴ Keep the verb and the subject close together.
- ∴ Avoid starting sentences with participles.

CONCRETE EXAMPLE

Here is a concrete example of a message sent to parents by a school service centre. The first text uses formal language, and the second uses plain language.

October 2, 2020

To all parents of students attending the schools under the jurisdiction of the School Service Centre

Dear Madam or Sir:

SUBJECT: School transportation

We are sending you some information concerning school transportation for students:

Wearing of a procedural mask

In light of the findings of the epidemiological studies conducted in our schools by the public health authorities, we know that wearing a procedural mask (also known as a surgical mask) provides greater protection than a fabric mask. If a case of COVID-19 were reported among the other passengers on your child's route, the wearing of a procedural mask would greatly reduce the likelihood of your child having to go into preventive isolation.

School transportation for elementary school students: new surplus seats available

After having taken into account all students who are entitled to school transportation and confirmed their use of the service on our different routes, we are now in a position to offer new surplus seats in certain sectors. They will be assigned on a priority basis to the youngest students and those whose principal address is located furthest from the school. New requests can be submitted up to and including October 9, 2020, and the transportation service will begin on November 1, 2020. You can register your child by clicking on the following link:
[https:// inscriptiontransportscolaire/place.ca](https://inscriptiontransportscolaire/place.ca).

School transportation workforce shortage

The current pandemic poses an additional challenge in terms of recruiting and replacing drivers. At this time, we are in a position to ensure service on all routes. However, given the information we have obtained from our transportation providers, the precarious nature of the situation could lead to temporary service disruptions on some routes. We prefer to advise you of this possibility. Should such a situation arise, we will inform you, by email, as soon as possible.

Thank you for your understanding and, above all for your forbearance at this very difficult time.

Yours truly,

Director General

October 2, 2020

To all parents of students in schools under the School Service Centre

Dear Parents:

SUBJECT: Taking the school bus

Here is some information on school bus transportation for students:

Wearing a procedural mask on the bus

Public health officials say that a procedural mask protects better than cloth masks.

We suggest that students wear a procedural mask on the bus.



Procedural mask

Buses for elementary school students: More seats are now available

More seats will be available on the buses **starting November 1, 2020**. Priority will be given to the youngest students and those who live farthest away from the school.

Signing up:

- You must sign up **no later than October 9, 2020**.
- To do so, **click** on this link: <https://xxxx/inscriptiontransportscolaire/place.ca>.

Shortage of bus drivers

It is hard to hire and replace bus drivers during the pandemic. Your bus route could be cancelled if the driver gets sick. If that happens, you will be sent an email.

Thank you for your understanding and patience in these difficult times.

Yours truly,

Director General

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alphare (2012). *Simplifier nos écrits, ça simplifie la vie!* http://bv.cdeacf.ca/RA_PDF/157393.pdf.

Consulted on October 14, 2020.

Dionne, M.-J. (1995). *Écrire simplement: Guide d'application des techniques d'écriture simple*.

Fédération canadienne pour l'alphabétisation en français (FCAF).

Direction régionale du Bas-Saint-Laurent (2010). *Techniques d'écriture simple* (working document).

MAGISTRAD. Écriture efficace – Cahier d'accompagnement. Online training session given by Jean-François Giguère on June 9 and 12, 2020.

Canada. Public Services and Procurement Canada (1994). *Pour un style clair et simple – Guide du formateur*. <http://www.rqis.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Pour-un-style-clair-et-simple.pdf>.

Consulted on October 14, 2020.

_____. Translation Bureau (2021). *Writing Tips Plus*. [Writing Tips Plus](#). Consulted on March 18, 2021.

_____. Treasury Board. *Content Style Guide*. [Content Style Guide](#), 2.0 Plain Language. Consulted on March 22, 2021.