



## Writing Tips for Informed Consent

- Avoid Technical/medical/legal jargon – or if it must be used, define clearly.
- Spell out acronyms and abbreviations the first time they are used.
- Be consistent with words and terms throughout the document (i.e., avoid using disease, condition, illness, syndrome, disorder, sickness when referring to the same thing – pick one term and use it consistently).
- Keep words to four syllables or fewer. Consider the vocabulary of your least capable reader.
- Write short, simple, direct sentences.
- Keep paragraphs short and limited to one idea.
- Use active voice instead of passive voice (i.e., use “We will take a sample” instead of “A sample will be taken”).
- Use subjective pronouns – using “you”, “we”, and “I,” etc. makes the message more personal and engaging, and the information more relevant and understandable to the reader.

Avoid	Preferred	Reason
Trial, Experiment	Research Study, Project	Negative connotation
Principal Investigator (PI)	Researcher, Scientist	Unlikely to be understood
Subject	Participant	Negative connotation
Randomization	Select randomly like drawing numbers from a hat or in a raffle	Technical jargon
Asked to participate	Invited to participate	To clearly convey the voluntary nature of participating in research. “Asked” implies a command from a higher status person (e.g., your boss asks you to do a task).
Symbols such as >, <	Spell out “greater than”, “less than”, etc.	Symbols may not be understood
Third person pronouns (e.g., he, she, his, hers)	Second person pronouns (e.g., you, your)	Engage potential participant directly to convey respect for persons in research.