

THE PLAIN ENGLISH CAMPAIGN

English has been twisted out of ___1___ and quite frankly it isn't the language's fault! For those who are on the verge of giving up all hope of filling in a simple form without asking a dozen ___2___, or replying to a letter you have absolutely no idea about – it's time to celebrate. Say hello to the Plain English Campaign.

It all started when two elderly ladies died because they couldn't ___3___ an application form for housing benefits. Chrissie Maher decided enough was enough and took up the battle for crystal-clear language in public information services and communication. After fighting solo for ten years, she ___4___ the Plain English Campaign as a full-time movement in 1979, risking arrest as she shredded forms in Parliament Square.

The Plain English Campaign is a self funded, independent organization ___5___ for crystal-clear language and are against jargon, gobbledegook and other confusing language. Their efforts are dedicated to defining plain English as something that the intended audience can read, understand and act upon the ___6___ time they read it.

The need for simplified language is now established in the law books of many countries across the world, and ___7___ to grow. The logic is, if we don't understand what we're offering – then there's absolutely no point is there?

If you like to know more about the Plain English Campaign and its services visit: <http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/> and if your organization is a trusted generator of gobbledegook – you must find ___8___ of it on the website under 'How to write English'!

Here are some examples of gobbledegook you'll enjoy. Some of them have translations into Plain English and the others... well, there's a lot of ___9___ to be done!

Before: Your enquiry about the use of the entrance area at the library for the purpose of displaying posters and leaflets about Welfare and Supplementary Benefit rights, gives rise to the question of the provenance and authoritativeness of the material to be displayed. Posters and leaflets issued by the Central Office of Information, the Department of Health and Social Security and other authoritative bodies are usually displayed in libraries, but items of a disputatious or polemic kind, whilst not necessarily excluded, are considered individually.

After: Thank you for your letter asking ___10___ to put up posters in the entrance area of the library. Before we can give you an answer we will need to see a copy of the posters to make sure they won't offend anyone.

Before: It is important that you shall read the notes, advice and information detailed opposite then complete the form overleaf (all sections) prior to its immediate return to the Council by way of the envelope provided.

After: Please read the notes opposite before you fill in the form. Then send it back to us as soon as - ___11___ in the envelope provided.

A document for a bricklaying NVQ (National Vocational Qualification), describing the act of laying a brick in the wall: 'to install a component into the structural fabric'.

An unnamed lawyer's suggested replacement for the word 'container' in a patent application (pure unadulterated gobbledegook!): 'a receptacle having at least one exterior surface and a plurality of walls defining a discrete object receiving volume'.

Use the following words to fill in the blanks in the passage above:

- a) fighting b) proportion c) questions d) understand e) first f) possible
g) continues h) launched i) permission j) samples k) work