Policy Guide Contents

Mini Stylebook

Good policies are easy to read and understand. They outline expectations for workplace or school setting. Plain language without legalese helps the reader/user:

1) find what they need;
2) understand what they find; and
3) use what they find to meet their needs

Using "Mines" as the reference for CSM, Colorado School of Mines, School, or University is preferred. See the Mines' Style Guide for acronyms, consistent style information, and references. When referring to Mines as "school" or "university" do not capitalize or use it generically in a policy document.

- *Correct*: *Colorado School of Mines is a world-class engineering and applied science university. Mines is home to …*
- *Incorrect*: *The Colorado School of Mines is a world-class engineering and applied science university. CSM is home to…*

Tips and recommendations are in the table on the next page.

The Right Document Type

- "Policy" is a strong statement of requirements and inflexible; change to policy requires a formal review process through the Policy Office.
- "Procedures" provide the outline of workflow or process for a unit/person. They are changeable by the Responsible Administrative Unit to stay current.
- "Guidelines" are suggestions of Mines' best practices and should be strongly considered.
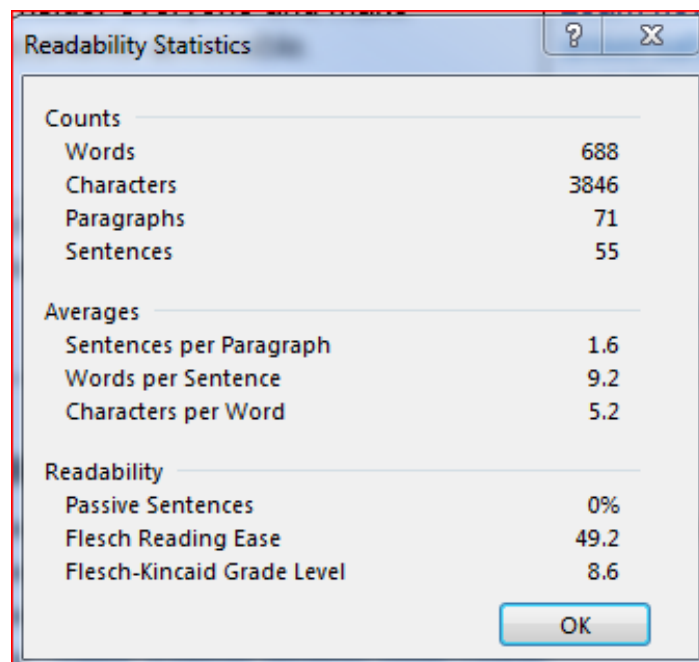
Mines Branding

Use approved Mines' logo in all documents. Look for the "R" in the circle to verify you are using a current version. See Mines' Logos link here.

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Writing Tips	Examples, Tools, or Reasoning
Documents should always have Headers and Levels	Style function is helpful (H1, H2, H3). Use templates provided.
Be clear about the main message:	Read your document aloud before you share it.
One idea per sentence and short sentences are easier to understand.	Long, wordy sentences or documents lose the reader. Break the sentence into separate sentences. E.g., The policy applies to all employees.
Short, concise, language and is accessible to all users.	Follow the procedure. Call the X office for help.
Avoid jargon and acronyms unless you define it well.	See the Mines' style guide for examples of acronyms used on campus. E.g., The human resources department (HR) handles on-boarding employees.
Avoid turning verbs into nouns. Use active voice rather than passive language.	"That's the take-away from today's seminar." Instead say, "The seminar take-away was…"
Avoid pictures or tables unless created with accessibility tags	Use "Alt. Text" for images or tables that are part of the document
Clean, organized lists are useful.	Use bullets or numbering to call out requirements.
Plain language is preferred over legalese.	E.g., Avoid "wheretofore" and "heretofore" in the text.
Shorten prepositional phrases.	Rather than "In following the procedures…" just say "Follow procedures…" or "Procedures include: (list)"
Avoid excess words including those that duplicate a thought.	Any and all students is not required, Say "all students."
Write in the "Active Voice" as the person or unit performing an action.	Passive voice usually has a "be" verb.
Avoid "Shall"	use "must", "may" , and/or "should"
Just say the information once.	Avoid restating information provided in the background or policy statements.
Use the 12 pt. Arial font, one-inch margins, and at least single spacing in the document.	Cramming text together is difficult for persons with vision challenges. E.g., Use the template.
	Continues on next page…

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Writing Tips	Examples, Tools, or Reasoning
Write for a web user <u>looking for</u> <u>answers</u> to questions.	a. Logical order/organization b. Informative Headers c. Active Voice d. Pronouns e. Common, Plain Words (not unit specific) f. Lists (bullets or numbered)
Consider everyone and make documents accessible.	Learn how to make documents or pages universally accessible for vision, hearing, mobility, and cognitive brains. Test text and Run Accessibility checkers before publishing.
Run Spelling and Grammar check several times during writing process	Run and re-run the "Spelling and Grammar" checker. Set the preferences for "Readability" to show grade-level. Either 6th or 8th grade is the target readability.

Readability example:

Readability Statistics

Counts
Words   688
Characters   3846
Paragraphs   71
Sentences   55

Averages
Sentences per Paragraph   1.6
Words per Sentence   9.2
Characters per Word   5.2

Readability
Passive Sentences   0%
Flesch Reading Ease   49.2
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level   8.6

OK

<u>**Resources**</u>: Mines Style Guide (Communications & Administration Offices)

- PlainLanguage.gov (checklists)
- Dept. Energy Writing Style Guide
- Campus Writing Program LAIS

Thank you to the University of California Policy Office for permission to utilize portions of their excellent style guide.