

Guide to writing and translating **Easy Read Welsh**



Learning Disability Wales
Anabledd Dysgu Cymru



Hawdd ei
Ddeall Cymru
Easy Read
Wales

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Introduction and general advice

Here are some recommendations that might be useful when writing or translating easy read text into Welsh.

When writing for the general public, Cen Williams in [Cymraeg Clir](#) recommends using short sentences in language that flows naturally. This is equally true when writing for people with a learning disability – but with further considerations!

Every one of the 12 rules of [Cymraeg Clir](#) are relevant when writing easy read text.

This document expounds on these rules and suggests other principles to keep in mind.

When writing for people with a learning disability, even more thought needs to be given to the words and phrases used, and real consideration needs to be given to how easy to understand they are.

1.1. Constructing a sentence or forming syntax

Writing or translating easy read text requires skills that are slightly different from everyday writing or translating skills. It's important to give the syntax, vocabulary and flow of sentences detailed consideration. Further thought is necessary about the associated rules of easy read words, which need to be arranged in a way that makes sense whilst also flowing with a smoothness that facilitates understanding.

Occasionally, in order to ensure that the sentences flow smoothly, flexibility is needed when forming a sentence. Sometimes, in order to convey the message in the simplest way, it is better to paraphrase the original text. Paraphrasing can give the translator more freedom of expression, rather than sticking more closely to the English text. However, the translator needs to ensure that the meaning holds true and that all the information is included.

Here are some principles to keep in mind when forming Welsh easy read syntax:

- keep the sentences as short as possible
- ensure the syntax is correct to ensure that the meaning is clear
- avoid adhering too strictly to the English syntax
- stick to verbs in the active voice, i.e. avoid impersonal verbs, for example:

☐ **Llenwir y botel gan Sara bob dydd.**

☒ **Mae Sara yn llenwi'r botel bob dydd.**

☐ **The bottle is filled by Sara every day.**

☒ **Sara fills the bottle every day.**

1.2. Presenting information

When presenting information, the task in hand is using the smallest number of words necessary to convey all the important facts. This document attempts to cover the main considerations when dealing with:

- constructing sentences or forming syntax
- words and terms
- parts of speech
- punctuation
- numbers
- abbreviations.

When drafting or translating text it is important to consider who the target audience is, the nature of the text or the document and the nature of the organisation or establishment who are presenting the information. Keeping these in mind will ensure that the information is presented in the most appropriate and effective way.

1.3. Checking your work

Checking your work carefully is even more important with easy read text. Usually, upon seeing a familiar word with a strange letter in the spelling, people would immediately conclude that this was a typing error. However, seeing an unfamiliar letter in the spelling of a word could confuse people with a learning disability.

Ideally, you should check your work three times in order to:

- Ensure you have interpreted the English correctly and haven't left anything out.
- Ensure that the words and the grammar are suitable for easy read texts.
- Ensure that the language flows smoothly by reading the document aloud.

More detailed advice and examples

2.1. Vocabulary

Using familiar language is the most appropriate way of presenting information to people with a learning disability, so use everyday words using standard spelling, rather than the dialect variations. For example eistedd rather than ista or ishte.

However, a certain degree of resemblance to the spoken language is needed. A formal literary expression should be avoided and more familiar forms with an informal feel to them should be used. Some verb conjugations are more familiar than others. You can refer to the [Gweiadur](#) to find verb conjugations and then decide which are too literary and formal and which are more suitable.

Words such as ‘nawr’ instead of ‘yn awr’ (now) also resemble the spoken language better.

2.2. Colloquial words

When learning to read, children with additional needs learn words that are commonly used throughout Wales. When two words that have the same meaning are used in different parts of Wales, for example, tost/sâl (ill), crac/blin (angry), brwnt/budr (dirty), the word that is more acceptable in literary Welsh should be chosen.

If it's not possible to choose between them easily, it is best to try and avoid them completely and paraphrase what is being said.

2.3. Words of a local or parochial nature

Occasionally whilst translating, a word might spring to mind that would be perfect to express a certain meaning in a sentence. But upon stopping to consider, it might be totally unfamiliar to someone from another part of Wales. Words such as 'bradu' (to waste) or 'andwyo' (to spoil) may not mean anything to people outside a specific area. Therefore, unless the document has been written locally for a group of local people, it would be better to avoid using words that are more parochial.

2.4. Borrowed words

As far as possible use Welsh words. Occasionally Welsh words that are generally familiar enough to Welsh speakers, for example, 'atal' (to prevent) or 'cludo' (to transport), are less familiar to people with a learning disability.

In such instances, borrowed words such as 'stopio' and 'cario' may be easier to understand. However, if the borrowed word needs to be mutated, try to avoid using it if the mutated form looks unfamiliar, e.g. tiwb > diwb, dipio > ddipio.

It might be possible, however, to use another more common Welsh word, such as 'rhwystro' instead of 'atal' or 'mynd â' instead of 'cludo'.

2.5. Words that are difficult to understand

Throughout the translation process try to consider whether the words you are using are familiar. Sometimes words that are easy in English are difficult when translated into Welsh. If a word that's difficult in Welsh arises, try to find an easier word that has the same meaning. A thesaurus is available on-line to help you on the [Gweiadur](#).

If you must use a word that's difficult in Welsh for a word that's easy in English, you can add an extra explanation box which isn't present in the English text, to explain the meaning of the Welsh word for example:

Rydyn ni am wneud yn siŵr bod **cydraddoldeb** yn rhan o'n gwaith.

> **We want to make sure that equality is part of our work.**

Mae **cydraddoldeb** yn meddwl bod pawb yn cael ei drin yn deg ac yn gyfartal.

> **Equality means that everyone is treated fairly and equally.**

2.6. Consistency of terms

The terms you find in easy read documents deal specifically with information that's important for people with a learning disability to know. It's therefore necessary that you are consistent in your use of specific terms throughout the document.

It is also essential that the words you use are consistent with the terms of other people who are preparing easy read text in Welsh for people with a learning disability. Communicating with your co-translators, or authors of articles dealing with learning disability matters, is key to ensuring you are using the same terms.

There are often parts within the text of easy read documents where the same wording arises time after time. Prescriptive text can be agreed upon with regards to these, for example:

- The text at the bottom of the front page which specifies who the authors are and the name of the source document.
- The text that explains how to use the document, but remember to check the English version in case adaptations have been made to the standard text to meet the needs of the customer.
- Explanations of the hard words that arise time after time.

2.7. Official words and sources

When an official English word arises in the source language, search for an equivalent Welsh word. This will ensure consistency throughout, and in time the Welsh term will be just as familiar as the English. Use these standard sources as a starting point:

- [Byd Term Cymru](#)
- [Porth Termau Cenedlaethol Cymru](#)
- [Y Termiadur Addysg](#)

If you cannot find the answers there, you should discuss with the organisation that has produced the English document to see if they can offer any guidance.

With regards to everyday vocabulary and general linguistic matters, these on-line resources will be useful:

- [Geiriadur yr Academi](#)
- [Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru](#)
- [Y Gweiadur](#)

2.8. Words/phrases to avoid

Avoid the formal 'a' and 'ei'

Some little words used in the formal language can perhaps create confusion, and they can be left out if the meaning is still clear without them.

For example, the 'a' can be left out:

- at the beginning of a question

☐ **A oes ganddyn nhw ddigon?**

☒ **Oes ganddyn nhw ddigon?**

> (Do they have enough?)

- if it's a relative pronoun

☐ **Mair oedd y ferch a gafodd lyfr**

☒ **Mair oedd y ferch gafodd lyfr.**

> (Mair was the girl who had a book.)

It's also possible to leave out the 'ei' when it's a supplementary object, which is the 'ei' that is used instead of the object in a sentence that puts emphasis on the object, for example:

☒ **Beth rydych chi'n ei wneud?**

☒ **Beth rydych chi'n wneud?**

> (What are you doing?)

☒ **Moron ydych chi'n ei fwyta?**

☒ **Moron ydych chi'n fwyta?**

> (Are you eating carrots?)

It is necessary to keep the mutation that is triggered by the 'ei' for accuracy and consistency.

Feminine forms of adjectives

Unless they are in common use it is better to avoid feminine forms of adjectives, such as *crwn* > *cron* (round), *syth* > *seth* (straight). These will probably appear strange. However, the forms that are often heard in the spoken language can be used, for example:

gwyn > gwen e.g. het wen (a white hat)

cryf > cref e.g. merch gref (a strong girl)

tlws > tlos e.g. menyw dlos (a pretty woman)

trwm > trom e.g. ochenaid drom (a heavy sigh)

Plural forms of adjectives

The same consideration should be given to plural forms of adjectives, for example:

caled > caledion

gwyrdd > gwyrddion

Here again plural forms that are often heard in the spoken language can be used, for example:

gwyllt > gwylltion e.g. adar gwylltion

du > duon, e.g. mwyr duon

Some plural forms of nouns

Sometimes the plural forms of some nouns look complicated, for example, words where the plural has been formed by changing elements within the word. Sometimes it's possible to make things easier by changing the pattern of the sentence so that the word is used in its singular form, for example:

☐ **Mae'r gweithfeydd glo i gyd wedi cau.**

☒ **Mae pob gwaith glo wedi cau.**

> All the coal mines have closed.

> Every coal mine has closed.

Words that have prefixes or suffixes

Sometimes words that have prefixes can look a little strange. Seeing the original word within a prefixed word can confuse some people.

One example is the word 'gweithio' (to work); this can be easy enough on its own, but adding the letters 'rhyng' at the beginning of the word creates the long word 'rhyngweithio'.

This is more difficult to read and understand, especially with the mutation in the middle of the word.

Consider the context and whether the word with the prefix is likely to be familiar in that context. Otherwise, it might be better to paraphrase, for example:

☐ **Echdoe**

☒ **Y diwrnod cyn ddoe**

> The day before yesterday

☐ **Rhyngweithio**

☒ **Sgwrsio a rhannu syniadau er mwyn gwneud pethau'n well**

> Chatting and sharing ideas to make a better job

Or, you can note the meaning of the word in an explanation box underneath the main text (see page 11).

This is also true with the suffixes which are added in order to change the part of speech. Changing a noun or a verb noun into an adjective can create a word that looks strange to people with a learning disability. Adding ‘-edig’ to the infinitive ‘ysgrifennu’ to create the adjective ‘ysgrifenedig’ brings about a word that is likely to be difficult to read. This can stop the flow of the reading process, and cause them to forget what they have already understood. It might be better, therefore, to avoid these complicated forms and use a long form instead:

- ☐ **Ysgrifenedig**
- ☒ **Wedi ei ysgrifennu**
- ☐ **Blodeuog**
- ☒ **Yn llawn blodau**

Nevertheless, we shouldn’t avoid using suffixes altogether. Words like ‘heulog’ and ‘gwyntog’, for example, are in common colloquial use.

Welsh idioms

The use of some Welsh idioms should be avoided. Since many people with a learning disability take language literally, reading certain Welsh idioms within a sentence can cause confusion. For example:

✗ **Roedd y plant yn dechrau mynd dros ben llestri.**

> **The children were beginning to go over the dishes (to run riot).**

✗ **Mae'r dyn drws nesa wedi gorfod talu trwy ei drwyn am deledu newydd.**

> **The man next door had to pay through his nose (an exorbitant price) for a new television.**

Figurative concepts

A figurative concept is a manner of speaking or a metaphoric expression. When translating such concepts, try not to translate them literally or word for word. Consider the meaning and paraphrase them in a simple way, for example, 'keep track of' could be translated to something like 'cadw golwg ar' (rather than 'cadw at y trywydd') and 'lay hands on' to something like 'dod o hyd i' (rather than 'rhoi eich llaw ar').

Abbreviations

It's best to avoid abbreviations unless they are in common use in Welsh. Put the name or the whole term throughout the document unless there is a common Welsh abbreviation available.

2.9. Adjectives

See under 'Words/phrases to avoid' on page 14.

2.10. Prepositions

Where necessary, make sure you follow a verb with the correct preposition. You can check which preposition is needed to convey the right meaning on the [Gweiadur](#) or [Geiriadur yr Academi](#).

2.11. Prepositions that can be conjugated

As there are so many variations of colloquial conjugated forms, it would be better to follow the pattern of the literary forms, but using the spoken informal verb endings when the prepositions have the same stem throughout the conjugation. For example:

amdana i

amdanon ni

amdanat ti

amdanoch chi

amdano e

amdanyyn nhw

amadani hi

And with regards to the prepositions where there is a third person stem in the conjugation, use the preposition itself as a stem, but changing in the third person according to the formal pattern:

droso i

droson ni

droso t ti

drosoch chi

drosto e

drostyn nhw

drosti hi

2.12. Verbs in their long (periphrastic) form

Long verbal forms are usually easier to understand, so when appropriate, use long verbal forms which include the more spoken conjugation of the verb 'bod' + the infinitive, for example, 'Rydw i'n gweithio' rather than 'Gweithiaf' and 'Roedden nhw'n cerdded' rather than 'cerddasant'.

2.13. Short forms of the verb in the Past Tense

Even though the long forms of the verb are usually easier to understand, it is possible to use some short forms, which are usually in the Past Tense. These are heard in the spoken language and are likely to be familiar to the users, for example, ‘digwyddodd’, ‘cafodd’.

Here are some examples of informal short forms of verbs:

- ✓ **cofion ni, cofion nhw**
rather than
- ✗ **cofiasom ni, cofiasant hwy**
- ✓ **ces i, cawson ni, cawson nhw**
rather than
- ✗ **cefaïs i, cawsom ni, cawsant hwy**

With regards to the forms of the verb ‘bod’, the Pluperfect Tense is also heard in the spoken language. Examples are:

baswn i, basai e, basen ni, etc.

Examples of informal short forms can be seen in the ‘[Berfiadaur](#)’ in the Gweiadur or under ‘Y Tabl Berfau’ in [Geiriadur Cymraeg Gomer, D. Geraint Lewis](#).

Occasionally, using the verbal word ‘fe’ in front of the short forms makes the text flow better. If you want to use a verbal word in easy read text, choose ‘fe’ rather than ‘mi’ for consistency, for example:

Fe ges i lawer o hwyl yn y ganolfan.

2.14. English phrasal verbs

Phrasal verbs are verbs which have prepositions or adverbs added to them, which give them an added meaning. There are many of these in English and we very often translate these slavishly when speaking. Don't be tempted to do that, but try instead to find a Welsh way of expressing them, for example, translate 'run out of paper' with something like 'does dim papur ar ôl (not 'rhedeg allan o bapur').

2.15. Negative forms of verbs

The sentence pattern 'Dydy ddim ' is usually better for easy read text, for example:

Dydy'r ysbyty ddim yn bell.

However, occasionally, 'nad' flows better and is likely to be easy enough for the users, for example:

Roedden ni'n synnu nad oedd digon o le i bawb.

2.16. Greeting the reader directly with the second person plural of verbs

Greeting the reader by using the second person plural or the pronoun ‘chi’ gives a clear indication that the information is relevant to the reader. The more formal second person plural rather than the singular, or the pronoun ‘ti’ is usually more appropriate since it conveys a sense of respect towards the reader, for example:

- ✓ **Dywedwch pa mor bwysig yw’r pethau hyn i chi.**
- > **Tell us how important these things are to you.**

However, if the document has obviously been written for children, the singular ‘ti’ might be more suitable.

2.17. Nouns

See ‘Some plural forms of nouns’ on page 17.

2.18. Punctuation

Basically, punctuation is an integral part of syntax as it helps to avoid ambiguity and makes the expression clear. However, in order to avoid unnecessary distractions, it’s better to use as few punctuation marks as possible. By keeping the sentences short and the expression simple, the need to punctuate doesn’t arise so often. Nevertheless, it’s important to use them to keep the meaning clear.

You will need:

- a full stop
- a question mark
- the occasional comma to keep the meaning clear
- the use of bullet points for listing examples.

You should avoid:

- **the use of brackets:** write full sentences instead, for example:

- ☒ Mae yna gynllun o'r enw Smart Export Guarantee (SEG).
- > **There's a plan called Smart Export Guarantee (SEG).**
- ☒ Mae yna gynllun sy'n cael ei alw'n 'Smart Export Guarantee'. Rydyn ni'n galw hyn yn SEG.
- > **There's a plan called Smart Export Guarantee. We call this the SEG for short.**

- **the use of hyphens**, apart from the ones in the Welsh orthography, of course. Use words instead of hyphens if possible, for example:

- ☒ 2022-2024
- ☒ o 2022 i 2024.

2.19. Numbers

Since feminine forms are used in spoken Welsh for 2, 3, and 4, for example, 'dwy gath' (two cats), 'tair merch' (three girls), etc., use words for these numbers, i.e. dau/dwy, tri/tair, pedwar/pedair.

Also some numbers trigger a mutation, which is also used in spoken Welsh, for example, 'pum mlwydd oed' (five years of age), 'deng mlynedd' (ten years). It would therefore be fitting to use these familiar forms in Easy Read by using words for the numbers 0-10.

When counting numbers over ten, use numerals to represent numbers, since using feminine forms and mutating is not as familiar in the spoken language from eleven onwards.

However, it is necessary to use the vigesimal system when telling the time. If it is necessary to convey the time in words, use 'ugain munud wedi ...' (twenty past) or 'pum munud ar hugain wedi' (twenty-five past) as people normally do in spoken Welsh. Usually there will be a picture of a clock showing the corresponding time to confirm what is being read.

2.20. Ordinals

Use words here instead of numbers, i.e. cyntaf, ail and trydydd rather than 1af, 2ail and 3ydd, mutating as we do naturally when speaking, for example:



Y ferch gyntaf, yr ail dro.

Designing Easy Read

Design is equally as important as text in Easy Read documents. Easy Read uses supporting images to the left of each paragraph to help with understanding and meaning.

You should choose supporting images that best explain your paragraph of text. Sometimes, text is used within supporting images to make their meaning clearer. Supporting images that use text must be translated into Welsh in Welsh Easy Read documents.



Other important considerations:

- Use between 4 and 5 supporting images per A4 page, depending on the length and density of your text.
- Leave plenty of white space between paragraphs, supporting images and margins.
- Align supporting images horizontally with the paragraph they relate to.
- Make supporting images are as big and clear as possible.

For more Easy Read design guidance, see our free resources:

- Clear and Easy: easyread.wales/resource/clear-and-easy-handbook
- Easy Read training videos: easyread.wales/resources
- Easy Read training: ldw.org.uk/training-events/all-events

Thank you

We hope you have found this guide helpful. It takes time and practice to get used to writing and translating Easy Read.

We are very happy to give guidance and support to help you create your own Easy Read, and to provide quotes for carrying out the work on your behalf. You can contact us at:

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