



The Complete Plain Words

By Sir Ernest Gowers

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For those who must write to get their work done businessmen and women, students, teachers and librarians; civil servants who have to compose regulations, letters on government business, even signs for public buildings, airports and highways; anyone, in fact, who must be able to put sentences together to make clear a set of facts, requirements or proposals to these busy people, *The Complete Plain Words* is a necessary companion. It is a proven, trustworthy guide to achieving an accessible style, to say what needs to be said clearly, succinctly, and correctly in whatever they must write day in and day out. When such guides work well, and Gowers is one that works (and reads) very well, they acquire a force and authority that keep the language clear, flexible and responsive to the constant pressure of the workaday world. The core of the book-nine chapters that cover the issues in the choice and handling of words will energize anyone with a writing job to do. The celebrated eighty page alphabetical glossary A checklist: words and phrases to be used with care will save many a writer from committing embarrassing blunders by writing something unintended, misleading or downright foolish.

In 1948 Gowers, a senior British civil servant, was asked by the Treasury to write a book that would improve the written work of government workers in every department. The idea was to combat officialese, that bloated argot of officials that buries meaning more that uncovers it. By 1951 Gowers had two short books, here combined in one, and revised in 1986 by Sidney Greenbaum, Director of the Survey of English Usage and Quain Professor of English at University College, London, and Janet Whitcut, former Senior Research Editor of the Longman Dictionary and Reference Book Unit. The introduction is by Joseph Epstein, Editor of *The American Scholar*.

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The Complete Plain Words By Sir Ernest Gowers Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1092276 in Books
- Published on: 2002-11-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: .90" h x 5.50" w x 8.20" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 320 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

The writer who wants to present his ideas clearly and with force by eschewing jargon and sticking to plain words should first read Gowers... --Jacques Barzun and Henry F. Graff, *The Modern Researcher*

About the Author

Sir Ernest Gowers was born in 1880 and served in a number of illustrious occupations. He advised numerous commissions and committees on a wide variety of subjects from work conditions to the preservation of historic houses. Sidney Greenbaum was a Director of the Survey of English Usage and was the author of many books on grammar and linguistics. Janet Whitcut has worked on a number of prestigious dictionaries and is now a freelance writer with a special interest in language.

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