



TARGET CRIME WITH LITERACY

CHAPTER 4 - FACT SHEET 2

Conduct Your Own Literacy Audit

An *audit* is a study or survey that helps you describe the way things are being done now.

A *literacy audit* is a tool that you can use to find out if you (or your section, or your department)

- are aware of the issues and difficulties that people with low literacy skills face
- know how to make sure that people with low literacy skills understand the verbal and written information you give them
- treat witnesses and suspects who have low literacy skills with fairness and respect

By answering the questions in this literacy audit, you will learn how you are doing with the processes and documents you use now. It will also point out where you need to do more to make sure that everyone can understand your section's (or your department's) written and verbal communications.

Here are three possible ways to do the literacy audit:

- Do the audit by yourself. It will take less than 10 minutes.
- Meet with your colleagues and do the audit together (in about 30 minutes).
- Have a lunch meeting and spend an hour doing the audit and creating a plan of action.

Section 1: Processes and Steps

Read the question and assess your current situation		Circle your assessment here		
1.	We use drawings, charts, and other graphics in letters, notices, and forms.	Never	Sometimes	Usually
2.	We offer non-print help (such as audio and video tapes).	Never	Sometimes	Usually
3.	We use visual elements like drawings, charts and other graphics in printed material.	Never	Sometimes	Usually
4.	The graphics we use are clear and simple.	Never	Sometimes	Usually
5.	We ask every person if they need help to complete forms or other paperwork.	Never	Sometimes	Usually

Section 2: Written Material

1.	Our written forms and materials are easy to read and easy to use.	Never	Sometimes	Usually
2.	We follow plain language and clarity when we produce written materials.	Never	Sometimes	Usually
3.	We write witness statements in everyday language.	Never	Sometimes	Usually
4.	We define technical and legal terms in any text.	Never	Sometimes	Usually
5.	We use words that are simple and common words, not police jargon or legalese.	Never	Sometimes	Usually
6.	We only ask people for information or to fill out forms when it is truly necessary.	Never	Sometimes	Usually
7.	We go over all written statements orally, using clear language, and checking to make sure the person understands.	Never	Sometimes	Usually

Section 3: Public Relations

1.	We ask people for feedback on how well our written materials meet their needs.	Never	Sometimes	Usually
2.	We avoid jargon and we define legalese when it must be used.	Never	Sometimes	Usually
3.	We explain things using the correct level of detail for each person. We check if they understand before we move on.	Never	Sometimes	Usually
4.	We offer all witnesses the same assistance, so we don't embarrass people who have low literacy skills.	Never	Sometimes	Usually
5.	We encourage people to ask questions.	Never	Sometimes	Usually
6.	We watch and listen for clues about a person's literacy level.	Never	Sometimes	Usually

Section 4: Our Role in Literacy

1.	We inform ourselves about literacy issues and our responsibility to treat people with low literacy fairly and with respect.	Never	Sometimes	Usually
2.	We support literacy groups in the community.	Never	Sometimes	Usually
3.	We train staff in how to respond to the needs of people with low literacy.	Never	Sometimes	Usually
4.	We train staff in clear writing.	Never	Sometimes	Usually
5.	We partner with literacy groups in our community to raise the profile of this "invisible" issue.	Never	Sometimes	Usually