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**Language resource management — Controlled human communication (CHC) — Part 4: Basic principles and methodology for stylistic guidelines (BSG)**

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ISO 24620-4

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## Contents

Foreword.....	iv
Introduction.....	v
1 Scope .....	1
2 Normative references .....	1
3 Terms and definitions.....	1
4 Principle.....	3
5 Methodology — How to apply the rules.....	3
6 Steps to create the stylistic guidelines (BSG) .....	3
7 Stylistic guidelines rules (BSG).....	5
7.1 Types of rules .....	5
7.2 Sentence length .....	5
7.3 Paragraph.....	7
7.4 Construction .....	11
7.5 Modification.....	14
7.6 Terminology .....	15
7.7 Others.....	19
7.7.1 General .....	19
7.7.2 Style .....	20
7.7.3 Tone.....	21
Annex A (informative) Difficulties and matters to be solved in communication .....	23
Bibliography .....	26

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## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see [www.iso.org/directives](http://www.iso.org/directives)).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see [www.iso.org/patents](http://www.iso.org/patents)).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), see [www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html](http://www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html).

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 37, *Language and terminology*, Subcommittee SC 4, *Language resource management*.

A list of all parts in the ISO 24620 series can be found on the ISO website.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at [www.iso.org/members.html](http://www.iso.org/members.html).

## Introduction

It can be generally understood that English has evolved into the representative international common language, i.e. lingua franca. When browsing the internet, people can find many English sites. According to an estimation made by W3Techs ~~(2018)~~<sup>[3]</sup> ~~in 2022~~<sup>[5]</sup>, English ~~sites enjoy a considerable share (52 is used by 60,4 %) on % of all the internet websites whose content language is known.~~ ASD-STE100<sup>[4]</sup><sup>[2]</sup>, one of the representative controlled English rule sets, has been downloaded by 71 % non-English-native-speaking countries compared with 29 % English-speaking countries ~~– [ASD-STE100, 2022]~~<sup>[3]</sup>. This is natural considering communication methods with other countries. Currently, people generally communicate with other people in non-English speaking countries by using English via the internet, email and social media. Therefore, it is necessary to make the communication tool (i.e. English) more understandable and translatable. ~~It would be nice if there were~~ This document provides guidelines for non-native English speakers to write English in an easy-to-understand manner, not just native English speakers.

At the same time, almost half of internet sites (47,6 %) are written in languages other than English according to the W3Techs report<sup>[5]</sup>. People should use plain, concise, and understandable language because so many of their counterparts are not good at English and stick to their own language. By making the language as plain as possible, ~~your~~ these counterparts will be able to understand it, and they will be able to apply it to machine translation. As a result, people can find that they need two languages: English and their own language. In order to facilitate communication worldwide, it is necessary for people to make English and their own language plain, comprehensible, and easily translatable, i.e. to make languages bi-directionally accessible.

~~While at the same time~~ In addition, in some countries, there is an active movement to improve the language itself so that it can be communicated in an easy-to-understand and non-misunderstood manner in order to promote communication. Typical examples are Plainplain languages<sup>[2]</sup><sup>[4]</sup> and ASD-STE100<sup>[2]</sup>. Both have a long history, especially ASD-STE100<sup>[2]</sup>, which ~~has a history of more than 50 years. was first released in 1983.~~ In addition, Plainplain languages have evolved into the languages of various countries, not just English. ~~It would~~ In the future, it could be nice if there were helpful to have writing rules that ~~could cover Plainboth plain~~ languages and ASD-STE100<sup>[2]</sup> across the board.

It is possible that the writing rules of this document overlap with the rules of plain languages and controlled languages (such as ASD-STE100<sup>[2]</sup>), but it also includes other detailed rules. This is to be able to address various languages in detail. The writing rules are not based solely on one language, as is the traditional practice, but instead by comparing English with a linguistically different language such as Japanese.

Writing using this document can facilitate communication around the world by writing original text that is easy for the readers to understand and by improving the quality of machine-translated output text.



# Language resource management — Controlled human communication (CHC) — Part 4: Basic principles and methodology for stylistic guidelines (BSG)

## 1 Scope

This document establishes a set of basic writing rules, called “~~Basic~~**basic** principles and methodology for stylistic guidelines (BSG)”, in English that can be applied to other languages, facilitating communication in each language and a language to other languages. It includes conceptual writing rules as well as specific grammar ones.

This ~~standard document~~ is designed to facilitate written communication in English for native and non-native English speakers. It allows English native and non-English native speakers to smoothly communicate through social media or email using English, or to translate into their local language. Furthermore, this ~~standard will be valid for~~**document is applicable to** the languages of each community. In other words, it aims to promote bi-directional communication between two particular languages.

~~The writing rules of this standard may overlap with the ones of Plain languages and controlled languages (such as ASD-STE100), but there are many other detailed rules as well. This is to be able to handle various languages in detail. The writing rules are not based solely on European languages, as is the traditional practice, but rather by comparing English, which is one of the European languages, with a language that is linguistically far from European languages. This is an unprecedented new attempt.~~

~~Writing using this standard can facilitate communication around the world by writing original text that is easy for the readers to understand and by improving the quality of machine-translated output text.~~

## 4.2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

## 5.3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminology databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <https://www.electropedia.org/>

### 3.1

#### **basic principles and methodology for stylistic guidelines**

#### **BSG**

guidelines specifying common writing rules applicable to many languages

### 3.2

#### **technical communication**

~~process of gathering information and developing and presenting technical content to a target audience in a usable form~~ process of defining, and creating ~~and delivering information for use to be delivered as~~ information products for the safe, effective, and efficient ~~and effective~~ use of ~~products~~ a supported product throughout its life cycle

[SOURCE: ISO 24183:—<sup>1</sup>, 3.1.1], modified — Notes 1 to 3 to entry deleted.

**3.3**  
**plain languages**  
~~a communication is~~ in ~~plain language if its~~which wording, structure, and design are so clear that the intended readers can easily

— find what they need,

— understand what they find, and

— use that information.

[SOURCE: International Plain Language Federation—<sup>2</sup>], [41]

**3.4**  
**controlled languages**  
language restricting the grammar and vocabulary used, to reduce ambiguity and complexity and to help people to understand the content

**3.5**  
**keyword**  
word or phrase used to describe the main content (nouns and verbs) of a document in a consistent manner

**3.6**  
**part of speech**  
category to which a word is classified according to each syntactic function

EXAMPLE    Noun, verb, adjective.

**3.7**  
**internationalization** ~~(L18n)~~  
process of generalizing a product so that it can handle multiple languages and cultural conventions without the need for re-design. ~~Internationalization takes place at the level of programme design and document development.~~ (LISA)<sup>[5]</sup>

Note 1 to entry: Internationalization takes place at the level of programme design and document development.

[SOURCE: Localization Industry Standards Association (LISA)]<sup>[6]</sup>

**3.8**  
**localization** ~~(L10n)~~

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<sup>1</sup> Under preparation.



process of taking a product and making it linguistically and culturally appropriate to the target locale (country/region and language) where it will be used and sold.

**Note 1 to entry:** The term derives from “locale”: a place where something particular happens or is done. Translation (T9n) is one of the activities in Localization.” (LISA<sup>[5]</sup>) localization.

[SOURCE: Localization Industry Standards Association (LISA)<sup>[6]</sup>

## 64 Principle

Since there are many common factors and rules among languages, it is possible to create a set of writing rules that is applicable to many different languages.

## 75 Methodology — How to apply the rules

The task of simplifying language can be divided into two groups: sentences and words. Sentences are involved in syntactic and grammatical issues, which can be applicable to all languages. On the other hand, since words (or vocabulary) heavily depend on the language of each country, it is difficult to find and apply common rules.

The BSG given in this document concentrate on simplifying language by sentences, including clauses and phrases. Any difficulties related to writing sentences can be solved by applying the 3C rules in technical writing and technical communication: clear, correct and concise:

- clearly showing the sentence structure and not making the structure complicated;
- writing in statements of fact, and distinguishing between facts and opinions;
- giving simple and concise expressions.

The 3C rules are applicable to any language, and are used in many writing guidelines for plain languages and controlled languages.

BSG in one language can be created immediately by applying this English version to that language. Some grammatical or syntactic ingenuity can be required.

## 86 Steps to create the stylistic guidelines (BSG)

There are two necessary phases to complete BSG: internationalization and localization. Figure 1 shows and explains the relation of the two concepts.

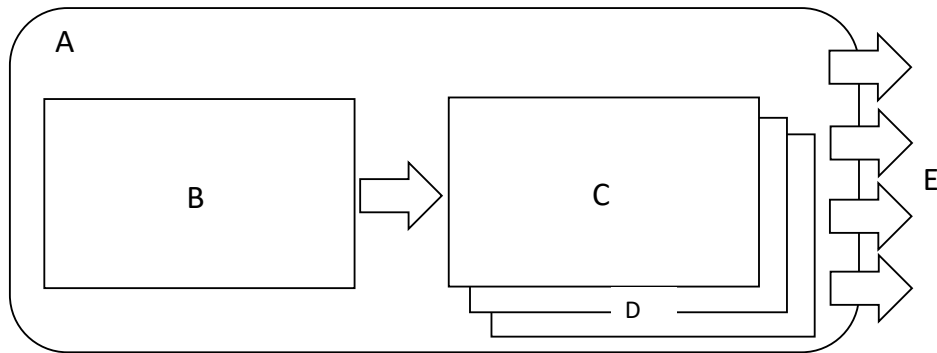
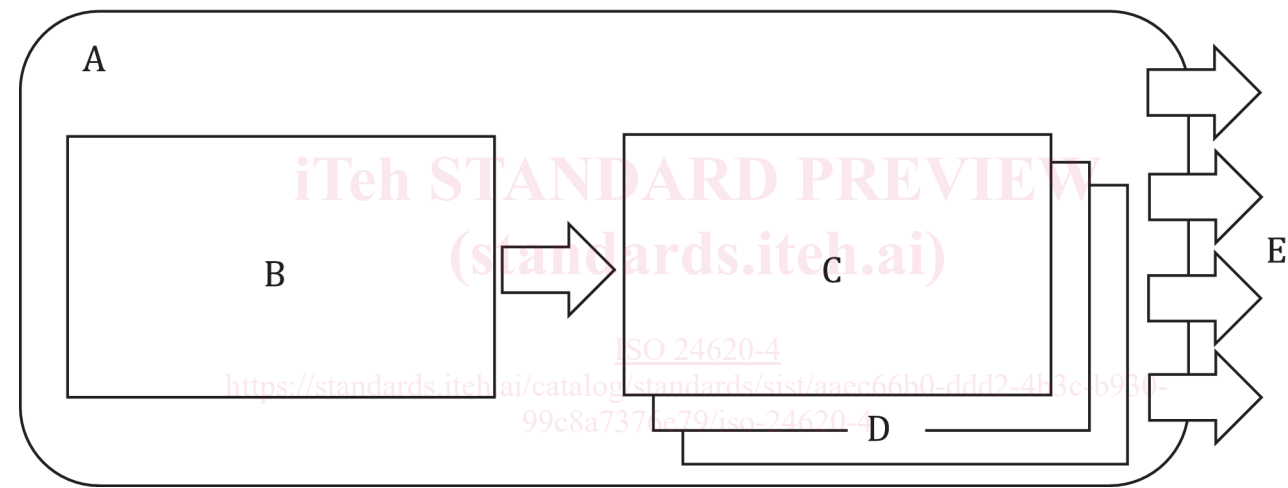


Fig 1: Terms used in Globalization

A: Globalization (G11n)  
B: Internationalization (I18n) or Generalization  
C: Localization (L10n)  
D: Translation (T9n)  
E: Simultaneous Shipment



- Key**
- A globalization (G11n)
  - B internationalization (I18n) or generalization
  - C localization (L10n)
  - D translation (T9n)
  - E simultaneous shipment

Figure 1 — Terms used in globalization

Based on the BSG rules (in English), create language rules corresponding to each of the English rules. To do this, an idea of internationalization is necessary to find similarities in languages to make them more generalized, rather than finding differences.

After internationalization, the production stage moves to the language-specific matters: localization. A dictionary specific to the language selected, including the approved words and deprecated words, can be necessary (“vocabulary control”). The dictionary should be created for each language to make effective use of this rule set. However, creating a dictionary is not mandatory. If it is too time-consuming to create a dictionary, starting with just the writing rules is possible.

## 9.7 Stylistic guidelines rules (BSG)

### 9.7.1 Types of rules

This clause provides the 55 BSG rules, which comprise 8 sentence-length rules (see 7.2), 8 paragraph rules (see 7.3), 14 construction rules (see 7.4), 6 modification rules (see 7.5), 12 terminology rules (see 7.6), and 7 other rules (see 7.7).

### 9.7.2 Sentence length

#### 7.2.1 BSG Rule 1.1: Write in short and concise sentences.

##### EXAMPLE

No: When the Control application of the inspection system is started up, the IS screen is displayed for checking and setting the data necessary for detailed inspection, such as program, default values, and functions. (33 words)

Yes: When you start the Control application of the inspection system, the IS screen is displayed. (15 words)  
You can use the IS screen to check and set the data necessary for detailed inspection, such as program, default values, and functions. (23 words)

NOTE See Rule 1.2 (7.2.2) for identifying essential information. See Rule 3.13 (7.4.3) for the order of sentences.

#### 7.2.2 BSG Rule 1.2: Divide essential information from ancillary information. Write the essential information first.

##### EXAMPLE

No: The research laboratory, located in the ancient capital city of Nara in Japan and famous for its unique management policy, has developed a device with a self-diagnosis function, usually seen in the neural medication field, which has gradually been increasing its presence. (42 words)

Yes: The research laboratory has developed a device with a self-diagnosis function. (11 words) The function is usually seen in the neural medication field, which has gradually been increasing its presence. (17 words) The laboratory is located in the ancient capital city of Nara in Japan and is famous for its unique management policy. (21 words)

The information enclosed by commas (underlined text) in the “No” sentence in the Example is ancillary, not-essential information. Place the ancillary information in separate sentences after the sentence with the essential information.

NOTE See Rule 3.13 (7.4.3) for the order of sentences.

#### 7.2.3 BSG Rule 1.3: Divide a compound sentence that does not share subjects and predicates.

##### EXAMPLE

No: Press the SHIFT button and then the device automatically detects the difference.

Yes: Press the SHIFT button. The device automatically detects the difference.

#### 7.2.4 BSG Rule 1.4: Divide a sentence with complicated nested constructions into simple sentences with a clear structure.

##### EXAMPLE

- No: When the linkage is complete, the inner domain is recorded if the operation is in the Lock mode.
- Yes: The operation is engaged in the Lock mode. When the linkage is complete, the inner domain is recorded.

**7.2.5 BSG Rule 1.5:** Separate overlong modification(s).

EXAMPLE

- No: ABC research laboratory has developed a device with a self-diagnosis function, usually seen in the neural medication field, which has gradually been increasing its presence. (25 words)
- Yes: ABC research laboratory has developed a device. The device has a self-diagnosis function, and it is usually seen in the neural medication field, which has gradually been increasing its presence.

**7.2.6 BSG Rule 1.6:** Separate a lengthy adnominal (attributive) clause from the subject.

EXAMPLE

- No: The intranet Q&A site that facilitates knowledge sharing and communication among employees has been established.
- Yes: The intranet Q&A site has been established. The site facilitates knowledge sharing and communication among employees.

We have established the intranet Q&A site.

**7.2.7 BSG Rule 1.7:** Use a complete sentence to introduce lists.

EXAMPLE

- No: In addition to invoking, managing and scrolling windows, the windowing environment can
- customize windows,
  - manage libraries and files, and
  - search text.
- Yes: In addition to invoking, managing and scrolling windows, the windowing environment can be used as follows:
- to customize windows;
  - to manage libraries and files;
  - to search text.