Formal and informal words 2

VOCABULARY PRACTICE

ADVANCED | C1

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

1 Match each advanced style concept with its meaning.

1 plain language	____	a direct neutral expression for a sensitive subject
2 bureaucratese	____	b language about the organisation of the text or argument
3 obfuscation	____	c unnecessarily complex institutional wording
4 hedging	____	d strong emphasis on certainty or importance
5 boosting	____	e deliberate or resulting concealment of meaning
6 metadiscourse	____	f clear wording designed for efficient understanding
7 dysphemism	____	g amount of meaning compressed into a stretch of language
8 orthophemism	____	h cautious limitation of commitment
9 accessibility	____	i harsh or deliberately offensive alternative expression
10 information density	____	j extent to which diverse readers can use and understand a text

2 Complete the critical-style collocations.

accessible | **bureaucratic** | **epistemic** | **information** | **plain** | **reader** | **rhetorical** | **strategic**

1 _____ language principles

2 _____ prose

3 _____ hedging

4 _____ boosting

5 _____ density

6 an _____ formulation

7 _____ expectations

8 _____ ambiguity

3 Choose the concept that best explains the effect.

1 Complex wording hides responsibility: *obfuscation / accessibility*.

2 A writer limits certainty with *might*: *hedging / boosting*.

3 A writer insists a result is clearly decisive: *boosting / orthophemism*.

4 The text says *the next section argues*: *metadiscourse / dysphemism*.

5 A harsh label devalues a group: *dysphemism / plain language*.

6 A direct neutral health term is used: *orthophemism / bureaucratese*.

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4 Complete the style audit with terms from the box.

accessibility | boosting | bureaucratese | dysphemism | hedging | information density | metadiscourse | obfuscation | orthophemism | plain language

The guidance claims to follow **1** _____, yet several clauses resemble **2** _____. High **3** _____ increases processing demands, while vague agents create **4** _____. Occasional **5** _____ appropriately limits uncertain claims, but emphatic **6** _____ overstates one conclusion. Helpful **7** _____ guides readers through the sections. A neutral **8** _____ is preferable to an insulting **9** _____. Overall **10** _____ would improve through shorter sentences and explicit agents.

5 Read the text and answer the questions concisely.

When formality excludes

Institutional language can protect precision and consistency, but it can also distribute power unevenly. Readers with less specialist knowledge bear a greater cost when instructions rely on dense syntax, unexplained terminology or hidden agency. Simplification is not merely shortening: responsible plain language preserves necessary distinctions while making actions, rights and consequences explicit. Style auditing should therefore test comprehension with intended users rather than assume that institutional convention guarantees clarity.

1 What two benefits can institutional language provide? ___

2 How can it distribute power? _____

3 Which readers bear greater processing costs? _____

4 Name three sources of difficulty. _____

5 What must responsible simplification preserve? _____

6 How should organisations test clarity? _____

6 Paraphrase using the expression in capitals.

1 The wording deliberately concealed responsibility. **OBFUSCATED** _

2 The writer strongly emphasised certainty. **BOOSTED** _

3 The sentence guided readers through the argument. **METADISCOURSE** _

4 The revision made the text easier to use. **ACCESSIBILITY** _

OVER TO YOU

Write a **160-190 word** critical style audit of an institutional message. Recommend revisions that improve clarity without losing necessary precision.

[ ] Use at least ten target terms or collocations. [ ] Identify effects on different readers. [ ] Justify each revision.

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ANSWER KEY

1 Advanced style concepts

1 **f** 2 **c** 3 **e** 4 **h** 5 **d** 6 **b** 7 **i** 8 **a** 9 **j** 10 **g**

2 Critical-style collocations

1 **plain** 2 **bureaucratic** 3 **epistemic** 4 **rhetorical** 5 **information** 6 **accessible** 7 **reader** 8 **strategic**

3 Conceptual distinctions

1 **obfuscation** 2 **hedging** 3 **boosting**
4 **metadiscourse** 5 **dysphemism** 6 **orthophemism**

4 Style audit

1 **plain language** 2 **bureaucratese** 3 **information density** 4 **obfuscation** 5 **hedging**
6 **boosting** 7 **metadiscourse** 8 **orthophemism** 9 **dysphemism** 10 **accessibility**

5 Reading - suggested answers

1 Precision and consistency. 2 By placing unequal burdens on readers. 3 Less specialist readers.
4 Dense syntax, unexplained terms and hidden agency. 5 Necessary distinctions. 6 With intended users.

6 Paraphrasing - possible answers

1 The wording **obfuscated** responsibility. 2 The writer **boosted** the claim. 3 This was **metadiscourse**. 4 The revision improved **accessibility**.

Over to you: Answers will vary. Check critical precision, reader impact and justified revisions.