



PPL CORPORATION

# UX Writing Guidelines

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## PURPOSE

This at-a-glance writing guide contains quick tips, common examples, and best practices to help you write accessible UX content for PPL customers.

## AUDIENCE

If you work with PPL digital content in any capacity, this guide is for you.

*For help writing long-form PPL brand copy (such as press releases, social media posts, or business communications) please view the [PPL Brand Standards & Guidelines](#).*

## UX WRITING CONTACTS

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# UX Writing FAQs

**Q How can I use this document?**

**A** Use this UX Writing Guidelines document as your go-to reference for creating user-centric content. Consult it often, and collaborate with your UX writers to ensure your digital content aligns with best practices.  
*This guide is not a replacement for collaborating with UX writers.*

**Q What is UX copy?**

**A** UX copy refers to the words or text used in a digital product. Effective UX copy should guide, inform, and engage users.

**Q How does UX writing differ from copywriting?**

**A** UX writing focuses on providing clear, concise, and action-oriented content so users can easily navigate and accomplish tasks within an interface. Copywriting often emphasizes marketing and persuasion, aiming to sell or convey a brand's message.

**Q Why is effective UX copy important?**

**A** Effective UX copy reduces confusion and enhances usability, leading to higher user engagement, retention, and conversion rates.

**Q Who writes UX copy?**

**A** UX writers specialize in UX writing, but any PPL employee may be asked to write copy for digital products.

**Q What else does a UX writer do?**

**A** UX writers are content strategists. They work alongside UX designers to create functional interfaces, enjoyable experiences, and intuitive products that meet customer needs and achieve business goals.

**Q When should I involve a UX writer in the design process?**

**A** Involve a UX writer at the beginning of a project to assist with content strategy and design direction.

# Voice

The PPL voice is **consistent** and **confident**. It's our personality, and it reflects the brand of PPL. Follow the PATH below to create copy that aligns with the PPL voice, which is:

## EXAMPLES

P

**Plainspoken** — Use plain language. Define all complex terms. Simplify topics to give customers clear guidance exactly when they need it.

- ✗ This unit vastly exceeds the PTC plus additional metrics.
- ✓ It exceeds the PTC (price to compare).

A

**Approachable** — Strike a balance between formal and informal to build trust with customers. Use contractions to sound more human.

- ✗ Please proceed to set up your account.
- ✓ Let's set up your account.

T

**Transparent** — Provide only the details customers need. Include clarifying details to add necessary context, or if omitting details could cause confusion or error.

- ✗ An adult must be present.
- ✓ An adult (18 years or older) must be present when the technician arrives to ensure we can access your meter.

H

**Helpful** — Guide customers with clear prompts. You may omit words altogether if the interface is straightforward (and if written instruction is unnecessary).

- ✗ See the blue link on the right.
- ✓ (No directional language required)

# Tone

Tone is **adaptable**. It changes based on context, which allows us to write appropriate content for a variety of users and scenarios.

The 3 forms of copy below are written for different contexts, so they'll adopt different tones. Alert copy, such as an error message, is direct to convey a potential risk or error. Success copy or informative copy, on the other hand, can be light and conversational.

Confirmation message

Informative body copy

Error message

## Conversational

Friendly and approachable. Offers guidance or clarifying information. Uses contractions.

## Direct

Straightforward and business-like. Offers warnings or corrections. Avoids contractions.

Lighthearted

Serious

Casual

Formal

Enthusiastic

Matter-of-fact

Simple

Complex

# Readability Tips

Writing readable and accessible copy helps users navigate effortlessly through digital experiences and services at PPL. Create strong copy by using:

## EXAMPLES

**Simple language** — Deliver information clearly and concisely. Don't use five words if you can use three. Use adverbs and adjectives sparingly.

- ✗ Don't compose unwieldy sentences utilizing long, lengthy, redundant verbiage and unnecessary punctuation, & jargon.
- ✓ Use simple words.

**Informative introductions** — Tell the reader early on what (and why) they are reading.

- ✗ Hello! We hope you'll read this very important message.
- ✓ This form includes important information about your claim.

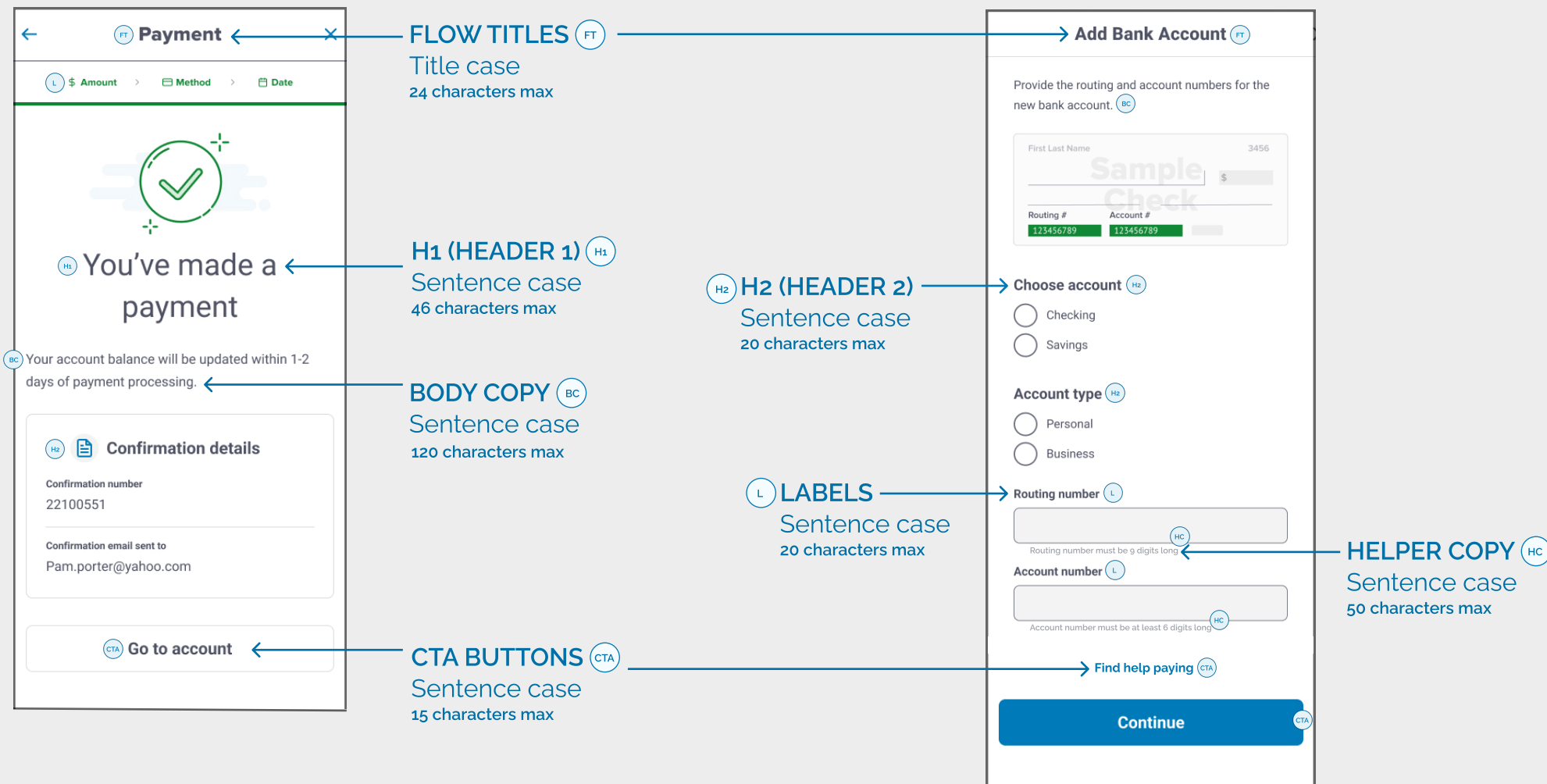
**Active voice** — As a general rule, use active voice. Strong verbs are assertive and have the greatest impact. Don't use passive voice unless the context calls for it.

- ✗ The sentence was written in passive voice by someone else.
- ✓ I changed the sentence to active voice.

**Passive voice** — We only use passive voice to avoid placing unfair blame or responsibility on PPL or the customer.

- ✗ We shut off your power because you failed to pay your bill.
- ✓ Your power was shut off due to a missed payment.

# Text Hierarchy



# Punctuation

Period ( . ) Use a period at the end of a complete sentence for body copy.  
↳ Helper copy does not require a period

Serial / Oxford comma ( , , ) Use the serial comma to separate three or more words in list form to avoid confusion, anxiety, and despair.

Hyphen (-) Use this top-notch mark to join words or parts of words.

En dash (–) Use the en dash to show a range for numbers, dates, or time. "Don't forget about the 2:30 – 3PM meeting."

Em dash (—) Use the em dash to mark a break in the sentence — and remember to leave a space on both sides of the dash.

Colon ( : ) Use a colon to draw attention to the following: list items, examples, or personal information in emails.

Semi-colon ( ; ) Avoid using the semi-colon as it can increase cognitive load. Use two sentences instead.

Exclamation point ( ! ) Avoid using the exclamation point as it doesn't align with PPL tone and voice.

Ampersand ( & ) Avoid using the ampersand in digital copy as this hinders web accessibility on screen readers.

# Numbers

## DATES

Use the month/day/year format for numerical dates:

- ✓ Your 11/11/2023 time card is due today.
- ✓ Your 2/7/2023 time card is due today.

Avoid using leading zeroes (due to developer constraints):

- ✗ 02/02/2023
- ✗ 11/02/2023

Write out the day of the week, month, and year:

- ✓ Orders made on November 11, 2023 are complete.

For mobile flows, or when space is limited, abbreviate months of the year:

- ✓ Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun,  
Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec

Avoid abbreviating days of the week:

- ✓ Today is Thursday, Nov 11, 2023
- ✗ Today is Thurs. Nov 11, 2023

## TIMES

Use the following appropriate formats for times:

- ✓ Nov 11, 2023, 4:42PM
- ✓ November 11, 2023, 4:42PM

Add the time zone (EST/CST/MT/PST) to clarify your time zone or to reference outside time zones:

- ✓ November 11, 2023, 4:42PM (EST)

## NUMERAL RULES

Use numerals for numbers 10 and above:

- ✓ There are 15 outages in your area.

Spell out numbers below 10 for contextual clarity:

- ✓ Tell us if there's more than one way to access your meter.

**RULE EXCEPTION:** For numbers below 10, consider the context and readability to select the appropriate option:

- ✓ There are two 12-month profiles on this account.
- ✓ Wait 1-2 business days.
- ✗ Wait one to two business days.

# Contact Us

Save these UX Writing Guidelines and feel free to share them with your colleagues. If you have any questions or recommendations for improving these guidelines, please contact the Digital Experience team.

*An expanded version of UX Writing Guidelines will be available in 2024.*

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