

Reflections

Using easy read formats in geography

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About this paper



This paper has been written for 'Fennia', an academic journal of Geography.



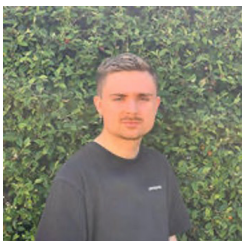
This paper is in **Easy Read**. Easy Read makes information accessible for people with Learning Disabilities. We do this by using **Plain English** and pictures.



This paper will encourage people to consider creating an easy-read format of their work as a first step. **The aim of creating an easy-read document is to make academic work more inclusive.**



Images for this document have been created through the use of PhotoSymbols, and through collecting institutional photographs of relevant employees.



Daniel P. Jones is the author of this easy-read document. If you have thoughts or would like to discuss this, you can **email him**. His email address is at daniel.jones2@sheffield.ac.uk

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Main content



Geography is an area of research that has done a lot of work about accessibility and inclusivity. There are many examples of this.



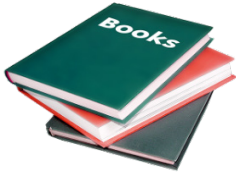
One good example was a book chapter written about how to make teaching in geography more accessible at university. This was written by Annie Hughes and Nona McDuff in 2019.



Most academic writing is in the format of **long-form text**. **This can be confusing for people**. Using complicated formats can make people feel excluded from research.



People prefer to publish their work as ‘**Open Access**’, which means that **anybody can see the work**. You do not need to buy the paper to read it. This is considered as a good way to improve the accessibility of academic work.



Some people have included ‘Plain Language Summaries’ of their work in the published paper, such as Marlene Stoll and her colleagues (2022). They write about the value of **plain language** summaries!



Some researchers have created Easy-Read versions of their work after publishing longer and more complicated versions. **Easy-Read** documents focus on making words large, easy-to-read, and with a relevant image next to them.



An example of this is **Antonios Ktenidis and others (2023) who wrote a guide on organising accessible events at university**. The team created an Easy-Read guide afterwards.



Until this article, there has been no published academic work that uses an Easy-Read format as a first step in sharing research. This paper shows an example of how to do this and why it is a good idea.



A field of study called ‘**Crip Studies**’ has asked the question “How can we crip academic work?”. Crip means to **make something more accessible**, and to challenge ableism.



One idea that crip studies has is to not take an individual approach to accessibility. This means that **the goal is to make things accessible for everybody instead of making changes for one person.**



If we care about inclusivity in academia, we need to ‘crip’ our work in different formats. One example might be creating **Easy-Read publications** before writing complicated papers.



Making **Easy-Read publications** can make us think about being inclusive from the start. Inclusion and access should not only be thought about afterwards. **We should centre disabled people in our disability work** (Jones & Gauthier-Mamaril 2024).



Using **Easy-Read** publications as a priority makes us think about who is welcome in academic spaces. We can ask questions like **‘Who do we think has important ideas?’** and **‘Who can do research?’**



As an example, movements like **‘Nothing About Us Without Us’** say **we should meaningfully include disabled people** in our research on disability (see Gonzalez 2018).



Geography as an area of study has been interested in **disability** for a long time. An example of this is the work of Edward Hall and Robert Wilton (2017) who write about doing disability research.



If we want to **include disabled people** in geography, this should also include the papers we write. How do we make research papers **more accessible?**



Creating easy-read guides like this might be one solution. Creating **easy-read guides** as a main part of writing about research might encourage us to **think more about accessibility**.



There are many ways to make easy-read documents, but it takes **practice**. This easy-read paper encourages everybody to **have a go** at making these documents, and ask ourselves '**who is welcome in geography**'?

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