

MISSISSIPPI
Access to Justice
COMMISSION

JUSTICE *for* ALL

PLAIN ENGLISH

FOR SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANTS

Language that is easy to understand, emphasizes clarity and brevity and avoids overly complex vocabulary. Plain English is free of technical jargon and appropriate to the audience's developmental or educational level and their familiarity with the topic.

HELP SELF- REPRESENTED LITIGANTS

Use the ATJ Tips when speaking with and writing Orders for self-represented litigants.

Follow the ATJ Tips on the reverse of this bench card to assist self-represented litigants in your courtroom.

Tips when speaking with SRL

1

resist the urge

Resist the urge to sound formal

2

use examples

Use examples as needed to help explain your meaning

3

avoid jargon

Avoid legal jargon when unnecessary

4

avoid Latin

Avoid Latin terms (arguendo, inter alia)

5

avoid negatives

Avoid multiple negatives (not uncommon, not insignificant)

6

avoid these

Avoid and/or, provided that, pursuant to, the instant case, shall (use must instead)

7

avoid these too

Avoid doublets and triplets (any and all; give, devise and bequeath)