



THE BUZZ ON LITERACY

Literacy Now, South Okanagan-Similkameen www.literacynowso-s.ca

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For more information on any of the items in this month's newsletter or any questions about literacy services please contact Naomi Ludington at literacynowsos@gmail.com or 250-462-0636.

Adults Buzzed at our First Annual Spelling Bee

Over 80 adult spelling bee participants and volunteers had nothing but praise for the inaugural event and are already talking about their involvement again next year. The event had 3 goals: to raise awareness of literacy issues in our community; to raise some funds for Literacy Now projects and programs; and to offer a fun, entertaining event that involves a good cross-section of the community. We met and exceeded all 3 goals!

We had teams from Interior Health, Ministry of Children and Family Development, Okanagan Boys and Girls Club, Okanagan College Tutoring Program, Ministry of Housing and Social Development and other individuals from the community. The teams stepped up to the challenge in a big way. They generously donated funds, came in costume and brought creative team names - 'Public Spelth', 'BEEautiful Babes', 'Bee Happy Honeys', The 'Spellwells', and more. But in the end, it was the Whizbangs (Ministry of Children and Family Development) who were named the 2010 Champions and received the coveted gold medals around their necks.

Thank you to the sponsors and businesses who supported the event: FortisBC, Penticton Golf and Country Club, Astral Media (SunFM and EZ Rock), the Penticton Western News, Whole Foods Market, Art Knapp's, Staples, Hooked on Books, and Seat of Serenity. Thank you to the many volunteers who came out first thing in the morning to make the event successful.

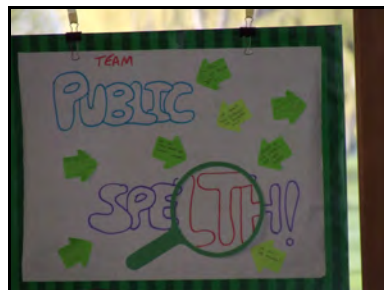
Start now to recruit your team and challenge others in the community. Imagine - an entire year to find the 'ringer' for your team and develop your skills!



The winning team, Whizbangs! (above)



B-U-T-F-L Spellers at the registration table (top); spellers hard at work (Public Spelth in the foreground) (below)



Bee Good Honey's (left)





What is Plain Language?

Plain language (also called Plain English or Clear Language) is communication your audience can understand the first time they read or hear it. Language that is plain to one set of readers may not be plain to others. Written material is in plain language if your audience can:

- Find what they need;
- Understand what they find; and
- Use what they find to meet their needs.

There are many writing techniques that can help you achieve this goal. Among the most common are:

- Logical organization with the reader in mind
- "You" and other pronouns
- Active voice
- Short sentences
- Common, everyday words
- Easy-to-read design features

No one technique defines plain language. Rather, plain language is defined by results—it is easy to read, understand, and use.

Good writing is effortless reading that makes you want to read more. It is clear and concise, uses short sentences and simple words. It keeps to the facts and is easy to read and to understand. It is so clear, the reader can take in the writer's exact message in one reading. For most of us, good writing doesn't come naturally, it's a skill we need to learn. However, you can learn to write well using plain language principles. (Nick Wright, plainlanguage.gov)



The language of truth is unadorned and always simple.
Marcellinus Ammianus

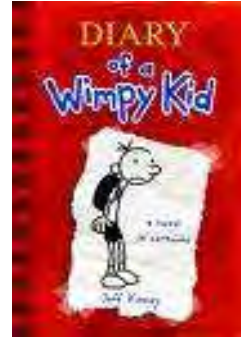
Plain Language Workshops

Literacy Now SO-S is planning to offer Plain Language workshops to community members in the near future. If attending a plain language workshop is something that interests you or would be valuable to your organization please contact us.

We are trialing our first workshop on May 26th from 1-4pm in Penticton for Literacy Now Task Group members. Each member is invited to bring a colleague or friend. The workshop is free of charge. We welcome new Task Group members!

Please call or email Naomi to sign up.

Diary of a Wimpy Kid



The first time I saw this book by Jeff Kinney, was when my grade 8 daughter, Julia, brought it home from her school library. She told me that the series of books is all the rage at middle school and that even kids who don't usually like to read are reading them! That caught my attention...Any book that may be the trigger to motivate a child to read is worth investigating.

Since then I have seen the Wimpy Kids books in the hands of many school children. There is definitely something special about these books that is catching on.

What makes these books stand out is the friendly cartoon-like format that is appealing and accessible to most young readers and they are funny!

The books are also great tools for introducing reluctant readers to the world of books, since the story is told both through words and short comics. It's a fairly easy read, with plenty of breaks for the weary mind. Here are some typical pages in a Wimpy Kid book.



Kinney states, that "he wanted to write books about the funny parts of growing up, and none of the serious parts". He wanted to write what it's really like to be a kid.

Kids are paying attention!