Where To Start With Plain Language

MATERIALS AS A .pdf | SCREENCAST (video) | WEBPAGE

Contents:

1. What is Plain Language?
2. Why use Plain Language?
3. A Plain Language activity

67%

of accessibility failures come down to design choices.

Reference

Plain language is:

“Clear, straightforward, and only uses words necessary to make sure all people can understand and participate.”

—AUCD.org

5 elements of plain language

1. Active voice
2. 6th grade reading level
3. Simple, familiar language
4. Fewer acronyms
5. Words of 3 syllables or less

References:
AUCD (.pdf)
SARTAC (.pdf)

Other ways to support plain language:

- Provide text & audio versions
- Provide a glossary -- in plain language
- Write the version you're comfortable with plus a plain language version
- Shorter paragraphs, more white space
- Include headings

CDCI's plain language starter kit

1. Active voice
2. Shorter sentences
3. 6th grade reading level

Active voice

Instead of:
“the cake was eaten”

We ate the cake.

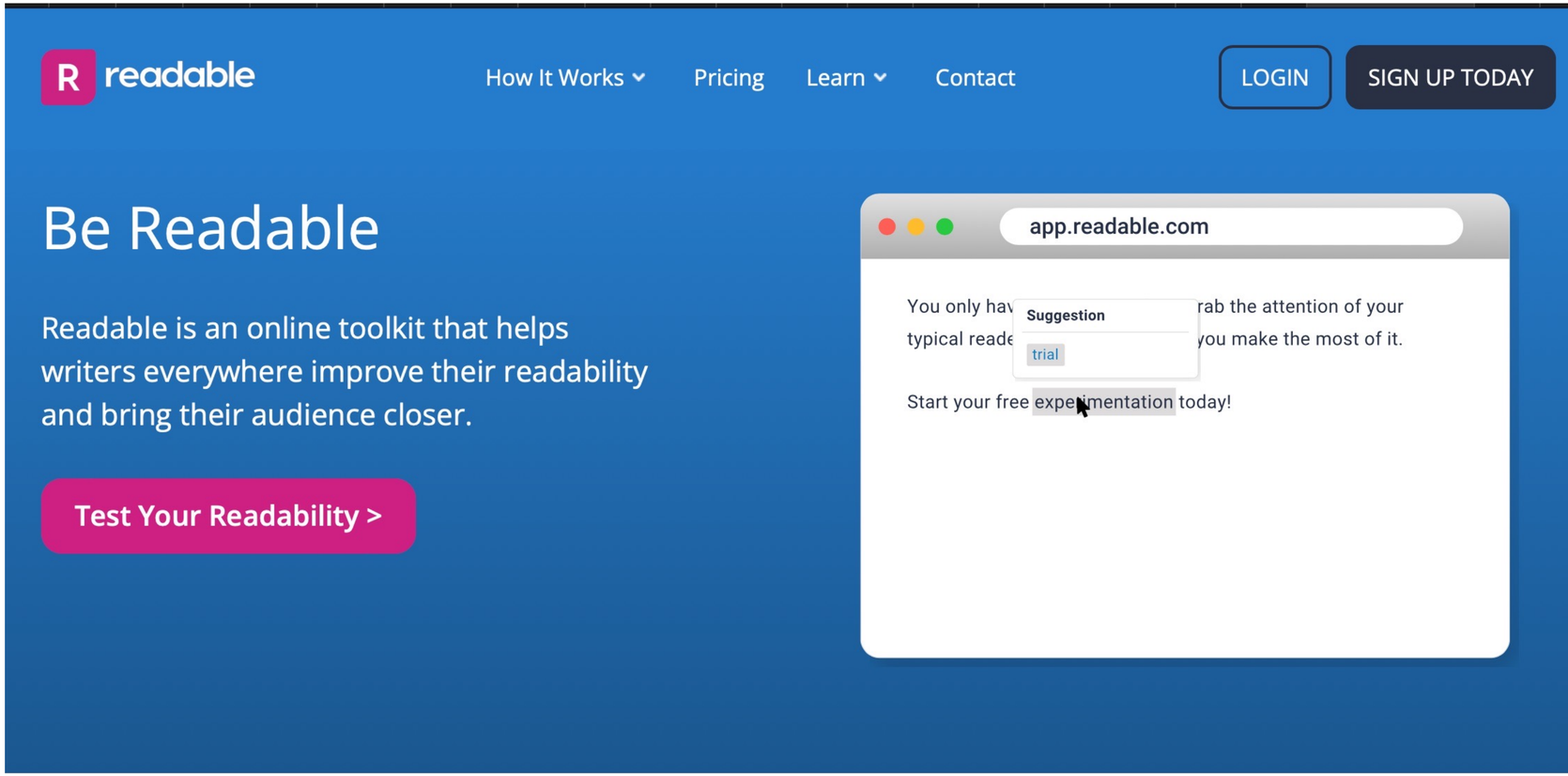
Shorter sentences

Instead of:

“It’s exciting to present these cakes to you as triumphs of the art of baking, the spirit of baking, and the joy of eating cakes of all shapes, flavors, and compositions!”

It’s exciting to present these cakes to you! They are triumphs of the art of baking. They are triumphs of the spirit of baking. And we hope everyone enjoys cakes of all kinds.

6th grade reading level



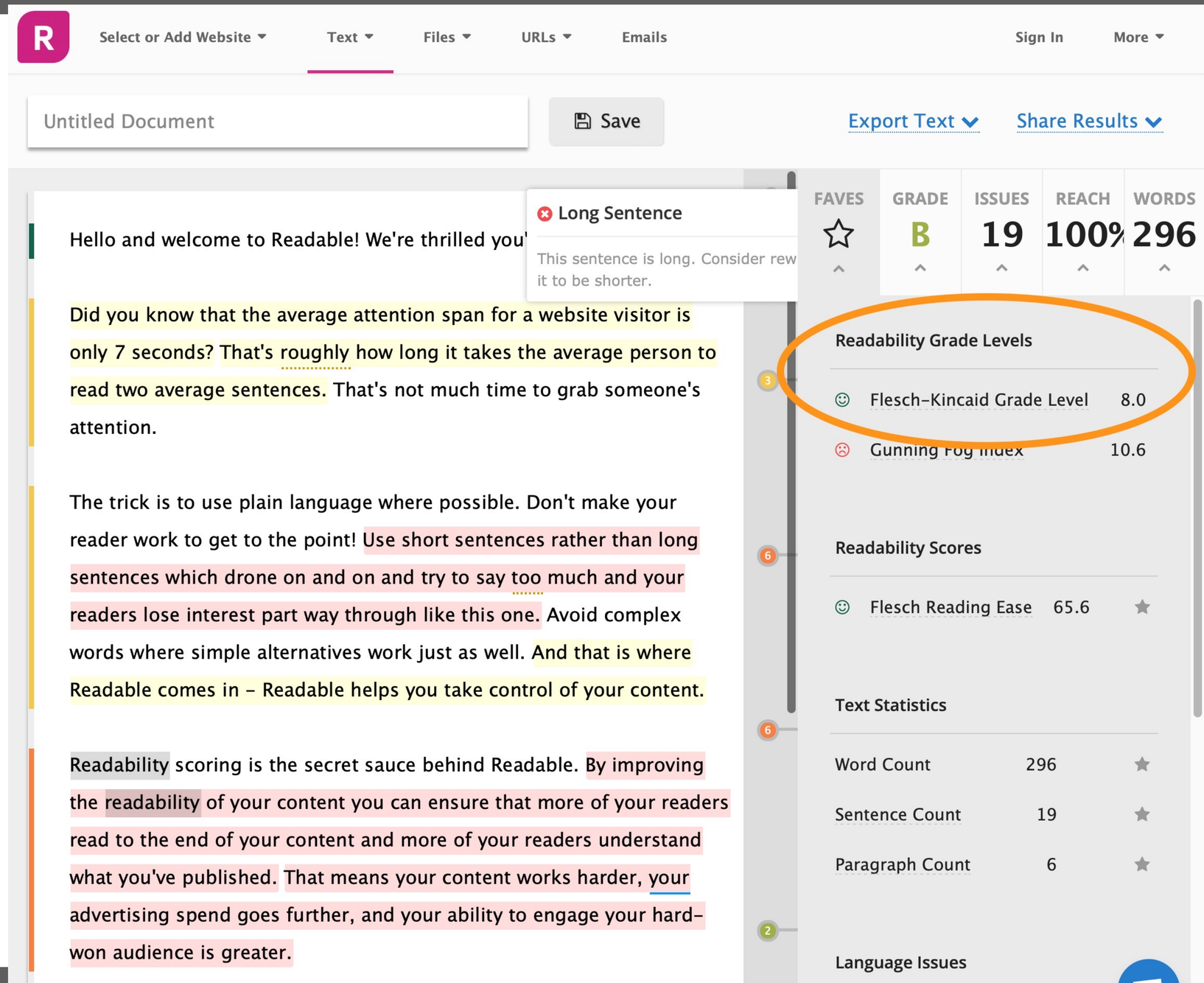
Your readability toolkit

Powerful, flexible readability tools that work where you work.

Meet Readable.com

WHAT IS PLAIN LANGUAGE?

Readable scores your text, and tells you how to fix it.



We’re writing for:

- people with permanent disabilities
- temporary disabilities, and
- situational disabilities

Plain language makes reading easier for:

- People with intellectual and developmental disabilities
- People who have difficulty reading

Plain language also makes reading easier for people:

- Who are learning English
- Who are translating your work
- Who are super, super busy

1. Break into groups.
2. Each group will get a sample paragraph taken directly from a published book, journal, or website.
3. Take 15 minutes to edit the passage and try to make it plain language.

TOOLS FOR THE EXERCISE, 1-3

1.

KOKH – Oklahoma City + Follow

Hefty fines for endangering roadside emergency workers set to take effect in November

Story by Grant Palmer • 11h

Hefty fines for endangering roadside emergency workers set to take effect in November
© Provided by KOKH – Oklahoma City

"This law is strictly designed to catch your attention," said State Representative Neil Hays.

If the law itself doesn't catch your attention, then maybe the fine that you have to pay if you're found guilty of failing to slow down or move over will. Starting November 1, if a person is found guilty of endangering an emergency worker on

2.

3.

People SUBSCRIBE

House of Kardashian: Find Out When the Docuseries Featuring Caitlyn Jenner Is Streaming in the U.S. (Exclusive)

The three-part series, previously available only in the U.K., chronicles the family's rise to household name status — now PEOPLE can share when and how American viewers can stream 'House of Kardashian'

By **Gillian Telling** | Published on October 23, 2023 11:00AM EDT

The latest docuseries about America's most famous family is coming to the U.S.

PEOPLE can exclusively reveal that *House of Kardashian* — the three-part series that's currently airing in the U.K. and includes never-before-seen archival footage and interviews with family insiders — will air exclusively on Peacock beginning Nov. 16.

TOOLS FOR THE EXERCISE 4-6

4.

IAAP EDUCATIONAL TRAINING DATABASE
SPEAKERS BUREAU

What are you looking for?

Select Advanced Search to search for specific criteria listed in Resources

Search | Advanced Search

Our Featured Resources will be updated monthly. IAAP Members and free resources will be featured. Resources will range from new, recently updated, or upcoming resources. If you have a time sensitive resource, please contact us at least a month before to be featured.

https://accessibilityswitchboard.org/ — View Details

The resources on the Accessibility Switchboard Portal are designed to include actionable intelligence that is based on proven success stories (case studies) provided by the community of practice members and related initiatives. The guides build on past work in the field of access to technology by including pointers to existing books, websites, webinars, online training courses, and other resources.

★★★★½ (4) Rate this resource

https://buyict4all.org/ — View Details

G3ict has developed their new information portal for the public procurement of accessible Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The new portal features curated resources, as well as news and blog articles on the topic of public procurement and digital inclusion.

★★★★½ (7) Rate this resource

https://businessdisabilityforum.org.uk/knowledge-hub/resources/ — View Details

Key to embedding accessibility within an organization, is the use of the Accessibility Maturity Model, developed by global businesses such as GSK, Barclays, Atos, Shell and KPMG working with the Business Disability Forum.

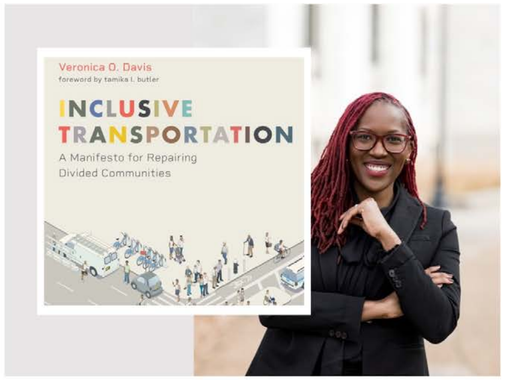
★★★½☆ (13) Rate this resource

5.

AUG 22

109. Inclusive Transportation with Veronica O. Davis

♡ 5

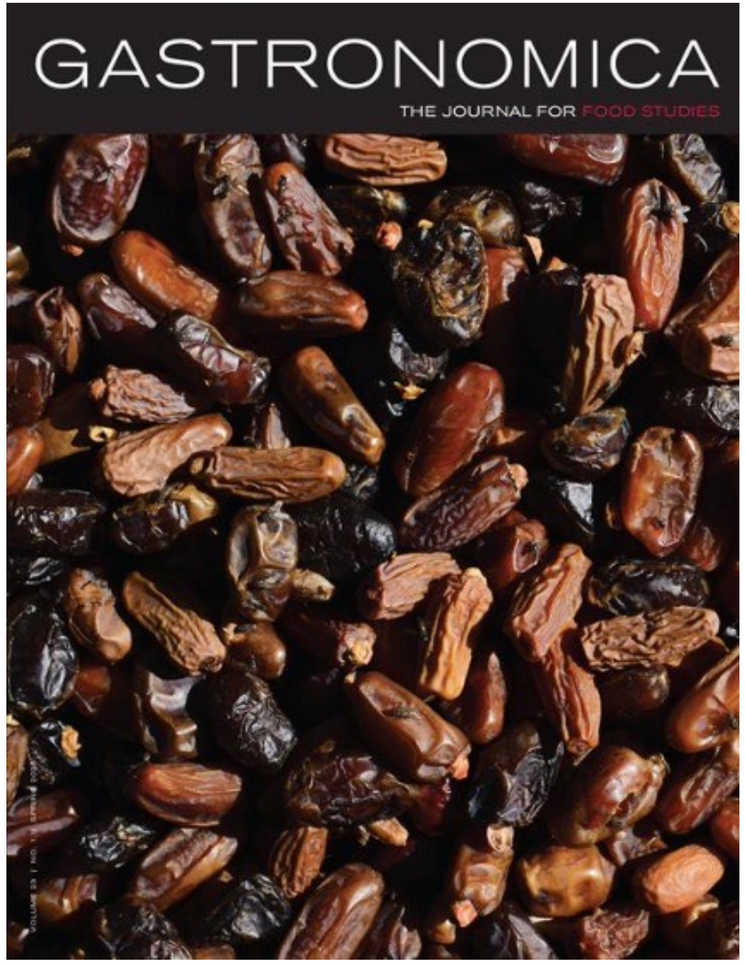


THE WAR ON CARS
The War on Cars FOLLOW SHARE
Inclusive Transportation with Vero
0:00 44:30 1x

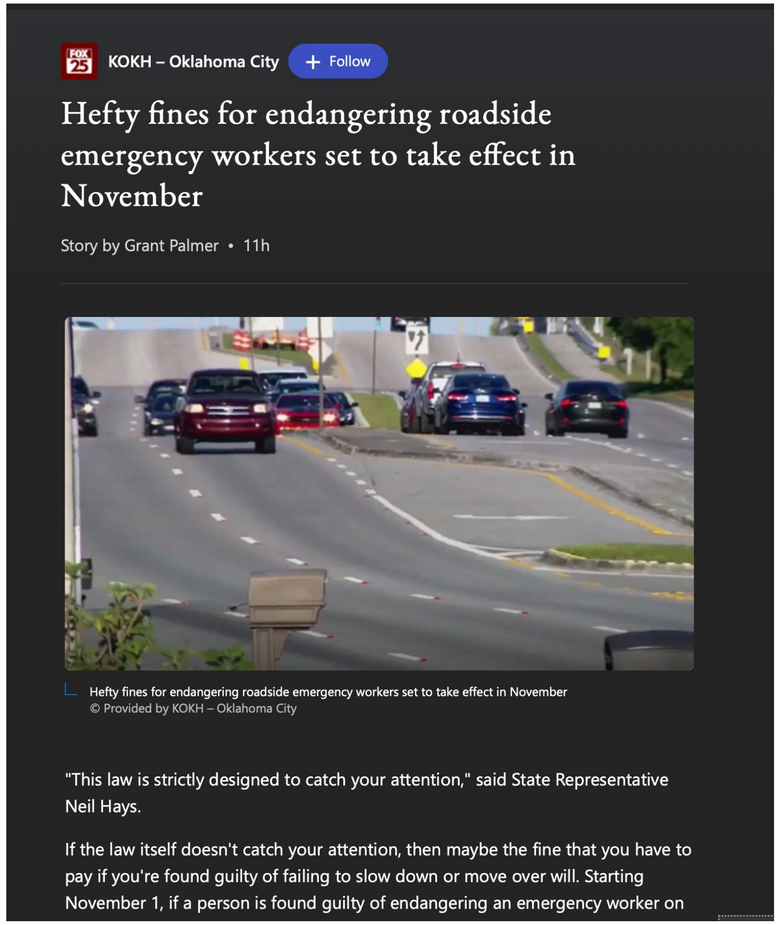
In her new book, Inclusive Transportation: A Manifesto for Repairing Divided Communities, Veronica O. Davis — the Director of Transportation and Drainage Operations for the city of Houston, Texas — takes a hard look at the ways in which planning a world for cars has harmed communities and how that affects anyone working to change things today. How do you repair a system that continues to divide communities? In a world where "equity" can sometimes just be a buzzword, what does equity truly look like if we can achieve it?

Davis tells her own "transportation story," asks readers to think about their own, and urges transportation professionals to consider past injustices and do the hard work that results in more than an idea and a catchphrase. She also has a lot of advice for how to approach community engagement and the different types of "stakeholders" who can make or break a street improvement project.

6.



1. NEWS ARTICLE: Msn.com



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“If the law itself doesn't catch your attention, then maybe the fine that you have to pay if you're found guilty of failing to slow down or move over will. Starting November 1, if a person is found guilty of endangering an emergency worker on the roadways, they can face fines of $1,000 for their first offense.

The $1,000 fine is a significant hike from the current fine, which is only $250. The fines only become more costly for repeat offenders, with the fine being $2,500 for the second offense.”

2. NON-FICTION BOOK: Turn On, Tune In, Drift Off: Ambient Music's Psychedelic Past

Ambient music, while appearing in name to be an asocial and suprastylistic artform, was in truth a socially savvy stylization of the intoxicating affective and embodied pleasures of psychedelic drone- and loop-based atmospheric audio for a presumptively white hip and high-middlebrow market.

3. ENTERTAINMENT ARTICLE: People.com

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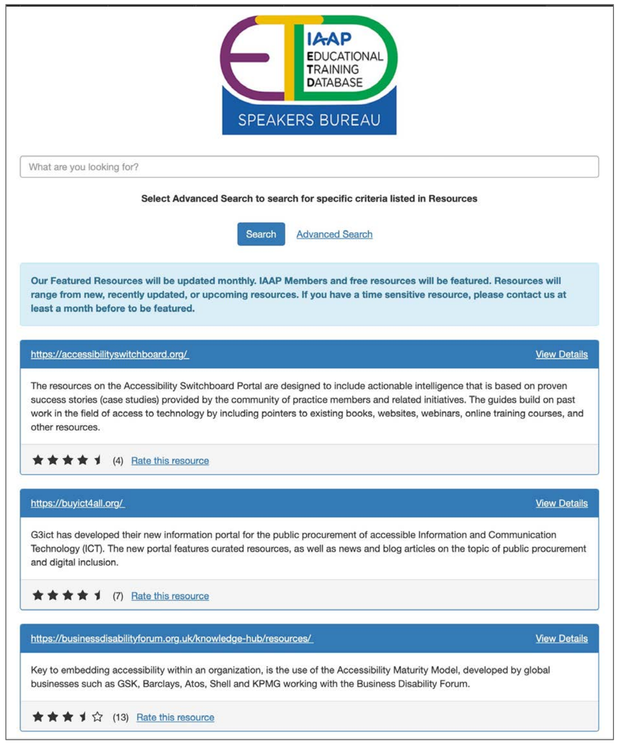
While the immediate family — including Kris Jenner, Kim Kardashian, Kourtney Kardashian Barker, Khloé Kardashian, Rob Kardashian, Kendall Jenner and Kylie Jenner — declined to participate in the series, Caitlyn Jenner is featured prominently, as are other family insiders, including Kim's former friend Rachel Sterling.

4. ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCE WEBSITE:

IAAP Educational Training Database



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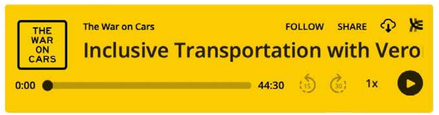
5. PODCAST EPISODE DESCRIPTION:

The War on Cars

AUG
22

♡ 5

109. Inclusive Transportation with Veronica O. Davis



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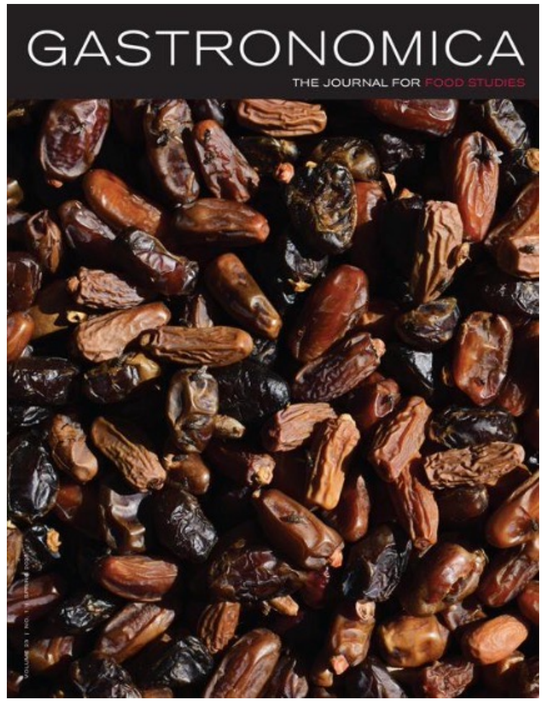
6. ACADEMIC JOURNAL: Gastronomica



This article focuses on absence and exclusion within heritage food making in northern Italy. These absences and exclusions are structured by race and gender inequalities and not incidental to heritage food making but built into it. I argue for an understanding of heritage foods as what Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing (2015) has called "capitalist ruins," or that which is left behind when capitalist structures and forms recede from particular landscapes and sites, leaving people to piece together livelihoods in the aftermath. To do this, I draw from my long-term ethnographic and linguistic anthropological research with heritage food makers in northern Italy, who primarily create various types of meat-based products, like salamis and sausages. The local concept of "nostrano" (our local) generates a type of authenticity that is also a chronotope, or a fusion of notions of time and space, which is key to how exclusions and absences are structured.

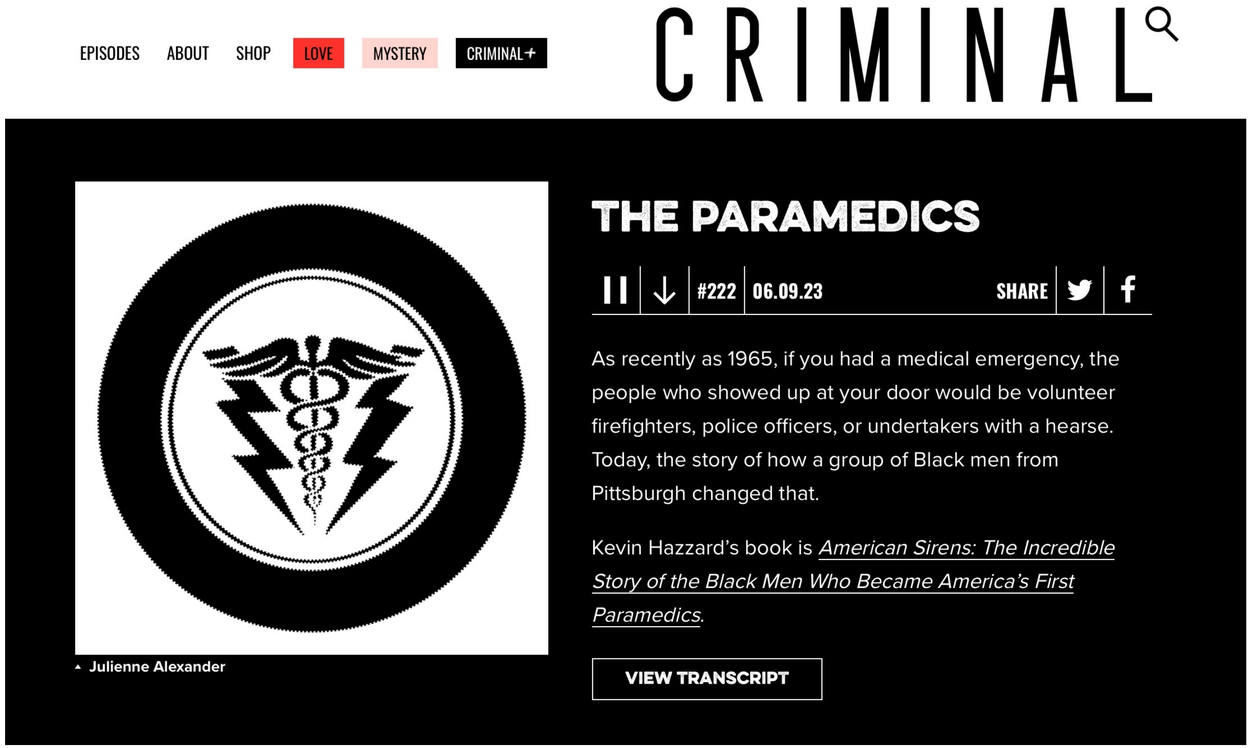
--Jillian R. Cavanaugh, "Authenticity and Its Perils: Who Is Left Out When Food is 'Authentic'?"

What did you notice?

What did you wonder?

And there’s homework.

Think about one piece of media you really like. It could be a podcast, a book, a tv show, or a website.



Think about CDCI’s 3 elements of plain language.

Vox Media | Episode 222: The Paramedics

JOHN MOON: Believe it or not, when I finished high school, I [CHUCKLES] wanted to be a police officer. I had no idea on how to pursue that goal because at that time, individuals that looked like me were not really noticeable on the police force at that time.

PHOEBE JUDGE: John Moon grew up in Pittsburgh in the 1960s in a predominantly Black neighborhood called the Hill District. At one time, it was the home of the nation's largest Black newspaper, had jazz clubs where Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong performed, and had its own baseball team. But by the time John graduated from high school, things had changed.

JOHN MOON: The businesses dissolved. And the community itself, from my opinion, became one of neglect and underserved. And there was a lack of jobs, a lot of unemployment.

PHOEBE JUDGE: John says that sometimes people who lived in the Hill District were called unemployables. John found a job working at a hospital.

There are no wrong answers.

1. Is it plain language?
2. Would you recommend it to a friend who you know has a cognitive disability?

Plain Language Resources

- AUCD Language Access Plan (.pdf)
- Self-Advocacy Resources and Technical Assistance (SARTAC) Plain Language Formats (.pdf)
- The ABCs of Plain Language (.pdf) – University of Kentucky
- Readable.com

Four for the door:

1. Resist the freakout: Accessibility is hard, and it’s a process.
2. You are always encouraged to ask for help.
3. Get feedback from people with disabilities.
4. If you find you frequently don’t have time for accessibility, ask: what are you making time for instead?

Thank you for your time.

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