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# ***Language Should Be Simple, Clear***

**P**OOR communication may lead to poor thinking or erroneous conclusions. It is reported that 63 per cent of outstanding high school students surveyed believed their schools had not prepared them to understand economics.

Result: Only one-third of the students believe the American economic system is the best.

The English language consists of 750,000 words, enough to express any thought vocally or in writing. But an idea doesn't get across if readers or listeners do not comprehend the words.

The Carnegie Foundation for Advancement of Teaching recently called general education at colleges and universities "a disaster area." It said they give students "whatever they want," allowing them to spend too much time in "aimless electives."

Trends in that direction exist in Oklahoma. Last month, Central State University Academic Council approved a resolution reducing by

one-fourth the number of hours of English courses required.

There is ample latitude within our language for trade, business or professional terminology, and even for overdrawn expressions such as chairperson, or the jargon of Citizens Band radio fans who "modjitate" as they "put the hammer down."

But a standard of values is needed for spelling and definition of words, to which people of various backgrounds may refer in order to establish a basis of communication.

Simple terms are favored for effective transmission of ideas. Many corporations send highly educated executives to special schools to learn to write simply and clearly.

Insurance companies advise clients to read their policies, but after many complained they couldn't understand the language, changes are being made. Home owner policies written in "plain English" are now being offered. They are about 40 per cent shorter.

Lawmakers and government are about the most prolific and least understood communicators citizens encounter. The Federal Register publishes upward of 50,000 pages of fine print annually, reporting laws, regulations, documents and rules. Its legalistic phraseology inspired an unidentified bureaucrat to write this parody:

"We respectfully petition, request and entreat that due and adequate provision be made, this day and the date hereinafter subscribed, for the satisfying of these petitioners' nutritional requirements and for the organizing of such methods of allocation and distribution as may be deemed necessary and proper to assure the reception by and for said petitioners of such quantities of baked cereal products as shall, in the judgment of the aforesaid petitioners, constitute a sufficient supply thereof."

In the Bible, this is stated more simply. It reads: "Give us this day our daily bread."