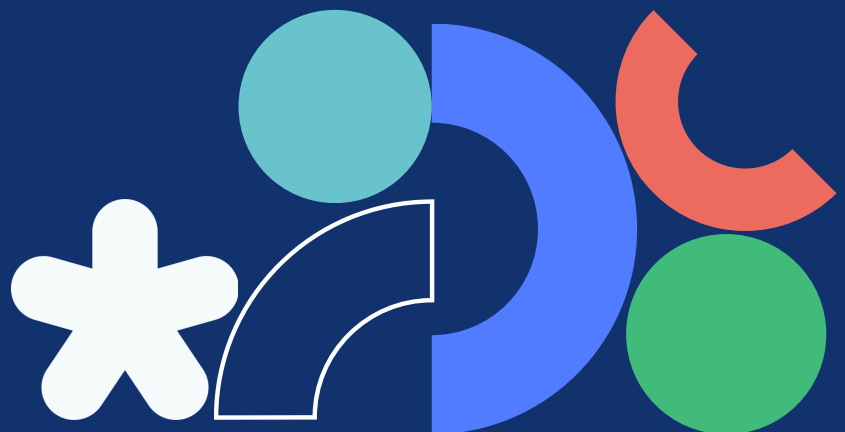


The OET Plain-Language Conversion Guide

Medical jargon to patient-friendly language, plus an empathy phrasebank

By Bailey, Head Teacher at [e2language.com](https://www.e2language.com)





How to Use This Toolkit

This resource pairs with the YouTube video “How to Write a Strong OET Update or Advice Letter.” When your OET reader is a patient, a family member, or a non-clinical professional, two language shifts make the biggest difference to your score: translating jargon and using empathetic patient-centred phrasing. This guide gives you a side-by-side reference for both.



Section 1 — Medical Jargon Conversion Table

When the reader is non-clinical, these terms benefit from being either replaced with their plain-language equivalent or paired with a brief explanation the first time they appear.

Cardiovascular

Hypertension	high blood pressure
Hypotension	low blood pressure
Tachycardia	fast heart rate
Bradycardia	slow heart rate
Myocardial infarction	heart attack
Angina	chest pain caused by reduced blood flow to the heart
Atrial fibrillation	an irregular heart rhythm
Oedema	swelling, usually in the legs or feet



Section 1 — Medical Jargon Conversion Table

Respiratory

Dyspnoea	shortness of breath
Productive cough	cough that brings up phlegm
Pneumonia	a chest infection in the lungs
COPD	a long-term lung condition that affects breathing
Asthma exacerbation	an asthma flare-up
Wheeze	a whistling sound when breathing



Section 1 — Medical Jargon Conversion Table

Endocrine and Metabolic

Hyperglycaemia	high blood sugar
Hypoglycaemia	low blood sugar
Diabetes mellitus	diabetes
Thyrotoxicosis	an overactive thyroid
Dyslipidaemia	high cholesterol

Gastrointestinal

Nausea	Feeling sick
Emesis	vomiting
Constipation	difficulty passing stool
Diarrhoea	loose, watery stools
Dyspepsia	indigestion or upset stomach
GI disturbance	stomach or bowel upset



Section 1 — Medical Jargon Conversion Table

Neurological

Syncope	fainting
Vertigo	a spinning sensation
Paraesthesia	tingling or pins and needles
Aphasia	difficulty with speech or understanding language
Hemiparesis	weakness on one side of the body

Medication and Treatment

Contraindicated	not recommended in your situation
Adverse reaction	unwanted side effect
Adherence	taking your medication as prescribed
Titration	gradually adjusting the dose
Prophylaxis	prevention
Once daily / BD / TDS	once a day / twice a day / three times a day



Section 2 — Empathy Phrasebank

These phrases support the Genre and Style criterion when your OET letter is addressed to a patient or family member. Pair them with the structural and clinical content rather than substituting for it.

Opening: Acknowledging the Reader

- "Thank you for attending your appointment last week."
- "I appreciate you taking the time to discuss your concerns."
- "I am writing to follow up on our conversation about..."

Explaining a Diagnosis or Result

- "I understand this may feel concerning, so I want to explain what we found."
- "Your test results have shown that..." (followed by plain-language explanation)
- "This is a common condition that can be managed effectively with..."

Giving Advice

- "To help manage this, I would recommend..."
- "It would be helpful for you to..."
- "Please try to..." (more direct, suitable for clear instruction)

Discussing Risks or Side Effects

- "Some patients can experience..."
- "While most people tolerate this medication well, you may notice..."
- "If you experience [symptom], please contact our clinic right away."

Reassurance

- "Please be reassured that this is straightforward to manage with the right treatment."
- "Your symptoms are likely to improve over the coming weeks."
- "We will continue to monitor your progress closely."



Section 2 — Empathy Phrasebank

Sign-off: Inviting Further Contact

- “Please don’t hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.”
- “If anything is unclear, please feel free to call the clinic.”
- “We look forward to seeing you at your next appointment.”



Section 3 — Pre-Submission Checklist

☐ **Reader-appropriate language**

Every clinical term has been either replaced or paired with a plain-language explanation

☐ **Action items signposted**

What the reader needs to do is clearly stated and easy to find

☐ **Empathy where appropriate**

Letter includes acknowledgement and reassurance phrases when writing to a patient

☐ **Warm sign-off**

Closing offers further contact, not just a polite full stop

☐ **Tone consistent throughout**

Letter doesn't switch between clinical and patient-friendly mid-paragraph



What's Next?

Patient-facing OET letters can feel deceptively simple because the structure is shorter - but they reward subtle language choices that take practice to develop. The most useful next step is writing one and getting feedback on the register and empathy, as well as the clinical content. E2's OET platform includes update and advice letter mock tasks with detailed correction feedback.

Ready to score a B? This resource is a starting point. To get personalised feedback on your own letters, real OET-style mock tests, and 1-on-1 tutorials with experienced OET teachers, head to [E2Language.com](https://www.E2Language.com) - trusted by over 3 million candidates across our English exam preparation.

 www.E2Language.com