Washington State University Institutional Review Board
Guidance on Writing Consent, Assent, and Parent Permission Forms

The templates are provided as guidance or suggestions only to assist researchers in writing informed consent documents. Use of the templates will generally ensure that all informed consent document requirements are met. However, these templates will not work for all situations. Contact the IRB Coordinator if you wish to significantly alter or modify the informed consent documents.

Formatting using the templates provided on the WSU IRB website:

- Delete all red font italicized instructions before finishing your form. Also delete any sections or information that is not relevant to your study.

- Use 12 point font. Times New Roman or Arial font is recommended.

- Use bolded section heading and place them directly above the text to which they refer.

- Do not let headings stand alone at the bottom of the page.

- Leave 1" margins at the top, bottom, and each side of the page.

- Write the consent form at a 6th – 8th grade reading level. Microsoft Word has a readability check (Word 2003: Under Tools, Spelling and Grammar, Options, check "show readability statistics").

- Number all pages of the document and include the version date in the footer in the lower left corner of each page.

- Only original signatures are permissible on consent, assent, and permission forms. Signature stamps are not acceptable.

- For all research studies, a copy of the signed and dated from must be given to the participant (or the parent if a parent permission form is used).

Tips for increasing readability of consent, assent, and permission forms

- ➢ Speak to your reader. Use "you" to refer to the participant.
- ➢ Use words with the fewest number of syllables ("take part" rather than "participate").
- ➢ Use short, simple sentences. Break long sentences into several shorter ones.
- ➢ Express only one idea per sentence.
- ➢ Break long paragraphs into several shorter paragraphs. Express only one major idea per paragraph.
- ➢ Use spacing to emphasize important concepts.
- ➢ Avoid contractions such as "don't". Glossaries of lay terms for medical terminology can be found on several websites, including: http://www.med.nyu.edu/irb/glossary/gloss_3_10_03.pdf
- ➢ Avoid jargon and use lay language in place of scientific terminology.
- ➢ Use a simple table or bulleted lists to outline complex study procedures.