

## Braille

[Braille is a system of touch reading](#) and writing for blind persons in which raised dots represent the letters of the alphabet. [It is a tactile code](#) enabling blind and visually impaired people to read and write by touch, with various combinations of raised dots representing the alphabet, words, punctuation and numbers.

## Simple Language

[It is essential to use clear, simple language to communicate effectively.](#) Using 'simple / plain language' is a key aspect of organising and presenting information so that it is easy to follow.

[Simple language](#) means communication that the listener or reader can understand the first time they hear or read it. It can be defined as a simple, clear, conversational style that uses everyday words and an active voice.

While recognising the need for flexibility, the Plain English Campaign advises:

- using short sentences – a good average sentence length is 15 to 20 words
- ensuring longer sentences do not have more than three items of information
- using 'active' verbs mainly, not 'passive' ones – for example, "We will send you an appointment" (active), rather than "An appointment will be arranged for you" (passive)
- avoiding acronyms and jargon - if you must use acronyms or uncommon terms, then include an explanation of them when they are first used
- using bullet points to help break complex information down
- using headings, subheadings, lists and tables to help readers navigate through the material.

## Other important considerations

Other important guidelines to consider in producing more accessible content are that:

- lowercase letters are easier to read – avoid using capitals for continuous text
- high contrast makes documents more legible – alternative colour contrasts (including black text on a yellow background) can be beneficial, particularly to readers who has dyslexia or have a learning difficulty
- avoid using colour alone to convey meaning - if you use colour to convey information (for example, by formatting certain items in a list in a different colour) then ensure that this is accompanied by a text alternative
- white space makes information easier to read – do not overcrowd the page with text; make sure you leave sufficient space between paragraphs; and consider increasing the space between lines
- large and bold font is useful for highlighting and emphasising text – italics and underlining can make text more difficult to read
- numbers from one to nine are easier to read (in normal text) if they are written as words – numbers from 10 upwards should be presented as numerals
- justify text to the left – this makes it easier to find the start and end of each line and ensures an even gap between words
- do not hyphenate words at the end of lines.

## **Accessible Fonts**

An accessible font is a font that will not exclude, nor slow down the reading speed of any reader, including those with blindness, vision loss, and reading disorders. [Choosing the right font improves the legibility and readability of the document or website for everyone.](#)

(Accessible fonts are fonts that are easy to see, read and understand for all people.)

[Keep in mind these recommendations and guidelines:](#)

- Use 12 point for body text. For most documents, body text should be around 12 points. Small fonts may be illegible for some audiences.
- Use 9 point for footnotes. If a document contains footnotes or endnotes, the minimum size should be 9 points.
- The [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG 2.0\)](#) recommend ensuring that text can be zoomed to 200%. As well, it is recommend using liquid layouts that can accommodate 200% text.

## **Colour Contrast**

In order to use colour in a way that is most accessible, consider colour contrast between text and background. People with low vision and/or a form of colour blindness may have difficulty reading text that does not contrast enough with the background colour selected. If the colour palette is too subtle (e.g., white text on a pastel background; medium-grey text on a light-grey background), the contrast between the foreground and background is probably insufficient for some people.

[Colour contrast ratio examples](#)

## **How to Test Your Materials for Colour-Contrast Ratios**

There are many online and downloadable tools available to help you evaluate colour-contrast ratios. Here are a few we have tried and like:

1. [WebAIM's Color Contrast Checker](#): This web-based tool allows you to select or enter colour values to test, and provides you with a "pass" or "fail" on your contrast ratio.
2. [ACART's Contrast Checker](#): This is a straightforward, web-based tool you can use to both check colour contrast and view your selections in grey scale. This tool also allows you to keep a history of the colour combinations you have tested.
3. [Giacomo Mazzocato's Accessibility Color Wheel](#): This web-based tool includes several options for testing your colour selections, including simulations of three types of colour blindness. You can also opt to test what your contrast ratio is when the foreground and background colour selections are inverted.

## **Link colours**

Links must be visually distinct from both the surrounding, non-linked text and the background colour. If you do not underline your links (or provide some other non-colour cue), you must ensure that you provide both sufficient contrast between the link and background colours and between the link colour and that of the surrounding text.

## **Audio Format**

- Speak clearly.
  - This is important for people wanting to understand the content, and for captioners.
- Speak as slowly as appropriate.
  - This will enable listeners to understand better, and make the timing better for captions and sign language.

### **Use clear language – script**

Avoid or explain jargon, acronyms, and idioms. For example, expressions such as “raising the bar” can be interpreted literally by some people with cognitive disabilities and can be confusing.

### **Captions/Subtitles**

Captions provide content to people who are Deaf and hard-of-hearing. Captions are a text version of the speech and non-speech audio information needed to understand the content. They are synchronized with the audio and usually shown in a media player when users turn them on.

The terms “captions” and “subtitles” are used for the same thing in different regions of the world. This resource uses:

- Captions for the same language as the spoken audio.
- Subtitles for spoken audio translated into another language.

### **Alternatives for Audio and Visual content**

This guideline applies to all forms of audio and visual content, regardless of length or format, as appropriate for the content:

- Subtitles must be provided where feasible, when they were included with a pre-recorded broadcast, or if content is for public facing corporate communications, employment or suppliers;
- Audio described or sign language versions must be provided if they were included with an original broadcast;
- For interactive content, such as e-learnings, narrative and instructions must be available both visually and audibly, for example using subtitles;
- In addition to other alternative delivery, transcripts can be provided for all types of audio and visual content.

### **Picture Guide**

When adding images to any document, it is important to ensure that images that convey important information have appropriate text alternatives or descriptions. Having a description of an image will ensure that they are accessible to everyone. Alternative text and captions are the most commonly used methods to describe images. However, depending on the complexity or overall functionality of an image, other image description approaches may be more suitable.

[Images are inherently inaccessible](#) to people who are unable to see them. How to address this issue depends on the purpose and complexity of the image.

For each image in the web page or digital document, determine which of the following categories best describes your image:

1. The image conveys simple information (e.g., a photograph, icon, or logo)
2. The image conveys complex information (e.g., a chart or graph)
3. The image is purely decorative, not informative

**Alternative Text or Alt text** is a text replacement for an image and is used to explain what the image is and what the image is trying to convey to the user.

Writing great alt text takes time and practice. There are tips to follow in writing good alt text:

- **Be precise.** Alt text should accurately present the same content and function as is presented in the image.
- **Be brief.** Alt text of an image should be short and to the point. Listening to long alt text can be burdensome for assistive technology users. Longer alt text might also be a problem because it may provide more information to assistive technology users giving a disadvantage to sighted users.
- **DO NOT repeat information.** Alt text should not provide identical information as text within the context of the image. Moreover, the same alt text should not be used with different images.
- **DO NOT use the phrases "image of ..." or "graphic of ..."** to describe the image. Typically, assistive technologies will announce to a user the presence of an image. Therefore, including phrases such as "image of...", "graph of..." causes unnecessary redundancy for users.

[Refer to know more about making accessible images](#)

[A guide for accessible image in a document](#)