

Guidelines for Accessibility: Printed Materials



Introduction



These guidelines were compiled to assist in ensuring accessibility and access for all readers to the information published in printed materials, specifically books. Following these guidelines will aid graphic designers in making choices to to enhance learning for persons with learning differences and vision impairments.

Quick Print Checklist



Double check the following based on the guidelines provided:

- **Typefaces (pg 6-7)**
- **Case (pg 8)**
- **Point Size (pg 9)**
- **Text Alignment (pg 10)**
- **Letter Spacing (pg 11)**
- **Line Leading (pg 12)**
- **Color Use (pg 14)**
- **Contrast (pg 15-16)**
- **Graphic Use (pg 18)**
- **Image Use (pg 19)**
- **Margins & Gutters (pg 21)**
- **White Space (pg 22)**
- **Use of Language (pg 24)**
- **Paper Choice (pg 26)**

Print Guidelines



Typography



Typefaces



- **Use** typefaces with consistent line weights.
- **Avoid** typefaces with extra thin or extra bold weights and avoid typefaces with a combination of thin and thick strokes.

Resources



Making Your Printed Materials ADA Accessible

<https://www.zaginteractive.com/insights/february-2020/making-your-printed-materials-ada-accessible>

How to Improve the Accessibility of Fonts and Typography in Your Designs

<https://design.tutsplus.com/articles/how-to-improve-the-accessibility-of-fonts-and-typography-on-your-designs--cms-34250>

Making Text Legible: Designing for People with Partial Sight

<https://www.visibilitymetrics.com/sites/default/files/downloads/Making%20Text%20Legible-Brochure.pdf>

Typefaces



- **Be aware** that monospaced fonts and fonts designed specifically for Dyslexia are not proven to be easier to read. Rather it seems that familiarity with a typeface plays a large role in legibility of letter forms.
- **Examples** of accessible typefaces: Arial, Arial Black, Bookman Old Style, Clarendon, Garamond, Gill Sans, Folio, Formata, Franklin Gothic, Futura, Helvetica, Korinna, Memphis, Myriad, New Century Schoolbook, NewsGoth, Optima, Palatino, Syntax, Univers, Verdana

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Case



- **Use** sentence case for the majority of text, because most people read the shapes or footprints of words, not the individual letters. Ascenders and descenders give words their shape.
- **Avoid** using uppercase when possible, words set in all uppercase letters have no distinct, recognizable shapes and so are less legible.

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Point Size



- **Use** larger point sizes when possible. Larger type is easier to read but keep in mind that the relationship between readability and point size differs somewhat among typefaces.

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Text Alignment



- **Use** left aligned text. It is the easiest to read because the beginning of each line is consistent with one-another and easy for the reader to navigate.
- **Avoid** center alignment and right alignment text because it can be distracting for a reader trying to skim quickly.

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Design for readability

<https://accessibility.huit.harvard.edu/design-readability>

Letter Spacing



- **Use** wider letter spacing when possible. Text with close letter spacing presents difficulties for readers distinguishing letter shapes.
- **Avoid** tightly spaced letters and putting two spaces after a period.

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Line Leading



- **Use** between 1.5x - 2x the point size of the typeface for the line leading so readers can move their eyes from line to line with ease.
- **Avoid** tight line leading, Tight line spacing impacts readability negatively.
- The amount of line spacing needed to improve readability will depend on the size and design of a typeface, as well as its x-height.

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Legibility and Readability: What's the Difference?

<https://creativepro.com/legibility-and-readability-whats-the-difference/>

Color & Contrast



Color



- **Use** color for aesthetic effect on larger, highlighted text. Use color combinations with high contrast on body copy—for print the most readable pairing is black and white.
- **Avoid** using color as the only indicator to distinguish between categories or elements.
- **Avoid** using high concentrations of oversaturated colors as they can be uncomfortable and unsettling for some users, prominently those on the autism spectrum.

Resources



Skip to ContentInnovation Studio **Logo**Web Accessibility Guidelines

<http://web-accessibility.carnegiemuseums.org/design/color/>

Making Text Legible: Designing for People with Partial Sight

<https://www.visibilitymetrics.com/sites/default/files/downloads/Making%20Text%20Legible-Brochure.pdf>

What is color contrast?

<https://www.a11yproject.com/posts/what-is-color-contrast/>

Designing For Accessibility And Inclusion

<https://www.smashingmagazine.com/2018/04/designing-accessibility-inclusion/#lens-color>

Contrast



- **Use** colors that provide maximum contrast, especially for text and important diagrams or interactive elements. Aiming for a color contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1 will help readers distinguish between content and background.

Resources



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Color Palette Tools



- **Colorable**

<https://colorable.jxnblk.com/>

- **Color Safe**

<http://colorsafe.co/>

- **Accessible Color Palette Generator**

<https://venngage.com/tools/accessible-color-palette-generator>

Graphics & Images



Graphics



- **Use** captions written in plain language with all graphics.
- **Use** icons and not color alone as identifiers. Patterns also work well to distinguish categories of information.
- **Avoid** using icons as decoration. Instead use the purposefully and try to use icons people recognize.

Resources



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Can you easily understand content associated with graphics, icons, and images?

<https://accessibility.digital.gov/visual-design/graphics-and-images/>

Images



- **Use** a solid background behind text, when using text over images.
- **Use** captions written in plain language with all images intended to inform the reader.
- **Avoid** using images for decoration alone.

Resources



Can you easily understand content associated with graphics, icons, and images?

<https://accessibility.digital.gov/visual-design/graphics-and-images/>

Accessible Images For When They Matter Most

<https://www.smashingmagazine.com/2020/05/accessible-images/>

Layout & Heirarchy



Margins & Cutters



- **Use** wide gutter margins when possible. Wider gutters along the spine allow the text to be displayed on the flat part of the page when the book is spread open.
- **Avoid** small margins. White space along the edge of the text allows readers eyes to travel more easily from line to line.

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White Space



- **Use** white space effectively and between areas of text. It creates a natural separation between content and unrelated elements within a document, aiding in reader comprehension.
- **Avoid** crowded layouts. Without white space readers will have a difficult time distinguishing between information.

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Language



Plain Language



- **Use** Plain Language writing practices when possible. Plain language is a style of writing where messages are portrayed in a simple, straight-forward manner.
- **Use** organization to order your content from the most important subject matter to the least important.
- **Use** headings to help the reader navigate the materials.

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Production



Paper



- **Use** matte paper of at least 24lb thickness if printing double sided. This way, the printed content does not show through the other side when flipped.
- **Avoid** using bright white printing paper and glossy paper when possible.

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Notes

