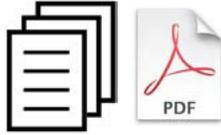


Guidelines for User-Friendly Handouts

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DELIVERY

Provide handouts both as hard copy on paper, and as accessible electronic files that can be located online.



People with vision impairment or learning disabilities like dyslexia, need accessible digital files that can be listened to with text-to-speech software (TTS).

PAGE LAYOUT

Use double columns when possible. Lines with fewer words are easier to read, especially on smartphone screens.



IMAGES FOR NAVIGATION

Images or icons help readers find the text they want, and can help them understand the text.



Find images in Google Images, sometimes adding icon or symbol to the words in the search field. If you are not comfortable using images with text, just start slowly, and seek assistance when technical questions arise. With practice, it becomes much easier, and your readers will thank you.

ALTERNATE TEXT FOR IMAGES

Use alternate text tags for images. In electronic documents, these “alt tags” tell readers what the image means with a mouse rollover, or by using a screen reader.



TAGGED HEADINGS WITH QUICK STYLES

Use the Quick Style menu for creating a tagged hierarchy of headings and text



styles, such as normal, title, subtitle, heading 1, heading 2, caption, quote, and table.

ACCESSIBILITY CHECKERS

Use the accessibility checkers in your software that will look at headings and images and tell you if your document is accessible. Blackboard Ally does this too.

CHUNKING OF TEXT

Divide text into chunks with numbers, bullets, subheads, line space or rules. Avoid making boxes with borders because they can complicate navigation for screen readers.



LARGER TYPE SIZES

Increase text type size when possible to 12, 14, or even 16 point. Spill over onto the back side of the paper. Large type helps readers with vision impairments, and is less intimidating for people who have English as a second language or low literacy skills. This text is 14 point Candara.



HIERARCHY OF FONT WEIGHT AND SIZE

By using size and weight to create a hierarchy of importance for headings and text

you help the reader navigate. Subheads need to contrast with the text so they don't get lost in the texture of the page. In addition to increasing size and using bold weight, you can also use color and all capitals to make the subheads stand out.

LEGIBLE FONTS

Not everyone agrees about what makes a legible font. These are the guidelines that I follow after fifty years as a designer of books and typefaces.

Monoweight

Strokes—Sans serif fonts that have monoweight strokes, or strokes of nearly uniform



width, tend to be more legible on both paper and digital displays for most readers, especially those who have the mild vision impairment called astigmatism. Fonts with tapered strokes that go from thick to thin, and that have pointed serifs at the end of strokes, tend to cause more eye strain, especially on digital displays, and in small sizes. This is why monoweight, sans serif fonts are preferred for interface design on computer operating systems.

RECOMMENDED FONTS FOR TEXT

MONOWEIGHT SANS SERIF

Calibri	Candara
Corbel	Gill Sans
Lucida Sans	Myriad
Trebuchet	Verdana

TAPERED, SERIF

Cambria	Georgia
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COMMON TEXT FONTS THAT ARE LESS LEGIBLE

Helvetica	Arial
Avant Garde	Times

TEXT LEGIBILITY IS DECREASED WHEN

Condensed

Italicized

SET IN ALL CAPITALS

These styles can be used for headings, but not for solid text.

EFFECTS THAT HARM LEGIBILITY

Leave the type alone. Don't stretch it, or stroke it, or give it drop shadows. All of those things reduce legibility unless done by an experienced typographer. And don't put type over images or colored backgrounds that reduce contrast.



SIMPLE DESIGN, NO FRILLS

Every element in your design should contain important information. Beautifully organized typography can be all you need to make the page attractive and inviting. Frills and decorations are distracting visual noise that do not help the reader.

