Accessibility Best Practices

for Word Documents

## PART 1. DOCUMENT CONTENT

| **SUBJECT** | **DO** | **DON’T** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Bilingual documents | Proper language Markup | * Do not place English and French **side-by-side** using columns or tables. * Do not **mix** one paragraph English and one paragraph French. |
| Reference to second language | * “Le **français** suit l’anglais”; or * The **English** follows the French. | * Avoid “Click **here** for French”; or * Avoid “Cliquez **ici** pour le français”. |
| Plain Language  [Readability Scores Flesch-Kincaid Grade](https://support.office.com/en-us/article/test-your-document-s-readability-85b4969e-e80a-4777-8dd3-f7fc3c8b3fd2) | * Use plain language ([TermiumPlus - Plain Language](http://www.btb.termiumplus.gc.ca/tcdnstyl-chap?lang=fra&lettr=chap_catlog&info0=13)); * Know your audience ([A way with words](https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/disability/arc/words-images.html)); * Choose straightforward vocabulary and simple structures; and * Divide your text into main points and secondary points. | * Do not confuse with oversimplified or condescending style; * Avoid passive voice; and * Do not write sentences of more than 20 words. |
| Acronyms | * Spell out the first time in usage; and * Write them in uppercase. | Do not add a period or an apostrophe to acronyms. |

PART 2. DOCUMENT FORMAT

[Run the Accessibility Checker (Microsoft website)](https://support.office.com/en-us/article/rules-for-the-accessibility-checker-651e08f2-0fc3-4e10-aaca-74b4a67101c1)

| **SUBJECT** | **DO** | **DON’T** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Heading Styles | * Format your text using built-in heading styles; * Use proper heading order (1-2-3); and * Modify the style appearance to better fit your needs; | * Avoid italic text; * Avoid bold and underline of text as it simulates a hyperlink; and * Avoid identical headings. |
| Background | * Keep the background white; and * Add “DRAFT” word to title page. | * Avoid shading or images for background; and * Avoid Watermark images. |
| Text  ([Contrast Checker](https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/)) | * Use 12 points font size minimal for text; * Use sufficient contrast between text and background (ratio 4.5:1); * Choose Sans serif fonts, such as Arial, Helvetica or Verdana; * Modify paragraph style to add space; and * Use styles to structure the text (Titles, Headings, bulleted lists and paragraph). | * Avoid using Full Justification; * Avoid hyphenated text; * Avoid runs of blank spaces, Tabs, or returns for formatting; * Avoid using table for formatting; * Avoid large amounts of text in bold, italics, underlined or all caps; and * Avoid animated text. |
| Tables | * Use simple layout structure; * Define header row for tables; * Identify tables with a number for referral; and * Add alternative text to the table. | * Avoid merging and splitting cells; * Avoid repeating text contained in the table in the Alternate-text fields; * Avoid blank cell/row/column for formatting; and * Avoid nested tables. |
| Colour  (Colour Contrast Analyzer) | * Use sufficient contrast between text and background. Contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1 for regular sized text (12 or 14 pt. font) and 3:1 for large text (18 pt. font).; and * Use pattern with colour for charts; | Do not convey information by colour alone. |
| Images | * Alternative text defines content and function; * Label images with a figure number and refer to them by their number; * Position all object “in line with text”; * Add description of InfoGraphic in a separate document (or an annex); and * Add data table for complex images such as charts. | * Avoid repeating information from the document in the image Alternate Text (alt-text); * Avoid alt-Text longer than 2 sentences; * Do not rely solely on charts to convey information; * Avoid referring to images by their appearances; * Avoid using “image of”, “graphic of” in the Alt-Text; and * Avoid using images of text. |
| Audio and Video objects | * Add closed captioning; * Add [video description](https://www.ami.ca/captioning-and-transcription); and * Add text transcription. | Avoid long video to prevent pause/stop due to buffering. |
| Hyperlink | * Provide a descriptive text to hyperlinks (to where it leads); and * Hyperlink text has to be clear “out of context”. | Avoid hyperlink text such as “click here” and “link to”. |

Circle with a computer and a red maple leave in the Center; at the bottom a line of icons for various disabilities: vision, hearing, mobility, cognitive, verbal
Please use the [Intake Form](http://iservice.prv/eng/imit/A11Y/intake.shtml) on iService or email us at [edsc.ti-it.a11y.esdc@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca](mailto:edsc.ti-it.a11y.esdc@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca) to request an Accessible Information and Communications Technology service.