Adapted from https://www.nngroup.com/articles/ten-usability-heuristics/

#1: clean

The system should always keep users informed about what is going on, through appropriate feedback within reasonable time. Avoid "black boxes" or "magic" when possible. Avoid misleading cues that lead users to make false assumptions about what the system is doing, like loading animations that take longer than necessary.

#2: Human language

The system should speak the users' language, with words, phrases and concepts familiar to the user, rather than system-oriented terms. Follow real-world conventions, making information appear in a natural and logical order.

#3: User control and agency

People may end up making unintended choices, or outright mistakes, as they use or explore your tool. Choices should be easily undoable and reversible, so that nobody gets stuck in a virtual cul-de-sac. This encourages learning by exploration, and leads to fewer errors.

#4: Consistency and standards

Take a systematic approach to words, visuals, and images. Users should not have to wonder whether different words, situations, or actions mean the same thing. Don't invent new vocabulary, verbal or visual, unless necessary.

#5: Error prevention, diagnosis, and recovery

Even better than good error messages is a careful design which prevents a problem from occurring in the first place. Either eliminate error-prone conditions or check for them and present users with a confirmation option before they commit to the action. Error messages should be expressed in plain language, precisely indicate the problem, and constructively suggest a solution.

#6: Efficiency and just-in-time information

Minimize the user's mental load by making objects, actions, and options visible. The user should not have to remember information in order to use the tool. Instructions should be visible or easily retrievable whenever appropriate. Provide help and documentation when and where people are likely to need it. Offer information freely and openly, rather than making people search for it. Use defaults, hints, and informative empty states in order to both smooth the process for experienced users and "teach" less-experienced users.

#7: Clean, task-centered interface

Every word, visual flourish, or other piece of information should have a purpose related to what the tool is trying to help people accomplish. Respect the task at hand and avoid unneeded urgency: alerts, notifications, and banners hurt the user's ability to focus. Do not demand more of people's time and attention than they need in order to get the job done.

#8: Consent and opt-in

Particularly when it comes to sharing data or changing settings, users should be presented with words, images, and design tools that encourage them to understand what they are doing in each specific case. Users should opt in, rather than out, of elements that may compromise their privacy. This may add friction to the user experience, but it is essential to making sure the user is able to act in their own best interest. Choosing to opt out should carry minimal penalty, and the consequences of a choice should be knowable in advance as well as reversible.

#9: Emotionally appropriate tone

The visual and verbal tone of an interaction should match the content of the interaction. Sometimes a tool should seem playful, sometimes it should seem highly technical, sometimes it should seem very serious. This is especially true in error states, where tone helps communicate the severity of the error, and in areas involving privacy or security, where the wrong tone can cause serious mistakes.

#10: Stress cases and accessibility

There is no such thing as an "average" user, and many different kinds of people will use the tool many different ways. We cannot design for every possible use case, but through user research, we can be aware of ways that people may "break" the tool, and attempt to design with those situations in mind. Follow guidelines for accessible interface patterns, color choices, and devices.