

How to make documents accessible



This factsheet tells you what you can do to make documents more accessible for disabled people.

How to use this factsheet



We are **AbilityNet**.

We are a charity that helps disabled people use technology.



Like computers, tablets, and smartphones.



This is an **Easy Read** factsheet.
You may still need help to read it.
You can ask someone you know for help.



For more information you can phone or email us.



Phone
0800 048 7642



Email
enquiries@abilitynet.org.uk

What this factsheet is about



This factsheet tells you how to make your documents accessible.



For example, for people who have a learning difficulty.

Or people who are blind.



More people can read and understand your documents when they are accessible.



We will tell you how to make your online documents more accessible.



And how to make your printed documents more accessible.



When you make a document accessible you need to think about how it looks.



But you must also make sure a **screen reader** can read it.

We will tell you how to do this.



A **screen reader** is a type of computer software. It reads out loud what is on the screen of a computer, tablet or smartphone.



This means people who are blind or cannot read can listen to your document.

How to use headings



A heading is the text at the top of the page or section of a document.

The heading on this page is **How to use headings.**



A heading tells the reader what the writing is about.

Headings help us organise our writing.



They also help the reader to understand the document.



You can make a heading stand out by making it **bold**.



You can also make a heading stand out with a bigger font size.



But **screen readers** will not understand that a different font size means it is a heading.



It is important to always use a heading from the **Styles tool** of Microsoft Word.



A screen reader will understand all headings made using the Microsoft Word Styles tool.



Try to use the same heading style for the main sections of your document.



You can do training on using the Styles tool on the [Microsoft website](#).

How to write in plain English



Language that is easy to understand is called Plain Language.
Or Plain English.



To make your language easier to read

- use short and easy to read sentences
- do not use hard words. Use words that most people know
- do not use **jargon**



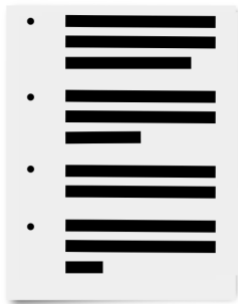
Jargon are words that professional people use to communicate with each other.



- but other people can find jargon hard to understand.



- if you do use hard words or jargon you must explain what they mean in simple, clear words.



- use bullet points to make lists.

Choosing fonts and sizes

Choosing a font

A a **A a**
A a A a
A a ꝯa
A a **A a**

A **font** is the style and shape of letters.

There are lots of fonts to choose from but some fonts are easier to read.

Arial font
Helvetica
font

A simple font like **Arial**, **Helvetica** or **Verdana** is easier to read.



If you know the reader you can ask them what font they like best.

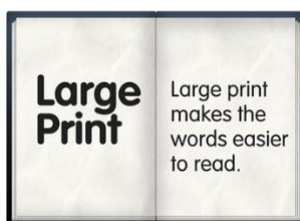
Thin fonts
like this are
hard to read

Do not use light or thin fonts as they are hard to read.

Choosing a font size



Make your font size 14 or bigger as this will be fine for most people.



Some people might want **Large Print** documents.

Large Print use size 16 Arial font or bigger.



We used size 20 font for this document.

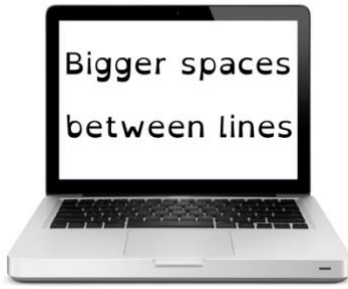
Other important things to know

WORDS IN
CAPITALS
ARE HARDER
TO READ

Do not put whole words in capitals like **THIS**.
It makes text harder to read.



Do not put too much writing on one page.
It makes it harder to read.



Make sure there is lots of space around each sentence.

You can also make the spaces between lines of text bigger.

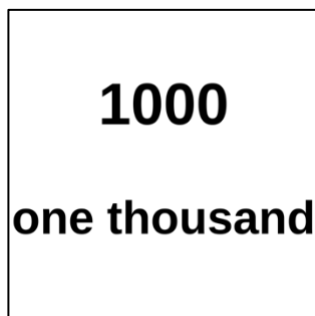


If you want a word to stand out, use **bold**.



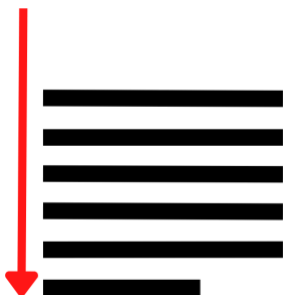
Do not underline words or use *italic* fonts.

It makes it harder to read.



It is easier to read numbers from one to nine as text.

It is easier to read numbers 10 and above as numbers, like 10, 50, 100 or 1000.



Make sure the writing lines up with the left side of the paper.



Do not split long words over two lines.

This makes them hard to read.



Black text on a white background is easiest to read.



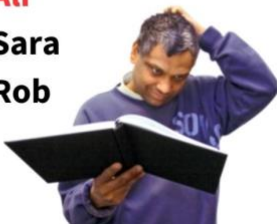
Black text on a yellow background is also good.



Some people are **colourblind**. People who are colourblind do not see colour the same way most people see it.

You need to pay if your name is in red

- Ali
- Sara
- Rob



A colourblind person might not understand what you have written if you have used colour text to mean something.

Pictures, lists, tables and links

Pictures



Sometimes having a picture next to the writing can help people understand more. Like in this document.



But sometimes pictures can confuse people.

When you use pictures

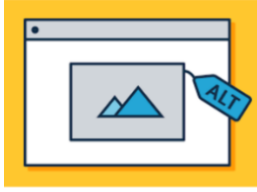
Leave lots of space



- make sure there is enough space between writing and the picture.



- do not put writing over a picture.



Screen readers can only understand pictures if you add **alt text**.



Alt text = a woman speaking to a doctor



Alt text is a tool that lets you write what is in the picture.

When a screen reader sees the picture it will read out the **alt text** you have written.



Some pictures are important. But some just make the document look nice. Like these sunflowers.



Alt text:

If the picture does not help the reader you can tell the screen reader to ignore it.

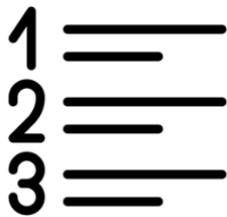
Lists



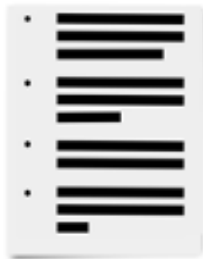
Putting a lot of information on a page can make it hard to read.



You can make it easier by breaking it up into smaller parts or sections.



You can number the sections.



Or put them in a list with bullet points using Microsoft Word.



A screen reader will be able to read the different sections and bullet points.

Tables



Tables are good for sharing information.

If you make a table in Microsoft Word it must be simple.

	Mon	Weds	Fri
Morning			
Evening			
Night			

You must put a name in the top box of each **column**.

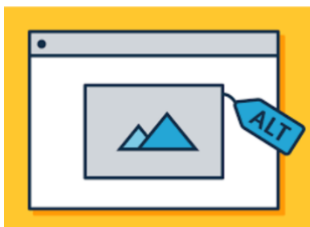


This makes it easier for screen readers to read the table.

	Mon	Weds	Fri
Morning			
Evening			
Night			

Alt text: Plans for next week

You can add a **label** to the table to tell the screen reader what the table is about.



You can do this by using the **alt text** tool.

Links



If your document is online you can include links to websites. Readers can find this helpful.



You can easily make links to websites in your Microsoft Word document.



If your document is printed as well write the web address after the link.



For example, [AbilityNet website](http://www.abilitynet.org.uk) (www.abilitynet.org.uk).

How to check your document



Microsoft Word has an **Accessibility Checker**. It checks if your document is accessible.



Accessibility Checker will tell you if anything in your document is not accessible.



Accessibility Checker tells you why you need to fix something.

And it tells you how to fix these problems.

Where to get more information



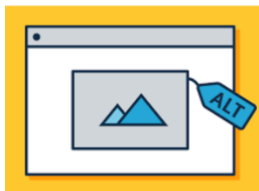
Microsoft gives lots of information about how to make accessible documents on the [Microsoft website](#).



If you want to make your document into a **PDF**, you can find out how to do this on the [Adobe website](#).



A **PDF** is a type of digital document. PDFs are good for sending information by email or sharing online.



You can get help to write alt text on [Benetech's website](#).

How AbilityNet can help you

My Computer My Way



The **My Computer My Way** website tells you how you can make your computer, tablet or smartphone accessible.

Website mcmw.abilitynet.org.uk.

Advice and information



If you have any questions, you can contact us at **AbilityNet**.

We are here to help you.



Phone

0800 048 7642



Email

enquiries@abilitynet.org.uk.

Support with technology at home



AbilityNet volunteers can help you with your computer, tablet or smartphone.



If you need support at home, you can book an AbilityNet volunteer to visit you.



You do **not** have to pay AbilityNet for support at home.

For more information, visit www.abilitynet.org.uk/at-home.