

Tips for Creating Accessible Documents

Seneca College embraces the requirements of the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\)](#) and is committed to expanding access and support to all students, employees and visitors with disabilities, by having as its goal a barrier-free learning and working environment to enable academic and employment success.

Text

Use a sans serif (Arial, Verdana, Tahoma, Calibri) typeface (font) for general text.

Use at least 12-point type for text.

Do not use more than two typefaces (fonts) in a document.

Use between 32 and 70 characters per line of text. Any longer and readers will lose their place when they read from line to line.

Do not use all capitals in headings.

Text should be aligned with the left margin and ragged on the right.

Use medium-length sentences of about 20 words.

Keep paragraphs under 12 lines.

Language

Use simple direct words and the active voice with strong verbs. Example: The professor teaches two subjects (*active*); Two subjects are taught by the professor (*passive*).

Don't use unnecessary qualifiers or multiple negatives. Example: I think I don't like this car (*with an unnecessary qualifier*); I don't like this car (*without an unnecessary qualifier*)

Be consistent with the terms you use to mean the same thing.

Layout

Divide your information into short sections.

The majority of your document should be black and white. Colour elements in your document should not overwhelm or distract from the legibility of your text.

Use descriptive headers and sub-headers to break documents into manageable chunks.

Ensure headings tell the reader what the upcoming sections will cover. Headings like “general” or “background” are not very helpful.

Group related material. This helps you eliminate repetitious information.

Use vertical lists to identify important material.

Put more important information before less important information. Put the general before the specific.

Use 1” margins or wider.

Use white space in margins, around headings, between columns, and between sections.

Use bulleted lists to simplify information, but do not overuse.

Avoid complicated background designs or watermarks.

Images and Tables

Provide concise text alternatives for images and graphics.

Provide a separate text description for charts and graphs.

Use simple table structures (avoid merged cells, nested tables).

If the table continues on more than one page, ensure the header rows repeat at the top of the next page.

Include a text description for long or complicated tables.

PowerPoint

Ensure your presentation has a high colour contrast between the foreground and background.

Use the largest possible font size, a minimum of 16 points.

Avoid backgrounds.

Use images and objects sparingly.

Provide alternative text for all images and objects.

Create a text-only version of your presentation.