



## Creating Accessible Documents

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Humber College is increasing accessibility for students with disabilities. This fact sheet is intended to assist faculty and staff in creating accessible documents.

### Why do we need accessible documents?

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) is legislation that requires identifying, removing and preventing barriers for persons with disabilities to ensure the province is accessible by 2025. The AODA outlines accessibility standards in four priority areas: customer service, information and communication, employment and transportation. In each of the areas, all documents are required to be in an accessible format.

### What is an accessible document?

An accessible document is a document that everyone can access, for example an individual with vision impairment may use a text to speech program to access information. A person who is blind will not be able to see a picture in a document. However, using alternative text, a written description of the image, can convey to the reader the content of the picture. Similarly, some colour combinations are difficult recognize. For example, light blue text on a white background (see below).

- [A magician was driving down the road...then she turned into a drive way.](#)

Using a sharp contrast between colours will enable many users to access your document, for example white text on a black background (see below).

- ✓ [A magician was driving down the road...then she turned into a drive way.](#)

## Six Ways to Make Your Print Documents Accessible

1. All documents are to be written in clear and simple language.
2. Avoid using technical terms if possible. Use clear language to convey your message. For example, consider the following statement:
  - In our endeavor to ensure guest safety at all times, can visitors please note that fire bell testing is carried out every Monday at 9:30 a.m.

A clearer statement would be:

- We test the fire bell every Monday at 9:30 a.m.
3. The most recommended fonts to date are Arial, Helvetica or Verdana, and a font size that is at least 12 point.
  4. The greater the color contrast the easier the text is to read.
  5. Use descriptive headers and sub-headers to break documents into manageable sections.

For example, a document that informs students of classroom expectations could use descriptive headers and sub-headers in the following way (see below):

**(Descriptive Header): Classroom Expectations**

**(Sub-header 1): Attendance**

Students are expected to attend all lectures. If you are unable to attend a lecture please contact me in advance.

**(Sub-header 2): Punctuality**

Please arrive promptly for lecture. If you arrive late or need to leave early please sit in the front section near the doors to minimize disruption. As well, if you need to leave class early or you anticipate being late for lecture please let me know in advance.

6. If your document incorporates a picture, use alternative text to provide a description of the picture. If any information in your document is conveyed through sound, provide that information in a text format as well. Alternative text must give an accurate description of what the item is, so that the user's assistive technology may convey what information is demonstrated by the item. Alternative text can be provided for pictures, images, Clip Art, SmartArt, charts, graphs, text boxes, AutoShapes and WordArt.

See example below:



A beach scene with two lounge chairs, an umbrella, a sandy beach and blue water.

7. To link your document to a website or another document, you may use a hyperlink. A hyperlink is a reference in a document that a reader can follow which links to another webpage. A hyperlink is generally highlighted or underlined.

For example by creating a hyperlink for [AODA at Humber College](#) the reader can click on the link taking them directly to Humber's AODA homepage.

- When using hyperlinks, make sure that the hyperlink has context and describes where it leads.
- The link should not read "[click here](#)," the destination of the link should be clear.

For example, the web link <http://www.humber.ca/> should be written as:

- [Humber College Homepage](#).

Use more than one method to convey information. Documents that are easy to read enable a wide range of learners to access and understand the content of the material. Creating accessible documents increases the opportunities for all students to be successful.

**Sources:** The information in this document was compiled by Human Rights and Diversity | HR Services with information from [Creating an Accessible Office Document](#) Microsoft Office Website George Brown, [QLC Accessibility Toolkit](#) Queens University and [Why You Should Use Plain Language: Before and After Examples](#) Plain Language Commission