

General Digital Accessibility Best Practices

This quick guide highlights common accessibility practices but is not a complete compliance checklist. For full guidance, consult the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\)](#).

Write Clearly

Clear, easy-to-understand content benefits everyone. Focus on straightforward language and provide information in ways that are easy to read and follow.

- Use plain language when possible.
- Pair text with meaningful images or visuals when they help explain content.
- Check spelling, grammar, and readability.
- Define abbreviations and avoid unnecessary jargon.

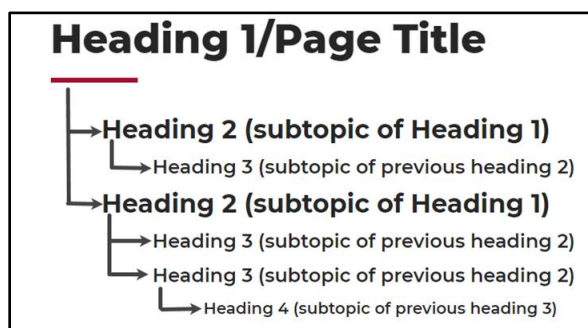
Example

- **Easy to read:** Please submit assignments by the due date listed in Blackboard.
- **Jargon-heavy:** Students must comply with submission protocols and upload all deliverables by the prescribed deadline in the learning management system.

Use Proper Heading Structures

Proper headings help screen readers navigate the document and improve accessibility for everyone.

- Organize content using your software or program's built-in heading styles.
- Avoid skipping heading levels, such as jumping from a Heading 1 to a Heading 3.
- Use bullet and numbered lists to break up information that would be difficult to scan in a paragraph.
- Include a descriptive page title.



Alternative Text

Alternative text, or alt text, is a brief written description of an image. It allows people using screen readers to understand the purpose or meaning of images.

- Add alt text to images by writing a concise description that conveys the content and purpose of the image.
- If the image is purely decorative and provides no extra meaning to your content, mark the image as decorative.
- In the example photo to the right, the alt text might read: "WKU's mascot, Big Red, playing a xylophone." If the image is purely decorative, you'd mark the image as decorative.



Meaningful Links

Use descriptive link text instead of pasting a full URL or using generic phrases such as “Click here” or “Link”. Clearly linked text helps all users understand where the link will take them, especially when links are read aloud by a screen reader

Choose link text that clearly identifies the destination or purpose of the link. Provided are three examples of URLs: copy and pasted URL, hyperlinked text that needs improvement, and a hyperlink with meaningful text.

- **URL:** <https://support.microsoft.com/en-US/Word/create-or-edit-a-hyperlink>
- **Needs improvement:** [Click Here.](#)
- **Hyperlink with meaningful text:** [How to create or edit a hyperlink in Word.](#)

Tables

Tables should be used to organize data, not to control the visual layout of a document. Accessible tables help screen reader users understand how information is organized and how each cell relates to the table headers.

- Keep tables simple. Avoid merged or split cells, blank rows or columns, and complex layouts, as these can make the table difficult for screen readers to interpret.
- Provide headers for data tables and include text in each header.
- Add a caption or description to summarize the table's purpose.

Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Combined Total
United States	1,231	1,012	885	3,128
Great Britain	313	345	361	1,019
Japan	211	198	233	642

Table 1. Summer and Winter Olympic Games All-Time Medal Count by Country

Color Contrast

Text and images should be clear and easy to read. Use strong color contrast between text and background. Avoid relying on font color or highlighting to show importance, as this can be difficult for people who are colorblind, have low vision, or are simply trying to read the document clearly. For example:

- **Needs improvement:** The Midterm Exam will be on Blackboard. It will **open at 8:00AM on May 1, 2026** and will be **due by 11:59PM on May 3, 2026**.
- **Improved:** The Midterm Exam will be on Blackboard. It will open at 8:00AM on May 1, 2026 and will be due by 11:59PM on May 3, 2026.

Captions and Transcripts

- Include captions and a transcript for all videos and live audio.
- If using auto-captioning services, edit the captions to ensure accuracy.