Designing Teaching Materials for Diverse Learners

Practical Booklet and Checklist
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Notes
Alternative Text to pictures and graphs in Office

Why: Alt text can be read by assistive technologies, which makes sure everyone knows what the picture is.

How:
1: Insert the image as usual
2: Right-Click the image and select ‘Format Picture’.
3: Depending on which version of Word you have, you now either select Alt-Text, or Layout and Properties and then Alt-Text.
4: Enter a suitable description for the image in the ‘Description’ field. Unless the image is complex, title is not needed.

Result: Now, when a screenreader gets to the image, it will read the text you have put into this box—helping the learner understand what the picture or graph is conveying.
Making hyperlinks more accessible

**Why:** Someone using a screen reader to access this link will hear one character read aloud at a time, which is difficult to understand.

**How:**
1: Copy the link you want to use into your Word document as usual.
2: Select the whole URL, including the "http" at the beginning and the domain at the end.
3: Right-click to open the context menu, then find and select Edit Hyperlink.
4: In the dialog box, look for a text box labelled ‘Text to display.’ Type in the description text you want.
5: Click Ok.

**Result:** When a screenreader comes to this it will read the words you have labelled it, rather than the actual link.

http://www.yorksj.ac.uk/access-centre/ (no)
Access Centre (yes)

Quick Document Checklist

- Have I added Alt Text to images?
- Are my links contextual?
- Have I checked for colour use and contrast?
- Have I used heading styles to structure my document?
- Did I name the file correctly?
- Have I created my tables correctly?
- Have I run the accessibility checker?
- Does my video have captions or a transcript?
Other considerations

If creating or using video content, some people may not be able to hear this. If using a video, try to select one which has captions, or write a transcript for it.

Some people do not use a mouse—if you can’t see a mouse pointer, you can’t click on things. Therefore blind students might only use the keyboard. Some students with mobility difficulties or pain conditions might control their computer using their voice. Therefore, avoid forcing control by use of a mouse or touch screen alone.

Avoid using text over images or patterned backgrounds, as this is unclear and overwhelming.

Autistic students can find the English language extremely confusing and illogical. Where possible be clear and direct when writing instructions or directions, and avoid using idioms such as ‘I’m over the moon’ ‘It’s raining cats and dogs’.

How colour impacts accessibility

Why: Not everyone perceives colour the same way. It is estimated that around eight per cent of men and 0.5 per cent of women suffer from some form of colour deficiency. Because of these factors, there are two issues that often arise in e-learning: colour coding and contrast.

How: When designing tables, charts or other imagery relating to colour, use other visual cues or words to ensure people don’t miss out on what you’re trying to tell them.

Result: Everyone regardless of colour perception can gain meaning quickly and easily.
Using heading styles in Word

**Why:** Most people use size and underlining to create a structure in a document. This is fine if you are sighted, but many people use screen readers to read a list of headings, so they can skim the document to find the content they want.

1: Select a sentence that you want to add a header to.
2: Select Home > Styles (or press Alt + H, then L), and then select the heading you want, such as the Heading 1 button.
3. It is also good practice to align all text left and use 1.5 line spacing to ensure text is easy to read.

**Result:** Your document is well structured, easy to navigate by everyone. If you save this as another type of file (PDF), the structure will stay, so the document remains accessible.

Running Accessibility Checkers - In PDFs (cont.)

As well as having the full check accessibility feature, you can also use:

- **Reflow View** - To quickly check the reading order of a document.
- **Read Out Loud** - To quickly see how a screen reader would read it out loud
- **Reading Order Tool** - To change the reading order, remove background decoration from being ‘images’ and add alternative text to images.

Other things to consider:

- **Image only PDF** - If you discover your PDF is an image, and does not contain fonts, you can select Tools > Enhance Scans. Then Recognize Text > In This File. This should then recognise the text and make it readable by a screen reader.

**Result:** Document is fully accessible.
Running Accessibility Checkers - In PDFs

**Why:** You can check the accessibility of a PDF document, to make sure the documents you have created are fully accessible.

**How:**
1. Choose Tools > Accessibility > Full Check.
2. In the Report Options section, select options for how you want to view the results. You can save the results as an HTML file on your system, or attach the results file to the document itself.
3. Select the checking options and click Start Checking. The results are displayed in the Accessibility Checker panel on the left, which also has helpful links and hints for repairing issues.

Create accessible file names

**Why:** If students are downloading your files, they need to be able to find them afterwards. Giving your documents meaningful filenames and document properties makes them easier to find for everyone. A good filename provides clues to a document’s content and age.

**How:**
1: Right-click a file, and then select Rename.
2: Type a new name for the document, and then press Enter.
3: Within the document select File, Info.
4: Under Properties, in the Title box, type a title for the document.
5: To add an author, under Related People, Add an author.

**Result:** Anyone searching for your file on their computer will be able to quickly and easily locate your document.
Formatting tables in Word

**Why:** Tables organize information visually and help you show relationships between things. However, if tables are not set up correctly, screen readers do not know how to read them.

**How:**

1: Choose Insert > Table to insert a table and choose the number of boxes to create columns and rows.

2: On the Design tab, choose the Table Styles Options group, and then choose Header row. Other options include Banded Rows or Total Row.

3: Place your cursor in the first box on the top row of your new table.

4: Type the name for this column and then press Tab to move from one column to the next. Add additional column names as needed.

**Result:** Your table now has a header row and column names. This means that, behind the scenes, Word and any assistive technologies can communicate intelligently about the table.

Running Accessibility Checkers - In Word

**Why:** You can quickly check accessibility in Word documents by using the “Accessibility Checker” tool. This tool scans your document and shows “Errors,” “Warnings” and “Tips” about your document.

**How:**

1: In the document, click the “File” tab in the Ribbon.

2. In the “Info” section, click the “Check for Issues” drop-down button in the “Inspect Document” area. Then click the “Check Accessibility” command to launch the task pane.

3. A list of “Errors” and/or “Warnings” may appear. If these appear, these indicate serious document accessibility issues for people with disabilities.

4. Below this you may also see a list of “Tips.” These are issues that may cause problems, but aren’t as serious as the issues shown in the “Errors” or “Warnings” list.

5. Then click an item shown in the list to select it in the document, so you can correct it.

**Result:** Document is fully accessible.