

10 Tips for Creating Accessible Course Content

(Janet Sylvia, Web Accessibility Group Leader)

Note: These tips are a starting point for creating accessible course content; for additional information, please download Section 508 Compliance and Online Course Content available in the [USG Accessibility Tutorial](#).

Accessibility Statement added to Syllabus must include:

- Accessibility 508 Compliance statement;
- Disability Accommodations statement;
- Links to vendor accessibility information for specialty products used in your course.

Semantic Structure (or Styles) always use to create structure in Word, Open Office, HTML, etc. Heading:

- Document Title; Heading
- Section Titles; Heading
- Sub-section Titles.
- Strong (structural equivalent of bold);
- Emphasis (structural equivalent of italics).
- Other Style types are available, as needed.
- Table of Contents should be provided based on the Heading structure;
- Table of Figures, if needed.

True Bulleted or Numbered Lists, True Columns, True Tables: always created instead of using spacebar or tab to create faux structure.

Ensure Readability: divide large blocks of text into smaller more manageable sections, avoid complex sentences, use sans-serif font at approximately 12 points.

Text Equivalents (ALT Text): for every non-text element such as image, chart or graph. A clear, concise description 100 characters or less that is provided via Format Picture. If ALT text **alone** is insufficient, provide Long Description in surrounding text or as separate document.

Avoid Color Coding: color alone is not sole means of conveying important information.

Sufficient Color Contrast: between foreground and background elements. Also, background does not overpower text (e.g. PowerPoint, Web page, etc.)

Descriptive Hyperlinks: must make sense out of context; avoid vague descriptions like Click Here or Email Me. Avoid using the URL. Instead, hyperlink text should describe the destination: website name, document name, or other resource.

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Accessibility Checkers: always use the software's built-in Accessibility Checker (Word, Open Office, Adobe Acrobat, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.). Follow the Repair recommendations provided by the Accessibility Checker to fix errors.

Multimedia:

- **Audio-only:** provide Text Transcript;
- **Video-only:** provide Video Description (text description of key visual elements);
- **Audio and Video:** provide Closed Captions, Text Transcript, and Video Description.
- **Note:** Combine Text Transcript and Video Description into one file.