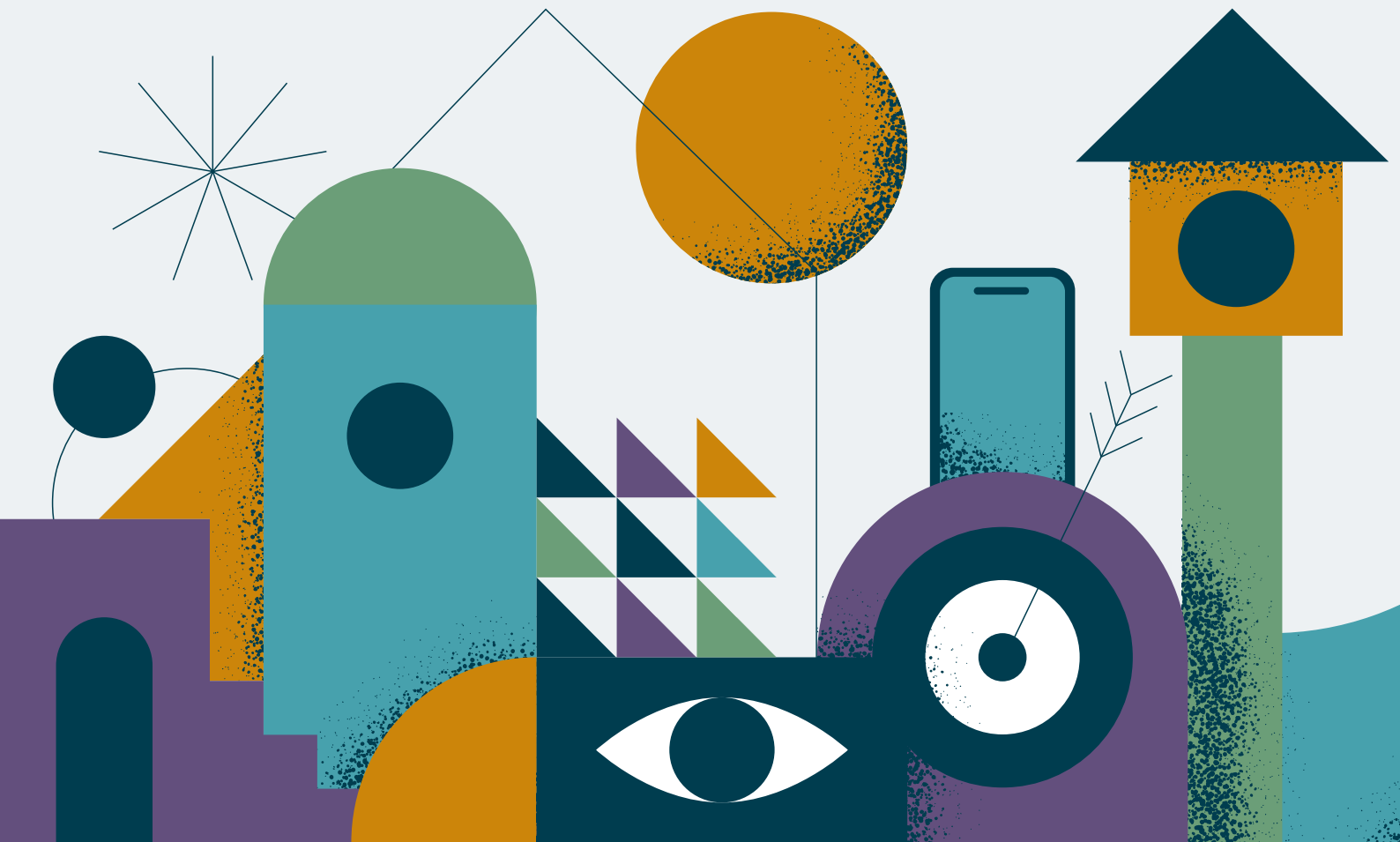


Cheat sheet: Creating inclusive content



/thoughtworks

Strategy. Design. Engineering.

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Accessible communication and content

Creating accessible content is more than just writing. It also includes the way you use images, color and design, and the size, font and formatting of your text making sure all your users can read and understand what you write.

Use clear and understandable language



Write in short, simple sentences. Avoid long with complex sentence structures



Write conversationally, in first person, using the active voice



Avoid jargon, metaphors, latin and buzzwords as they are unlikely to be clear language



Create content that all users can understand, whatever their expertise or background

[Content Design London's Readability Guidelines](#) website is a useful resource that can help make your writing more readable.

You could use [Hemingway Editor](#) to make your writing clearer.



Text formatting



Use left alignment

Avoid justified alignment as the irregular spaces might make it difficult to read. But if you need to use center alignment make sure that is for short sentences or headings.



Use a large enough font size and weight

Use a text font size of at least 12pt. If you can, try to make the font 16pt or even bigger.

Avoid light or smaller font weight. Note that this can vary depending on the design of the font.



Use appropriate headings

Headings summarise the content. So they help screen reader users quickly navigate through different sections and determine if it covers the topic they seek, saving them time.



Opt for fonts that are easy to read

Serif fonts may improve the readability of text for a user with a visual impairment while a user with dyslexia may find the characters difficult to tell apart. It's preferable to use sans serif fonts.

There are some fonts that have been designed specifically for accessibility, such as [Tiresias](#) and [OpenDyslexic](#), but fonts like Arial, Helvetica, Open Sans, and Verdana are good.



Emphasising content

Screen readers do not identify color and may not identify font styles like Bold, Italics, Underline, Strikethrough. Use these styles to provide visual breaks.

Do not use them to indicate visually the importance or convey information.

Use the written text itself to emphasise important content.



High color contrast

WCAG 2.1 establishes some contrast criteria between background, text, and images to guarantee more readability in our productions.

If you want a tool that tries to reproduce how colors and fonts are shown for people with color blindness, among others, or recreate an environment with too much or too little light, [access this tool to check contrast](#).



Make your links descriptive

Every link should describe what the user can expect to find when they click it. This is key for the Links List tool that screen readers provide.

- Avoid using generic phrases such as “click here” or “see more.” The Links List tools will read the text of the link exactly as entered
- Web addresses or URLs are not considered informative and should not be used. The screen reader reads each letter individually. Instead make the text descriptive
- Opening links in a new window can be disorienting. Keep them to a minimum. Tell your users when you are using a new window



Alternative text for images

Alternative text enables people to visualize images when they are unable to see them, helping them understand the intended message conveyed by the image. Writing alt text:

- Format: Tell us if it’s a photo, illustration, artwork, GIF, photo album or something else specific
- Subject: who is the main “character” of the image? Is it an adult person, a child, a dog or an object?
- Landscape: contextualize the image scene. Where does it happen? Is it the inside of a place or an outside area? Is it on a street, in a garden, in the office? Which colors are highlighted and in which position?
- Action: describe what the action is. What is happening? How is it happening? Remember to use the verb in the present tense



Closed captioning for videos

Closed Captioning is time-synchronized text that reflects an audio track and can be read while watching visual content. Writing good closed captions:

- Divide your sentences into two relatively equal parts like a pyramid
- Always keep an average of 20 to 30 characters per second
- A sequence should only last between 1 and 8 seconds
- Always keep a person’s name or title together
- Do not break a line after conjunction
- Consider aligning multi-lined captions to the left
- Be careful with the font and background colors’ contrast
- To improve the contrast and readability of the subtitles add a semi-transparent box behind the text

References from

- [Write Accessible Content by Blackboard](#)
- [Change people org](#)
- [What are accessible fonts](#)
- [How to Make Your Social Justice Events Accessible to the Disability Community: A Checklist](#)
- [Creating Neuro inclusive event](#)

Additional resources

- [Alt text to describing maps, charts, diagrams and any other complex images](#)
- [How to write good alt text](#)
- [Designing for Accessibility: Best Practices for Closed Captioning and Subtitles UX](#)
- [Guidelines for closed captions](#)



To learn more:

**Download the
software practitioner's
Accessibility handbook**