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ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES

PROVIDE A TEXT EQUIVALENT FOR EVERY NON-TEXT ELEMENT.

Who benefits:

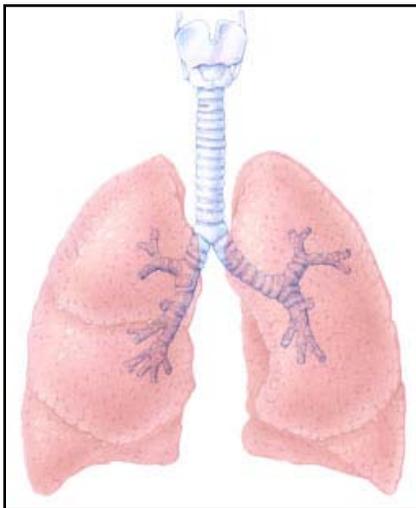
- Text to speech users – visually impaired and learning disabled.
- Non disabled people who have their images disabled in their browser: for example, someone with low bandwidth (e.g., dial up Internet connection), and users of small screen devices like PDAs or smart phones.

Tips:

- Add an alternate text description to all images.
- Use the fewest number of words to describe images.
- Avoid words such as “picture of” or “image of”.
- The alternative text should describe the content and function of an image, not necessarily the description of the image.
- If the image has no relevant content or function, if it’s just decorative, the image should still have an alt tag, even if it’s empty.
- Always consider the context and purpose of the image before you decide what words to use in the alternative text tag.
- Footnotes are recommended for documents that are going to be printed.
- Avoid using PDF files created as images. These files are inaccessible. If you scan a document into PDF, make sure you scan it using Optical Character Recognition (OCR).

Examples:

BAD EXAMPLE:



GOOD EXAMPLE:

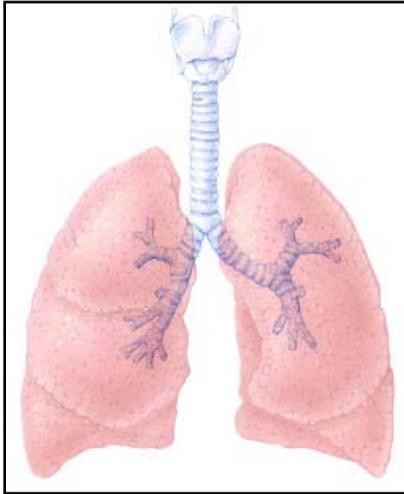
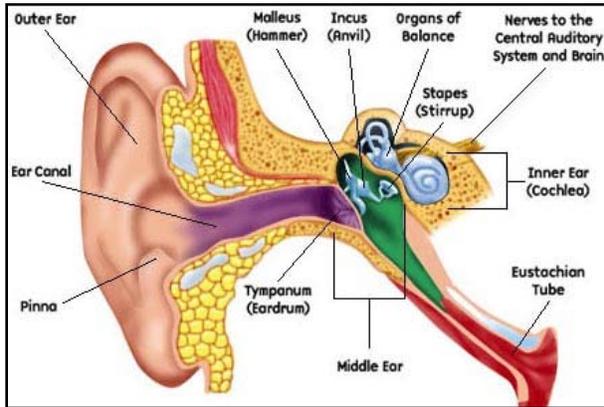


Figure 2. Healthy lung

BAD EXAMPLE:



GOOD EXAMPLE:

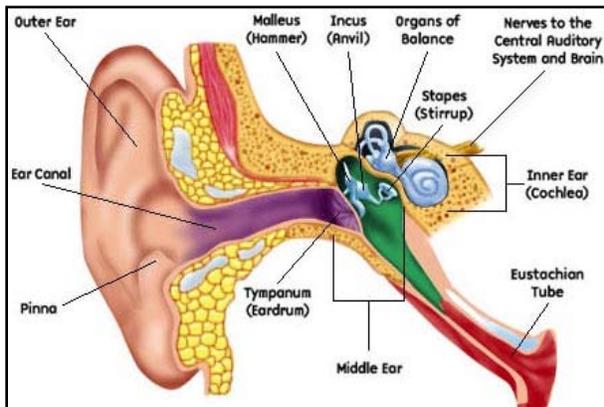


Figure 3. Anatomy of the ear

DON'T RELY ON COLOUR ALONE.

Who benefits:

- Colorblind users.
- Blind users
- People with low vision
- Non disabled individuals who use small screen devices (e.g. PDAs).

Tips:

- Never use colour to convey information not conveyed in any other way.
- Avoid the use of green and red.
- If colour is used, make sure the contrast between two colours is strong. This is particularly important for users with low vision, but it may affect many others.

Examples:

BAD EXAMPLE:

These are the results of the race. Racers listed in red also made the Olympic team:

- John Doe
- **Jack Sprat**
- Billy Bob

GOOD EXAMPLE:

These are the results of the race. The second place finisher, highlighted in red, also qualified for the Olympic team:

- First Place: John Doe
- **Second Place: Jack Sprat**
- Third Place: Billy Bob

HELP USERS NAVIGATE TO RELEVANT CONTENT – USE STYLE SHEETS AND USE THEM PROPERLY.

Who benefits:

- Screen reader users – usually blind or visually impaired
- People who use their keyboard to navigate

Tips:

- Use true headings defined with Style Sheets (e.g., h1, h2, etc.), not just enlarged or formatted text, to organize content.
- Provide a table of contents with links to each sub-section.
- If you use formatting to emphasize headings or important information in a document, text to speech software such as programs used by visually impaired students may not recognize the information that is emphasized unless you use style sheets.
- Style sheets allow you to clearly define the structure of a document and to improve the accessibility of documents while still allowing for visual formatting. You can use style sheets to divide content into meaningful sections, reducing cognitive load. Use of style sheets to create headings also allows for easy creation of Table of Contents, which are particularly convenient with long documents.
- Avoid using textboxes to emphasize information. Instead, use the Borders and Shading feature in Word.

Examples:

BAD EXAMPLE:

[Open document created without CSS styles.](#)¹

GOOD EXAMPLE:

[Open document created with CSS styles.](#)²

¹ \sample CSS file\CLASSICS IN THE HISTORY OF PSYCHOLOGY no css.doc

² \sample CSS file\CLASSICS IN THE HISTORY OF PSYCHOLOGY with css.doc

PROVIDE CONTEXT AND ORIENTATION INFORMATION.

Who benefits:

- People with cognitive disabilities (LD, Cerebral Palsy, Brain Injuries, etc)
- Non disabled individuals with lower literacy
- Everyone

Tips:

- Grouping elements and providing contextual information about the relationship between elements can be useful to all users.
- Complex relationships between parts of a page may be difficult for people with cognitive disabilities and people with visual disabilities to interpret.

Example of text provided without context:

With hocked gems financing him, our hero bravely defied all scornful laughter that tried to prevent his scheme. "Your eyes deceive," he had said. An egg, not a table, correctly typifies this unexplored planet." Now three sturdy sisters sought proof. They forged along, sometimes through calm vastness, yet more often very turbulent peaks and valleys. Days became weeks as many doubters spread fearful rumors about the edge. At last from nowhere welcome winged creatures appeared, signifying momentous success.

What's the context?

ENSURE THAT DOCUMENTS ARE CLEAR AND SIMPLE.

Who benefits:

- People with cognitive disabilities (LD, Cerebral Palsy, Brain Injuries, etc)
- Non disabled individuals with lower literacy
- Everyone

Tips:

- Use the simplest language possible for your content.
- Organize your content using headings defined by Style Sheets.
- Avoid slang or jargon.
- Use the active voice (e.g., “They bought the books”, not “The books were bought by them”).
- Use positive language (e.g., “Remember to...”, not “Don’t forget to”)
- Use empty space to improve readability.
- Use illustrations to supplement text.
- Check spelling and grammar.

SIMULATION OF HOW TEXT IS READ BY LD:

With the end of the cold war and the military victory of the United States and its coalition partners over Iraq during the Gulf War, many believed that a better world order could be established partly on the basis of great power leadership. In particular it was hoped that the great powers would exercise leadership through the United Nations thereby strengthening that institution as an instrument of peace keeping and collective security. In an essay on the paradox of power explore the extent to which the great powers have since 1991 successfully secured or kept the peace in such troubled regions or states as Cambodia, Haiti, Rwanda, Somalia and the former Yugoslavia.

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[Listen to text to speech version of text.](#) ³

³ Text audio.mp3

ENSURE LINKS MAKE SENSE OUT OF CONTEXT.

Who Benefits:

- Screen reader users (usually blind)
- People with cognitive disabilities.
- Everyone.

Tips:

- Create contextual links and name them according to their purpose.
- Avoid using words such as “Click here”, “Here”, “More”, “More information”, “Continue”, etc.
- Focus on what the link is for. For example, “Download Office plugin”.
- Use footnotes or end notes to show entire URLs.

Examples:

Bad hyperlink examples:

To email professor [click here](#).

<mailto:eva.revuelta-lopez@humber.ca>

Good hyperlink example (look at footnote too):

[Contact professor by email.](#)⁴

⁴ <mailto:eva.revuelta-lopez@humber.ca>

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS.

TABLES

- Tables can be inaccessible for screen reading users, and confusing for people with cognitive disabilities.
- Never use tables for layout.
- Never draw a table, always insert table.
- Provide row and column headers.
- If the table continues on the next page, specify that in the Table Properties.
- Under Table Properties, ensure that the rows do not break across pages.
- Do not press Enter inside of a table cell to make the cell bigger. Instead, go to Cell Properties and specify a higher cell margin.
- Enter a caption for each table.
- Do not use heading styles in a table.

TEXTBOXES

- Do not use textboxes, they are inaccessible. Users of text to speech software will not hear the computer read the content of textboxes.
- Use the borders and shadow settings to emphasize text while still making it accessible.

BAD EXAMPLE:

The text inside of this textbox is not accessible for screen readers.

GOOD EXAMPLE:

The text inside this border is accessible.