# Creating accessible documents

This fact sheet outlines some key tips for accessible documents that will improve the way you deliver information in your workplace and community.

## Why are accessible documents important?

We communicate through a range of printed and digital documents every day. Many of them are not accessible for everyone. Common issues include:

* small font size and difficult to read fonts
* poor contrast between background and information including poor colour choices
* digital documents which are not accessible for screen readers which look for navigational structures such as headings, links and alternative text
* complex sentence construction and concepts which are poorly explained and don't consider cognitive ability or literacy.

## What should I focus on when improving accessibility?

Firstly, [design your document](https://www.stylemanual.gov.au/accessible-and-inclusive-content/design-accessibility-and-inclusion) with accessibility and inclusion at the core. Consider the target audience – what information do they need and how will they engage with the document? Include other people who communicate in a variety of ways in the design of the content.

Make sure your document is available in multiple formats. PDFs are not always accessible for everyone. Choose Word and/or HTML where possible.

Consider technical elements and make your document more accessible by:

* Using headings and built-in style guides to make your document easy to navigate.
* Using simple fonts (i.e. ‘sans-serif’) and avoid fancy or stylised fonts.
* Using a [colour contrast](https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/) checker between the text and the background.
* Utilising white space to improve readability and avoid crammed content.
* Ensuring any diagrams, image or graphs have [alt-text](https://employmentservices.visionaustralia.org/business-consulting/digital-access/blog/five-tips-for-writing-alt-text) and a caption to describe them.
* Making sure your table has a header row and no merged cells.
* Avoiding text boxes and use text directly in the document.
* Naming your document’s properties accurately including document title, subject, keywords and author. Don’t forget to [update your metadata](https://w3c.github.io/publ-a11y/UX-Guide-Metadata/draft/principles/?updated).

## What are accessibility checkers?

Common software such as Microsoft Word and PowerPoint, and Adobe Acrobat for PDFs have [accessibility checkers](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/improve-accessibility-with-the-accessibility-checker-a16f6de0-2f39-4a2b-8bd8-5ad801426c7f). If you have followed the above steps, you should be able to reduce accessibility issues and improve access for people with disability.

## Further resources

This resource is part of a suite of training resources including a disability-friendly language guide and accessible and inclusive communication. Visit the Queensland Disability Plan website at [www.qld.gov.au/qld-disability-plan](http://www.qld.gov.au/qld-disability-plan)