

ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATIONS 101

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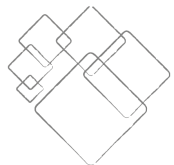
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What are communications?

- “The technology and systems used for sending and receiving messages, for example, postal, telephone, radio, TV and the Internet. The tactics used to execute a marketing strategy, for example, advertising, PR, Sales promotion, events...” Dr. Larson, University of Utah
- “...Communication is the strategy and creativity. It is the planning and managing that takes place first, and then communications are employed (through various media, whether the medium is print or Web or whatever) to get those formulated messages across.” Joshua De Lung, Executive Editor, Relatively Journalizing

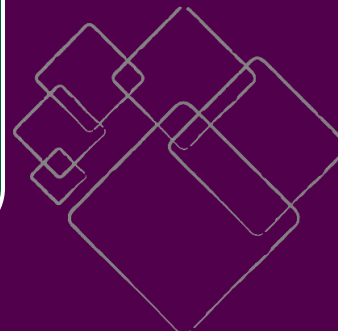


What are accessible communications?

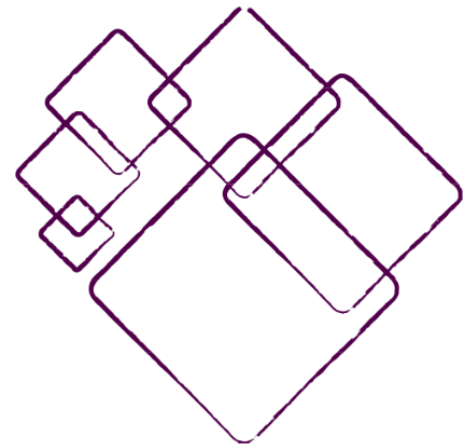
Ways of communicating that reach a wider and more inclusive audience, including people with disabilities and more (i.e. non-native English speakers)

Practices you can incorporate in virtual and in- person forms of communication

A way to increase the reach of your projects, events, and classes



“Increasing numbers of people with disabilities attend professional conferences and meetings. Most presenters have the goal that **everyone** who attends their presentation is able to **fully participate and access information**. Reaching this goal involves efforts at many levels. To begin with, think about the diverse characteristics that may be present in your audience. Potential attendees may have **different learning styles**, may not be fluent in the **language** in which you are presenting, and/or may have difficulty **seeing, hearing, moving, speaking**, and/or understanding common phrases and jokes in your **culture**.”



TRUE or FALSE:

Image descriptions and
alternative text are the same thing.

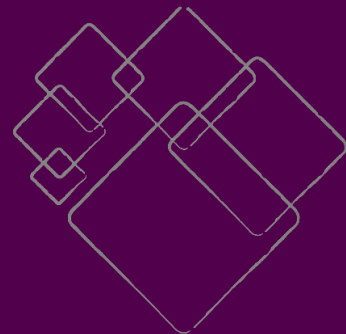


Image Descriptions vs. Alt Text

Image Description

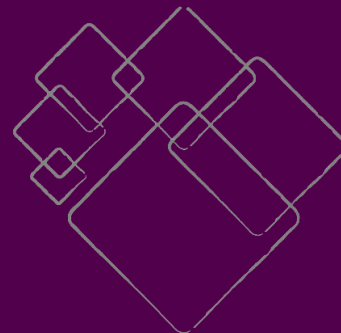
- Located in image caption, text post, or shared as a text link
- Visible to everyone
- No character limit
- More details and context

Alternative Text

- Typically located in the image metadata or added in the "alt text" box on social media
- Usually only visible to screen readers
- Limited to ~100-250 characters
- Short and brief summary

Visual Accessibility

- Describe yourself in your introduction
 - EX: I am a white woman, with straight blonde hair and glasses. I'm wearing a red blouse and have a white wall background. My pronouns are she/her.
- Provide image descriptions or alternative text for any visual elements like images and icons
- Share PDFs along with an editable document
- Try to avoid visually-led instructions, or provide alternatives (e.g. "click on the red box to download")
- Be careful with moving/dynamic content (e.g. moving elements, transitions, autoplay)
- Test it out!



Text-To-Speech

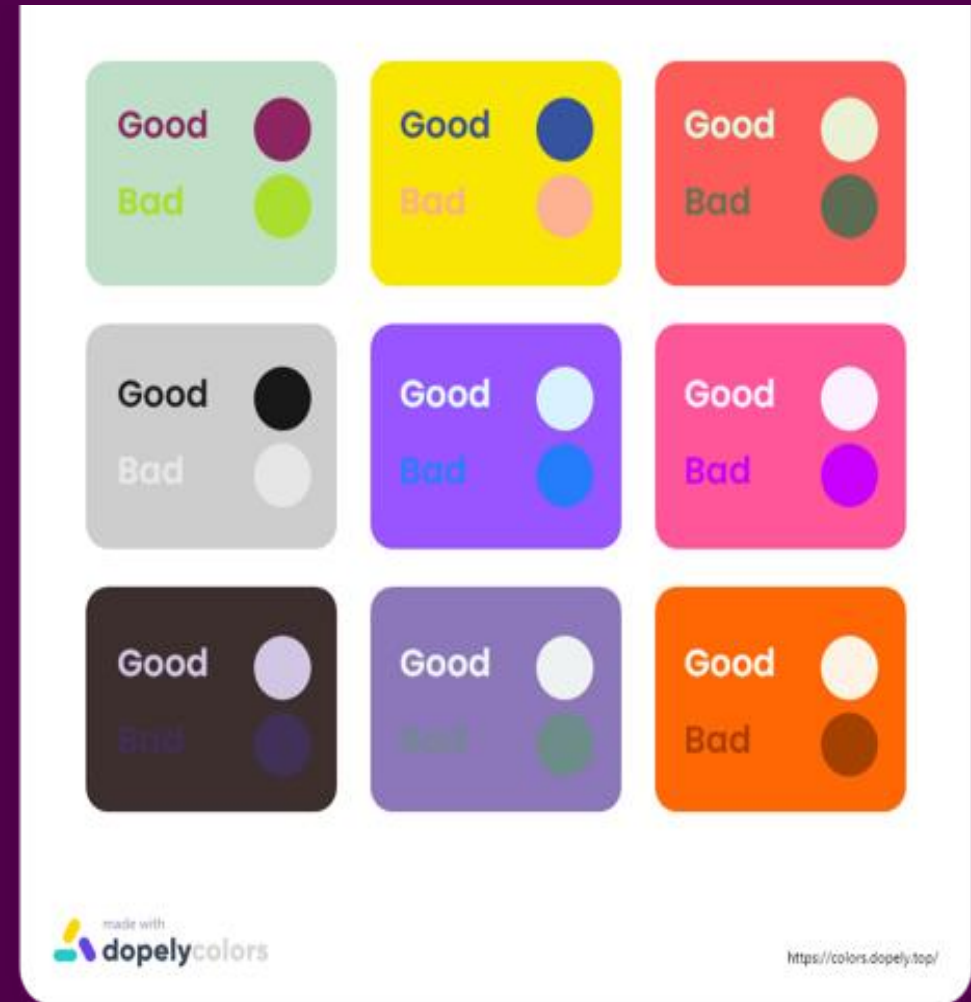


Customizable Text



Contrast

- Colors with high contrast makes navigating, reading, and interacting better
- Applies to text, images, links, icons, and more
- Rule of thumb: if it's important enough to be seen, it must have adequate contrast
- An easy way to check contrast:
coolers.co/contrast-checker

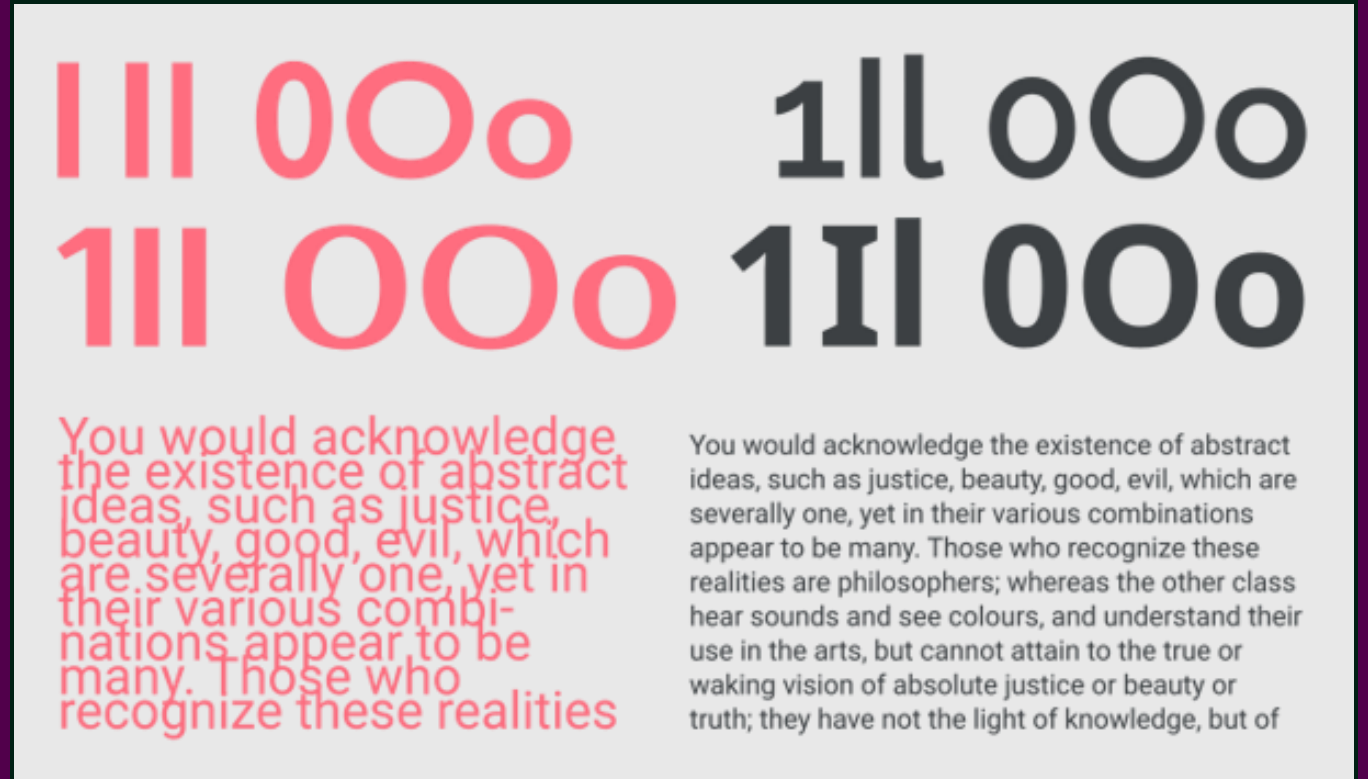


Contrast Demonstration



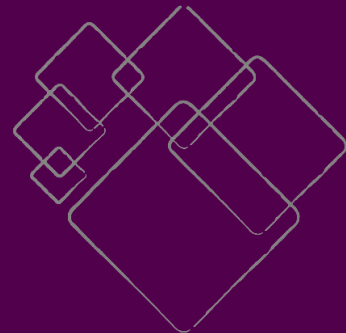
Font

- Adequate spacing between words and lines
- Font styles that are less decorative (i.e. avoiding cursive styles)
- Font size and style (bold, italics)
 - As contrast decreases, font size must increase
- Provide editable documents that allow readers to change font as needed

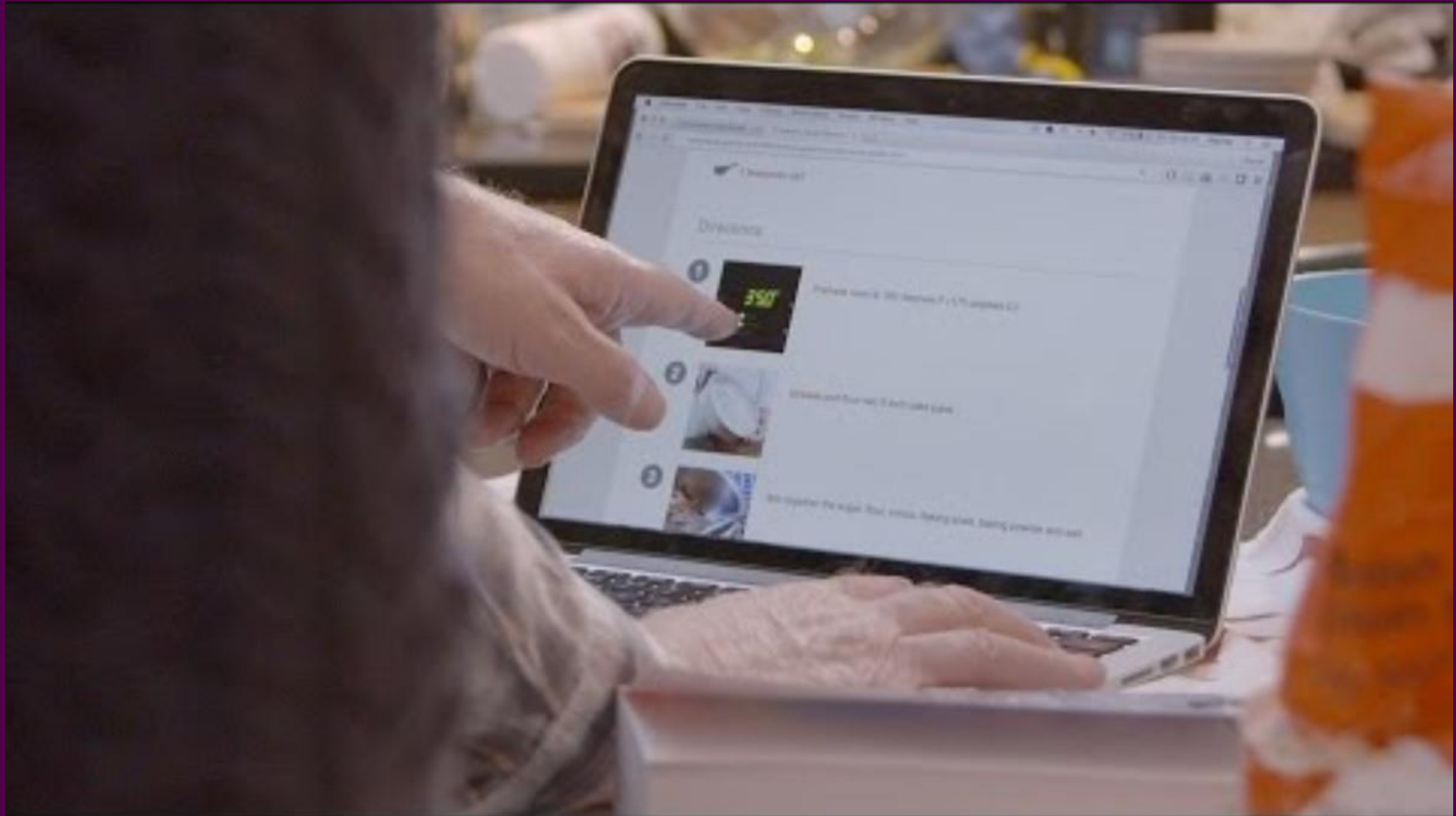


Auditory Accessibility

- Captioning
- ASL interpretation
- Audio clarity (speed, clarity of enunciating, pause for processing)
- Repeating most important concepts more than once
- Audio amplification (microphone for speaker; dependent upon learning space)

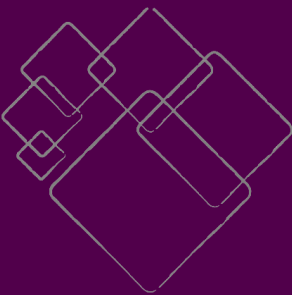


Understandable Content



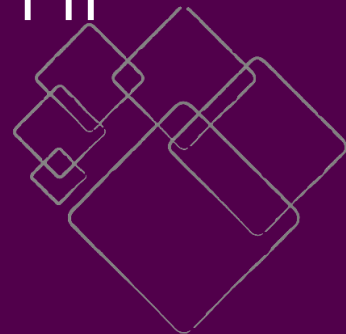
Questions?

Short Q&A Break



How comfortable are you writing in plain language?

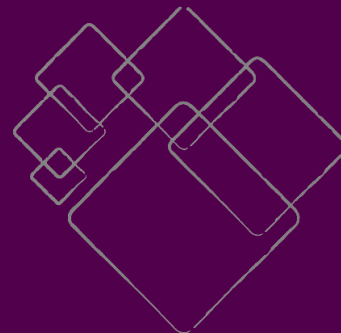
- I'm an expert
- I understand the concept, but am looking to learn more strategies
- I know what it is, but I don't know how to write in it
- This is the first time I've heard of plain language



What is plain language?

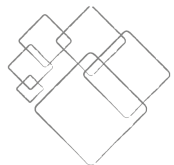
"Writing that is clear, concise, well- organized, and follows other best practices appropriate to the subject or field and intended audience"
(Plain Language Act of 2010)

- Material is in plain language if your audience can:
 - Find what they need
 - Understand what they find the first time they read or hear it
 - Use what they find to meet their needs
- Why use plain language?
 - Plain language gets your message across in the shortest time possible.
 - More people are able to understand your message



Tips & Tricks

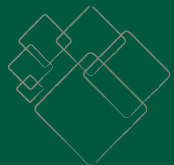
- Write for your audience
- Simplify word choices, use common terms
- Eliminate use of acronyms or jargon
- Only include the necessary information
- Use Active vs. Passive Voice:
 - "He was invited to the party" - passive
 - "They invited him to the party" -active
- Lists & tables can help
- Use short sentences
- Be helpful & human
- Clarity of information for a "layperson" is key.



Simplify word choices & use 'common terms'

If your initial screening evaluation indicated you have high blood pressure, you will be asked to participate in the second phase of this research investigation. The investigation aims to examine a new medication that may prevent cardiovascular disease.

If your tests show you have high blood pressure, we ask you to be in the second part of that is study. Our goal is to test new medication that may help keep some people from getting heart disease.



Shorter isn't always better...

Definition: Legal Guardian

Before:

A legal guardian has the authority and duty to care for the personal and property interest of another person.

Grade Level: 13.5

Definition: Legal Guardian

After:

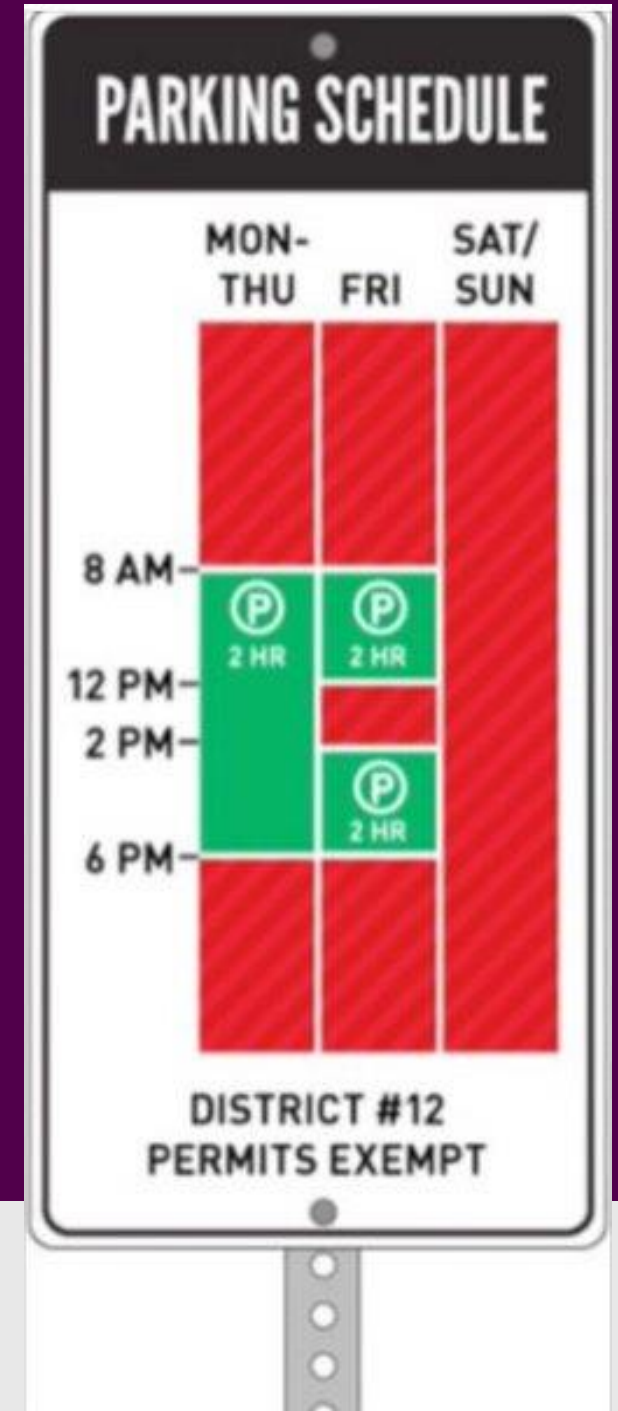
A legal guardian acts as a parent for another person. The guardian must care for and make decisions for that person.

For example:

- The guardian must make sure the person is properly fed, clothed, housed and goes to school.
- The guardian has the power to make property, medical care and schooling decisions for that person.

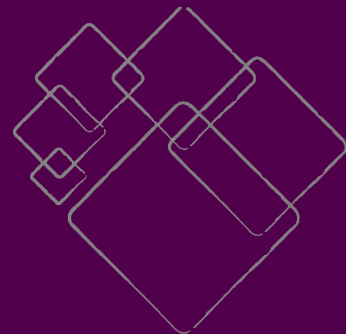
Grade Level: 7

Lists and tables can help



“Active vs. Passive voice” - Active Preferred

- Use the bunny test if you're not sure: If you can add "by bunnies" at the end of a sentence and it still seems grammatically correct, it's most likely in the passive voice.
 - Passive: A report will be submitted... (by bunnies)
 - Active: We (or "department X") will submit a report.
 - Passive: The class syllabus will be posted... (by bunnies)
 - Active: The biology professor (or "I") will post the class syllabus



Try it out!

- Conceal
- Consent
- Enjoined
- Expenditures
- Injunction
- Modification
- Parties
- Shall



Simple Swaps

Single words	→	Plain Language
• Conceal		Hide or cover up
• Consent		Agree, okay, allow
• Enjoined		Ordered, commanded
• Expenditures		Costs or expense
• Injunction		Ban, order, ruling
• Modification		Change or adjustment
• Parties		People involved
• Shall		Must, will, going to

Now, with short phrases

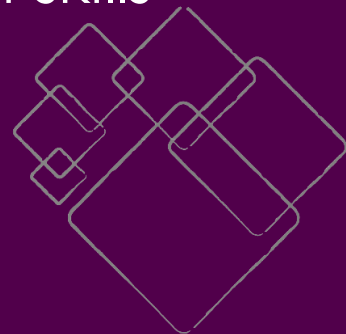
- At the present time
- Effective date of termination of order
- Set the matter for hearing
- With regards to
- A true and correct copy
- Found a loophole with which to circumvent the truth
- Made a statement that
- Supply an explanation that is satisfactory
- Now
- The date the order ends
- Set your hearing date
- About
- A copy
- Lied
- Said
- Explain

On your own

As used in subsection (a) of this section, the term “discriminate against a qualified individual on the basis of disability” includes—

failing to select and administer tests concerning employment in the most effective manner to ensure that, when such test is administered to a job applicant or employee who has a disability that impairs sensory, manual, or speaking skills, such test results accurately reflect the skills, aptitude, or whatever other factor of such applicant or employee that such test purports to measure, rather than reflecting the impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills of such employee or applicant (except where such skills are the factors that the test purports to measure).

From ADA Employment - Title 1



SAMPLE PASSAGE Remixed:

This document says that illegal discrimination against a person with a disability includes:

Choosing and using employment test formats that do not reflect job skills.

If a job candidate has a disability that: effects their senses, effects use of hands or body, or effects their speaking skills, steps must be taken to ensure that the employer is testing the candidate's actual ability to perform the job.

This means that the test cannot simply screen for sensory, manual or speech skills. Instead, employment tests must screen for specific skills that are relevant to the job.

The only exception to this law would be when the specific skills mentioned are uniquely relevant to the job itself, such as needing vision to be a commercial driver.



Resources

[\[1\] Dr. Larson - University of Utah](#)

[\[2\] Joshua De Lung, Executive Editor, Relatively Journalizing](#)

[\[3\] Equal Access: Universal Design of Your Presentation](#)

[\[4\] How to Write Alt Text and Image Descriptions for the visually impaired](#)

[\[5\] Web Accessibility Perspectives: Text to Speech](#)

[\[6\] Web Accessibility Perspectives: Customizable Text](#)

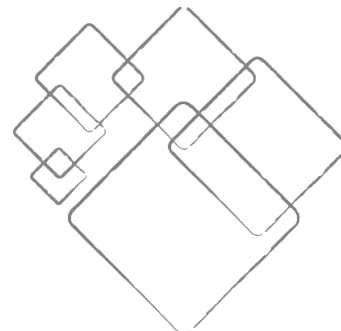
[\[7\] Colors - Color Contrast Checker](#)

[\[8\] WebAim - Contrast Checker](#)

[\[9\] Accessible Web - WCAG Color Contrast Checker](#)

[\[10\] Chrome Web Store: WCAG Color contrast checker](#)

[\[11\] Web Accessibility Perspectives: Colors with Good Contrast](#)



Resources (2)

[\[12\] Web Accessibility Perspectives: Understandable Content](#)

[\[13\] GovInfo: Public Law 111 - 274 - Plain Writing Act of 2010](#)

[\[14\] Perdue University - Active Versus Passive Voice](#)

[\[15\] Medium - Readability Checkers](#)

[\[16\] National Archives: Plain Writing Checklist](#)

[\[17\] PlainLanguage.gov](#)

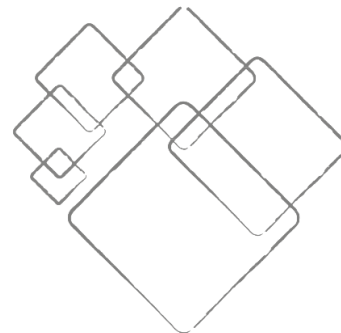
[\[18\] Center for Plain Language: What is Readability?](#)

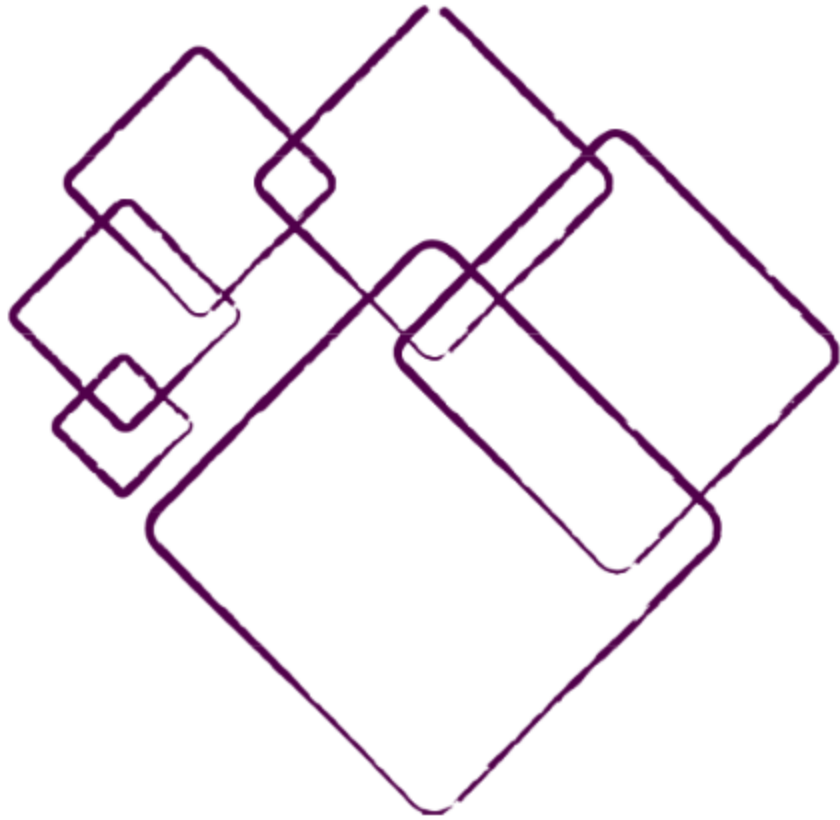
[\[19\] "One Idea Per Line" Guide \(ASAN\)](#)

[\[20\] HHS Plain Language Examples](#)

[\[21\] How Plain Language Empowers People with Disabilities](#)

[\[22\] From ADA Employment - Title 1](#)





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