

Accessible Language Checklist

- Make the purpose clear**
Most people read only the first few words or sentences of content. Making the purpose clear not only engages users, but it makes the information more accessible.
 - Use active voice**
Active voice is clearer, more direct and easier to translate. Using active voice whenever possible is important for accessibility.
 - Stay consistent**
Use the same terminology throughout your copy (don't use both "doctor" and "physician"). And try not to use the same word two different ways ("tear a paper" vs. "eyes make tears").
 - Organize with headings**
Headings outline information for easier skimming. Tagging content with standard heading styles can also help people who use screen readers and boost your SEO.
 - Add descriptive links**
Hyperlinks should make sense out of context. The more descriptive linked text is, the easier it is for people (or screen readers) to understand what they're clicking.
 - Remove extra words**
Words that only take up space — very, seriously, some, just, even or I think — without adding meaning make sentences longer and the message less available to users.
 - Chunk information**
Limiting paragraphs to one main idea makes content more accessible. Bulleted or numbered lists, where appropriate, can also help.
 - Avoid jargon and idioms**
Simplify complex healthcare terms like "hypertension" or "cardiovascular." Look out for idioms and think about different ways the audience could interpret your content.
 - Define complex terms**
The key to making complex words accessible is to define them. Adding a glossary can help. Look at acronyms and see if it makes sense to use the full phrase.
 - Remember multimedia**
When possible, try to use multimedia elements in addition to words. Consider audio clips, videos and images. And don't forget descriptive alt text and captions.
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