

## Getting Started with Document Accessibility

To help you remember the best practices for document accessibility, use the mnemonic **SLIDE**, which stands for:

- **Styles** are used to properly mark up headings
- **Links** are meaningful
- **Images** have text alternatives
- **Design** is perceivable and predictable
- **Empathy** drives design

### Styles are used to mark up section headings



Section headings reveal how the information is organized and make the document easier to scan. Properly marking up section headings with styles also improves navigation for screen reader users.

**Best Practices:** Select the desired heading text and choose an appropriate heading style (H1, H2 and so on) from the styles menu in your authoring tool. Make sure headings are nested in a logical order (e.g. H2 does not come before H1).

### Links are meaningful



Screen reader users can use a shortcut to bring up a list of the links in a document. Links need to be unique and descriptive for them to make sense when they are accessed as a list, without the surrounding text for context.

**Best Practice:** Instead of “click here” or “learn more” select meaningful text (text that is descriptive and unique) and make that text the link.

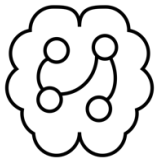
## Images include text alternatives



Screen readers can only describe an image to someone who is blind if a text alternative is provided. Text alternatives can also make complex images easier to understand for other learners.

**Best Practices:** After considering the purpose of the image and the context for its use, provide a concise description that focuses on the information the image conveys. If the image is only used for decoration, mark it as decorative (if your authoring tool has that option) or use “decorative” as the alternative text.

## Design Is perceivable and predictable



Through good design, you can reduce the amount of effort it takes your readers to process the information in a document, allowing them to focus on the meaning conveyed by the content rather than its presentation.

### Best Practices:

- Ensure sufficient contrast between text and the background. This can be confirmed with the free [Colour Contrast Analyser](#) tool for Mac and Windows.
- Choose a sans-serif font (one without extra ornamentation) for your body text.
- Use left-alignment rather than fully-justified text. Full justification can add extra spacing between words that can be distracting to some readers.

## Empathy drives design



As you work on your documents, think about how your choices impact on others - approach your design with empathy and ask yourself questions such as:

- Is everyone able to perceive the information? Does my content require only one means for accessing information (e.g. seeing, hearing, etc.)?
- Is everyone able to navigate and interact with the content? Does my content require only one means for interacting with the information (e.g. mouse, keyboard, touch gestures)?
- Is everyone able to understand the content? Does my content include definitions of key terms and other language supports? Is my content written in plain language?