

Guidelines for Preparing Accessible Curriculum Materials

1. Use Google Docs and Slides

If you must [convert from a Word document \(video script\)](#), then review your Google Doc after conversion, as the conversion process may result in some formatting features that are not supported.



2. Do not include screenshots of text

When students need to read the text in a document or a slide, the text reader will only work if the reader can select the text with the mouse. If you have pasted an image of the text, it is inaccessible.

3. Use sufficient white-space

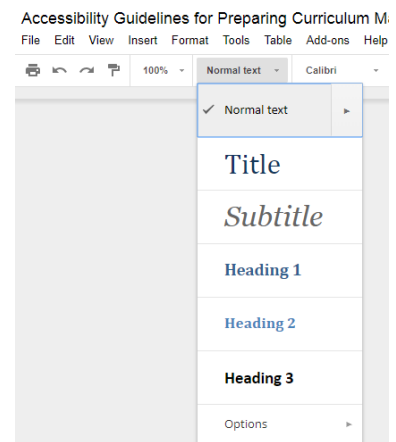
Crowded text can overwhelm struggling readers, individuals with visual impairments, and those with test anxiety.

4. Put periods after question numbers and answer choices.

For those using a text reader, punctuation prevents text from flowing together, which can confuse. Whenever grammatically acceptable, put periods at the end of each answer choice.

1. What is the most important reason to make your documents accessible?

 - a. Everyone will be able to use them.
 - b. You will be in compliance with ADA.
 - c. Fewer students will be at a disadvantage.



5. Use the [word processor's built-in styles](#)

When you use these built-in styles, the assistive technology tools can understand the navigational elements. This will assist those

with motor impairments and readers with low or no vision. If you simply bold or resize your font, the screen reader gives no indication of this, and a low-vision reader doesn't benefit from the visual cues.

6. Use images that are clear, sufficiently large, and of a quality that can be enlarged on the screen.

If students might be working with a printed version of your resource, then make sure that your images will copy with acceptable quality. If the students will be working with the document online, make sure the images are of substantial quality so that they render correctly when magnified to 200%.



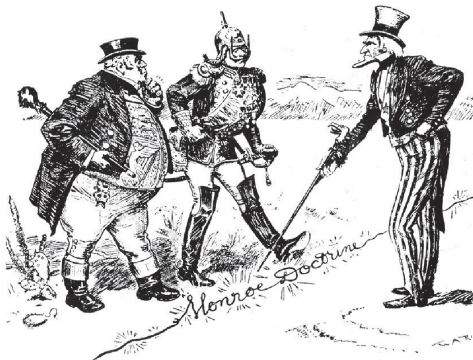
High-quality image zoomed in



Low-quality image zoomed in

7. When images contain text, provide an alternative.

An alternative would be a caption or a transcript, depending on the content.



Caption: The line on the ground reads "Monroe Doctrine."

8. Use the special "alt-text" feature to describe pictures

This is the best practice for creating accessible documents. Every image can be tagged with underlying text that describes it to individuals who cannot see it well.

[To create alt-text in Google Docs](#), right-click on the image and choose "Alt text..." from the popup menu.

9. All videos should be closed-captioned

See [Accessible Videos for Instruction and Distance Learning](#).

10. For mathematical expressions, use an equation editor

This will ensure consistency in presentation for sighted students. Assistive technologies for low vision students have the ability to read the mathematical expressions when written using an equation editor.

11. Consider how a human reader would read special symbols and equations

If necessary, guide what should be read aloud and what should simply be described to a student using a human or text reader accommodation.

12. Add pictures when relevant and appropriate

This supports engagement, memory, and cognition.

13. Be mindful of your use of color

If you use color to convey meaning, remember that individuals listening to the text may not benefit from this visual clue. Individuals with color blindness will not distinguish some color combinations. Red on black is the most common problem.

14. Embed your links in the text

This makes your text more readable and avoids having the text reader speak all the letters and symbols in the web address. This is also the best practice for web design. If you want readers of the printed copy to be able to navigate to the website, create a [bit.ly](#) or [tiny URL](#).

Do this:	Instead of this:
-----------------	-------------------------

Read more about the [branches of government](#) from the [USA.gov](#) website.

Click on the link to read more about the branches of government from the USA.gov website.

<https://www.usa.gov/branches-of-government>

15. Use descriptive headings

When creating and posting material for students, use descriptive headings so students know what format and content to expect when they access that material. For example, instead of "video," write "[PebbleGo's video about Dolphins.](#)"

16. Use header rows in tables

Always include a header row if using tables to organize content.

This

Color	Quantity
Red	16
Yellow	18

Not this

Blue	12
Red	16
Yellow	18

17. Add links when embedding resources in MyMCPS

When embedding a resource in MyMCPS classroom, such as an accessible Google Slides file, provide the link to the resource on the page, enabling students to "pop" the resource out. Embedded documents and web pages are inoperable with screen and text readers.

18. Use accessible fonts

Examples of accessible fonts are Sans-Serif, Arial, Helvetica, Comic Sans, Verdana, Tahoma, and Calibri. Font size should be 12-14 points or equivalent (e.g., 1-1.2em / 16-19 px). Some dyslexic readers may request a larger font. Avoid using all capital letters and uppercase letters for continuous text. Lowercase letters are easier to read. Things to avoid: Italics and excessive underlining.

See Also: [Designing for Accessibility in Canvas Guidelines](#) and [Accessible MyMCPS Classroom Assignments](#)