



## Home Recording Accessibility Considerations

Based on the scenarios introduced in this [Keep Sharing: A Spectrum of Options for Home Recordings](#), we created a list of accessibility considerations for each home recording option. We suggest that instructors should read through and reflect on these accessibility considerations **prior to** the recording.

If you'd like to directly jump into the accessibility considerations for a specific home recording option, please activate the **direct link** underneath its title in the table below.

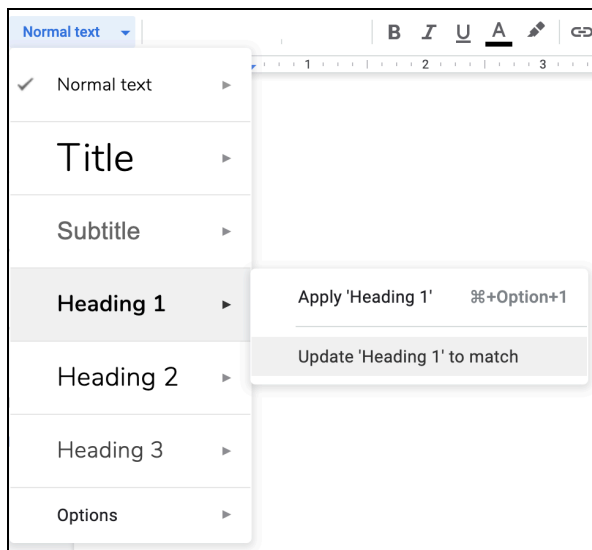
<b>Text &amp; Images</b> <a href="#">(direct link)</a>	Text is an often overlooked option for providing content and context. Not a “recording” per se, but an alternative for many presentations. Examples: illustrated textbooks, blogs
<b>Talking/Showing without screen visuals</b> <a href="#">(direct link)</a>	The focus of the “talking” approach is the presenter and their “performance” of the material, while “showing” is recording an event. Examples: podcasts, many YouTube videos, newscasts; a dance demo
<b>Screencast/Slideshow</b> <a href="#">(direct link)</a>	A method for sharing the full-screen; often used to show software demonstrations, slides with (or without) annotations, with audio/voice. Examples: software tutorials, slide presentations
<b>Screencast with video “bookends”</b> <a href="#">(direct link)</a>	A combination of the “talking/showing” approach and a screencast, where the presenter opens and closes with unscripted video, but the main content is a screencast. Examples: software tutorials with intros
<b>Lecture+Screen, edited lecture</b> <a href="#">(direct link)</a>	This is the classic video lecture format, where the slide presentation is intercut with video of the presenter lecturing with, or without, a script. Examples: many many online lectures

## 1. Text & Images

- **Avoid using non-searchable documents such as non-OCRd PDF documents.** If a document is not searchable, it prevents screen readers from recognizing the text in the document. For example, if you scan a book without applying OCR (Optical Character Recognition), the scanned copy will turn out to be simply a set of images instead of searchable PDFs. If you plan on assigning digital documents for learners to read, the order of **preferred formats** (from the most desirable to the least) from an accessibility perspective is: Electronic publication (Epub) > HTML > PDF > OOXML (Word doc).
- **Select easily readable fonts for body text.** When you create text documents by yourself, it is reasonable that sometimes you want to be creative in font choices to meet certain visual design goals. However, please make sure that the body text, which occupies the majority of your document content, is written in an easily readable font. *Imagine the body text in your document which is pages long is written like this in fonts such as Caveat, how challenging it would be for people especially those who have low vision or whose first language is not English to read.*
- **Avoid small font sizes.** While there is no official minimum font size for document creation, it is generally agreed upon that the smallest font size in your document should be larger than **10** points. However, considering that different typefaces would look different even in the same font sizes and there are also other factors such as spacing and the amount of text on one page that would contribute to the readability of a document, instead of proposing a suggested font size, we suggest that you can test if the font size is acceptable by **resizing** the whole document into 50% of its current size. If the text is still readable in its 50% view, then the font size should be good.
- **Use sufficient contrast of colors between text and background.** We recommend two easy to use free online tools:
  - [Color Safe](#) can generate accessible color palettes if you need a whole color palette to design your document.
  - [Contrast Checker](#) produced by WebAIM is a tool to check color contrast ratio. What you need to do is to type in the color codes of the text color and background color. You should be able to get the color code in the color choice pane in the text writing software you are using. If not, consider using an online [color eyedropper](#) to get the color code.
- **Make visual content accessible by providing textual descriptions.** Visual content such as images and graphs should be accompanied with textual descriptions to make sure that learners who use screen readers can have equal access to the information. See some examples in this [Image Description Handbook](#).
  - If the external resources you assign to learners do not have textual descriptions to its visual content, consider **drafting a supplemental document** by yourself that includes descriptions to important visuals.



- If you are creating documents by yourself, there are two ways to describe visuals in your document:
  - **1) Adding alternative text.** Alternative text is a textual description that you embed the image so that screen reader users can read.
  - **2) Add captions underneath the image.** If you are not familiar with how to add alternative text to images, you can write detailed captions to your images and put the caption underneath the image. You can also do this if you think the caption would benefit other learners as well besides screen reader users.
- **Use Style Pane to make sure document elements are correctly tagged.** Elements in a document primarily include the title, different heading levels, and body text. These different elements are usually differentiated by font sizes and colors. However, it is crucial to make sure that they are **differentiated by tags** as well, so that screen readers will be able to identify different tags of elements for people who are not able to see the appearance of different font sizes and colors. The easiest way to ensure your text elements are correctly tagged is to use the **Style Pane** in the software you are creating documents with. For example, the screenshot below is the Style Pane in Google doc. Other text writing software such as Word Doc have similar Style Pane. **Note:** If the default font choices or colors in Style Pane do not match your ideal choices, you can always replace them with the ones you want, as long as you remember to **“update to match”** as the screenshot indicates. A correctly tagged document allows users to transfer the document to a different format more easily as well (e.g., from Doc to PDF).



- **Do not skip heading levels.** A set of logical heading levels, i.e., heading level 1 followed by heading level 2, is important for screen reader users who rely on the heading level tags to understand the structure of the document. The more complex the structure (e.g., contains nested headings), the more important it is to maintain a logical reading order.

## 2. Talking/Showing without screen visuals

- **Provide textual alternatives to your audio content.** In this scenario, your talk is the only source that learners receive information from. So, it is important to offer textual alternatives to audio so that those who have difficulty in accessing audio information won't be excluded.
  - If you are creating an audio-only file (e.g., podcasts and audiobooks), you can provide a downloadable file that has a transcript of your audio. You can use transcribe services, or write a transcript by expanding your script if you have any.
  - If you are creating a video, please caption your video. There are free tools to caption your video such as [YouTube](#), there are also paid services such as [KAPWING](#).
- **Verbally describe body movements/gestures if they are required to understand course content.** If you are creating a video, keep in mind that learners who are visually impaired would not be able to see what's happening on the screen without your verbal description. If you use any body movements or gestures that are expected learners to watch to be able to understand certain content, please make sure that you verbally describe your gestures and movements.
- **Use plain language to explain complex concepts.** Since the focus of this “talking/showing” approach is the presenter verbally delivering content without any visuals on screen, it would be helpful for the presenter to use plain language to ease the comprehension challenge of complex concepts. Plain language is not only about word choices, but also can be embodied by several techniques, including analogies, comparisons, metaphors, and synonyms.

## 3. Screencast/Slideshow

- **Verbally describe images when you talk about them.** Keep in mind that there might be learners who are visually impaired in your course and it is challenging or even impossible for them to see the visual content in videos. So, when you talk about visual content such as pictures and diagrams in videos, do not assume that everyone is able to visually see them. It is very important for you to verbally explain pertinent details so that learners with visual impairments are able to follow the content.
- **Verbally describe what's active on the screen.** If you are doing a demo and learners are expected to observe what's happening on the screen, please try your best to speak out loud the key points on the screen. For example, instead of saying “look at here”, it'd be better to say “look at this Fujita Scale, it estimated wind speeds: 261 to 318 mph”. If it's helpful, you can provide a textual narrative to the demo afterward so that learners who have difficulty following the video demo won't be left behind.
- **Highlight cursor movements while recording your screen.** When you have documents such as slides open on your screen and you expect learners to follow where your cursor points at, you should be aware that the cursor movement could be hard for learners with



low vision to follow, if you just use the default cursor size. Here are two options you can consider to amplify your mouse action:

- 1) Highlight the text in slides or documents that you are talking about at that moment
- 2) Use annotate tools such as *pen* in PowerPoint to mark the text you are talking about.
- 3) Adjust cursor sizes in your device system settings

#### 4. Screencast with video bookends

- The three points mentioned in **Screencast/Slideshow** can be applied here.
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#### 5. Lecture + Screen, edited lecture

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