## Designing Visually Accessible Slides

Many people with visual differences use assistive technology, including text-based screen reading software and computer devices. Slides need to be formatted so screen readers read everything on each slide in the order you intend. Even people without screen readers need to be able to **see** your slides, especially if you are presenting the slides to an audience in a large room. Think about designing your slides so that they are readable by **everyone**, including those in the very last row of the presentation space.

### Color and Background

- Select a template from PowerPoint instead of starting from a blank screen.
- There should be a high contrast between font color and slide background, such as white font color on a black background, or black font color on a white background.
- Avoid backgrounds with complicated, intricate, or distracting patterns or color gradients.
- Decorative elements on slide backgrounds should be used minimally.
- Avoid using *just* color to distinguish different things. Use symbols, icons, and shapes and/or bolding the text in addition to color (i.e. red checkmark, blue target symbol, green circle etc.) to distinguish different aspects of your slides.

### Text and Formatting

- Every slide should have a title and the title font size should be 44 pt or larger.
- Use a font size of 36 pt or larger for text boxes.
- Use underlining only for hyperlinks.
- Use Sans Serif fonts that are simpler and more readable on screens. Suggested sans serif fonts include Arial, Calibri, Helvetica, Tahoma, and Trebuchet MS.
- Limit the amount of text on a slide: no more than six (6) lines of text, or only 15 words total.
- Avoid over-crowding text: make sure there is space between lines.
- Use bullet points for a list, or numbered points for items in a sequential order.

### Using Multimedia (videos, images, graphs, charts)

**For Videos:**

- Embed YouTube video links within the slide.
- Provide text description of all multimedia in presentation.
- Closed captioning is required for all videos; it is recommended to also include a transcript for all videos.

**For Images:**
- Include alt-text for every image, or mark image as "decorative" if it is not an essential part of content.
- Provide captions and citations for images.
- Make sure the image is large enough on the slide to be seen in the back row.

**For Graphs & Charts:**
- Replace graphics with text whenever possible.
- Use high-contrast colors when creating graphs and charts.
- The font size should be 20 pt or larger for labels and should contrast with graph or chart colors.
- Use the Graph or Chart Title as the Slide Title.
- Provide a text slide after each graph or chart that describes when is seen in that graphic.
- Favor clarity over quantity of content.

Finally, use the Accessibility checker built into slide presentation software, such as Power Point, to review and correct any accessibility issues within the design.

## Resources

Reinert Center Resource Guide: Auditory Accessibility when Presenting or Recording a Slide Deck.

Av-Shalom, I., Malhotra, N., and Tatum, A. (2023). "Bridging the Gap: Overcoming Barriers in Higher Ed for Students with Disabilities including Neurodivergent Learners." Faculty Focus.

Explore Access at University of Arkansas. "Creating Accessible MS PowerPoint Presentations."

Noah, T. (2023). "Mistakes I Used to Make in Digital Accessibility—and How to Fix Them." Edutopia.org.

Rentz, J. (2023). "Supercharge Your Slide Deck for Student Learning." The Teaching Professor.

WebAIM. (2021). Power Point Accessibility.

For more information or to discuss how you might incorporate these ideas into your courses, contact the Reinert Center by email or submit a consultation request form.