



Fleming College

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# Fleming College's Guide to Creating Accessible Documents

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# Background

## **A.O.D.A. is the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, passed in 2005.**

This Act is meant to create accessibility for all Ontarians with disabilities by January 1, 2025.

### **Legislation:**

There are three Standards under the A.O.D.A.:

- Customer Service Standards
- Integrated Accessibility Standards (I.A.S.)
- Built Environment Standard

The I.A.S. was made law as **Ontario Regulation 191/11**. This regulation contains accessibility requirements related to [Information and Communications](#), Employment, Transportation and the Design of Public Spaces.

### **Action:**

A requirement of the Information and Communications section of the I.A.S. Regulation is to provide information in an accessible format, upon request, to help people with disabilities access information.

Fleming College will communicate in a way that is accessible to everyone. The information will be provided in a timely manner and at no additional costs. In addition to in-person communication, this includes written documents, reports, brochures, forms and extends to multi-media tools, such as the College's website.

## **Accessibility** is not just a matter of legal compliance.

The A.O.D.A. requires the College to provide accessible formats for people with disabilities, upon request. With little effort, we are in a position to do even better.

Implementing accessibility standards will facilitate inclusiveness and enhance access to Fleming College's services and facilities in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

This Guide to Accessible Documents aims to support the production of website ready, user-friendly documents for all students, faculty and staff, including people with disabilities.

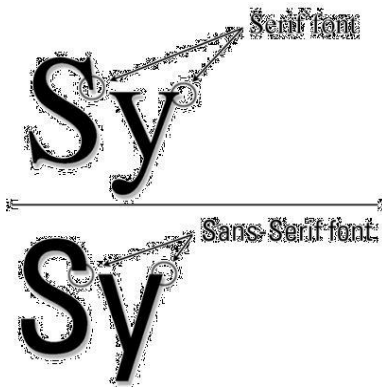
**Readability** should be the first step in making administrative documents accessible to everyone.

# Use appropriate **Font Family**

**Avoid complicated, decorative or handwriting fonts.**

Choose “Sans-Serif” fonts such as Arial. These fonts have easily recognizable upper, lower-case and numerical characters. Narrow versions of these fonts should be avoided.

Arial	This font is accessible
Garamond	This font is not accessible
<i>Monotype Corsiva</i>	<i>This font is not accessible</i>



The College’s standard font family is **Arial**.

## **Make text large, preferably between 12 and 18 points.**

The size of the font is a fundamental factor in legibility. Font size 12 is the standard for main body text. A minimum font of size 16 is the standard for presentation documents. A font size of 10 point and smaller is not accessible and should be avoided where possible.

Font Size 10	Size 10 or less is not accessible
Font Size 12	<b>Standard for main body text</b>
Font Size 14	Standard for main headings
Font Size 16	Standard for large print

Note: Font size varies between font families. This guide is based on the Arial font. If using sans-serif fonts other than Arial, use Arial as the base for determining appropriate font size. For example:

Arial, font size 12	Standard for main body text
Calibri, font size 14	Calibri 14 is similar in size to Arial 12
Verdana, font size 11	Verdana 11 is similar in size to Arial 12

Use **Bold** for emphasis, not italics or underlining

## **Avoid *italics* and underlining, to improve readability.**

**Italic fonts** are more difficult to read than regular fonts, mainly due to the output of angled characters on a digital screen that has poor resolution. There may be exceptions to using italics, such as when required to meet standard formatting (for example, citation in legal documents). Keep in mind, if the font is very large, italics may be more legible, but as a general rule, avoid italics where possible.

**Underlining** interferes with lower case letters and should be avoided for emphasis. Only use underlining when describing links, such as email addresses and web pages. In this application, use the international standard of a blue font. For example, [www.flemingcollege.ca](http://www.flemingcollege.ca). Microsoft Office products typically recognize email addresses and web page links and automatically apply this format.

When following these simple rules, we not only comply with the requirements of the **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005**, we make documents easier to read.

## **A sentence written with a combination of upper and lower case letters is easier to read.**

The ascenders and descenders found in lower-case letters provide word shape, causing mental reading clues to speed up the process of reading. Sentences written in all upper case do not benefit from these clues and are more difficult to read.

### **CAPITALS DON'T GIVE CLUES.**

#### **Different shapes give clues.**

It may make sense to use all upper case in some instances, such as short headings, titles with a maximum of two words or when text is used as a graphic image and not intended to be read. In these examples, there is no benefit to having the mental reading clues. However, upper case can give the impression of shouting at the reader and therefore should be avoided where possible.

If the intent is to convey a shout, an exclamation point may be better. Screen readers generally do not read text differently if it is in all upper case letters, so listeners will not know that the author is shouting. Screen readers do change the voice inflection with exclamation points.

Also, upper case acronyms should have periods to allow screen readers to properly interpret the text as an acronym and not a word. For example, A.O.D.A. is more accessible than AODA.



## Align text to the left margin.

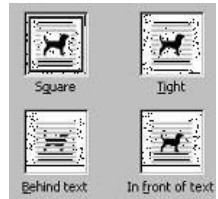
**Aligning text to the left margin** makes it easier to find the start of the next line and keeps spacing between the words even.

**Centre alignment** is not

accessible. For example, a person  
display set up to zoom  
have difficulty finding  
document. They would

**Left and right alignment (justified)** is not accessible. It causes uneven spaces between words. It is more difficult to read because the human eye can not move smoothly along the sentence and has to search and jump to the start of each word.

Where images are used with text, align the image to the left of the page with the text directly above or below. Alternatively, align the image to the right of the page with the “Square” text wrapping option and keep the text aligned left.



## Use Styles to create a reference structure and help users navigate the document.

Use the Microsoft Office “**Styles**” tool to quickly apply formatting choices to headings and paragraphs. Benefits are:

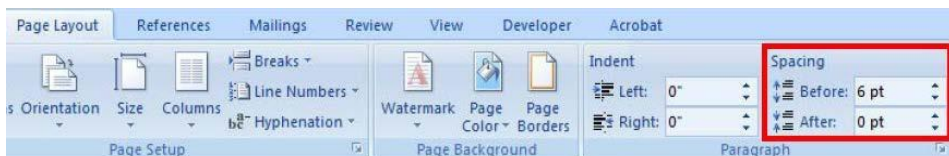
- Screen readers can identify and navigate sections.
- A table of contents with links to document sections can be automatically generated, as formatted in this document.
- Formatting is consistent throughout the document.



## Do not use hard returns to create spacing.

If you hit “enter” twice, a screen reader will interpret the second “enter” as a new paragraph with no text. The screen reader will read the word “blank” out loud for every blank line.

Instead, use paragraph spacing tools to adjust the spacing before (above) or after (below) a line.



## Use a minimum 4.5:1 colour contrast ratio between the background and the foreground.

### What does a 4.5:1 colour contrast ratio mean?

The better the contrast between the background and the foreground, the more legible the document will be. Black text on a white background provides the best contrast, but is not the only option.

test number	contrast ratio
<b>Test 1</b>	21:1
<b>Test 2</b>	21:1
<b>Test 3</b>	19.56:1
<b>Test 4</b>	15.27:1
<b>Test 5</b>	14.73:1
<b>Test 6</b>	10.37:1

test number	contrast ratio
<b>Test 7</b>	7:1
<b>Test 8</b>	4:1 (fail)
<b>Test 9</b>	4:1 (fail)
<b>Test 10</b>	3.04:1 (fail)
<b>Test 11</b>	2.18:1 (fail)
<b>Test 12</b>	1.43:1 (fail)

A good way to check contrast is to print in black and white and check if the document is legible. Online contrast testing tools are also available, which allow you to test colour combinations to determine the exact contrast ratio. [Colour Contrast Check](#)

Note: fonts larger than size 18 and fonts formatted to be bold have lesser requirements than a 4.5:1 contrast ratio. Adequate contrast is required for only objects that are intended to be read.

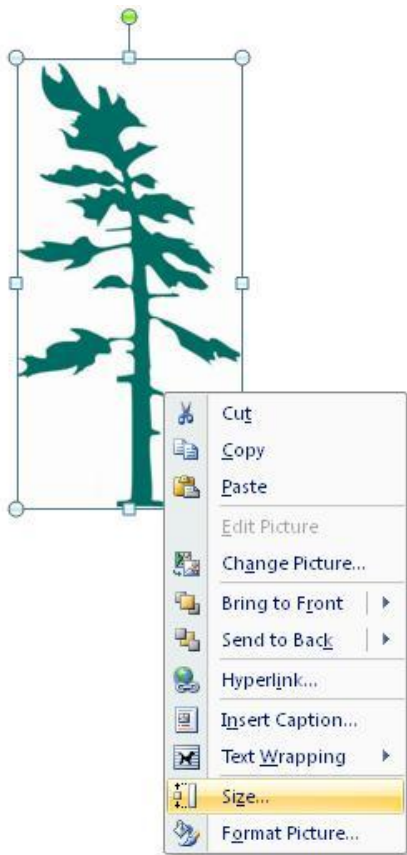
## Add a short description to all graphics inserted into a document.

An “Alt tag”, or alternative text, is a brief description of any graphic inserted into a document. It can be read by a screen reader to allow someone with a vision disability to understand what the graphic is.

It is also displayed in place of the image when software does not support the display of images or when the user has chosen not to view images. As an added bonus, it can be read by search engines.

For example, the image to the right of this text has the following alt tag:

**How to add an Alt Tag to the pine tree symbol from the City of Peterborough "It's a Natural" logo.**



# Clear print that is organized will be readable to a broader audience.

Use the following guidelines to make documents more accessible:

## **Clarity:**

- Do not provide too much information.
- Use bullet point summaries, rather than dense text.

## **Organization:**

- Do not place text over cluttered backgrounds.
- Set adequate margins (minimum 0.5 inches).
- Use larger line spacing.
- Leave larger spaces between sections than between paragraphs.

## **Readability:**

- Printed material should have a matte finish, not glossy.

## **Avoid Dot leaders that are often used in a Table of Contents.**

What is acceptable?

Dot leader ..... No

Solid line leader \_\_\_\_\_ Yes

No leader Yes

Note: a table of contents with no leaders is only acceptable when there is generous spacing between lines.

## The international standard for date format is yyyy-mm-dd.

Dates are formatted differently around the world which may confuse readers and cause misunderstandings.

The simplest way to write dates is to spell out the month portion of the date. For example, use “[April 2, 2013](#)” or “[2 April 2013](#)”. The moment the month is spelled out, the date is no longer misinterpreted.

If the month is not spelled out, use the international date format of yyyy-mm-dd for consistency and ease of reference. For example, April 2, 2013 should be noted as “[2013-04-02](#)”.

# Aim for using plain language level so the greatest number of people will get the message.

Plain language is a way of organizing and presenting information so that it makes sense and is easy to read the first time. Information is written in plain language when the intended audience understands it. Where possible, strive to make information available in plain language.

### Plain Language Tips:

- Write for your audience.
- Use short sentences and paragraphs.
- Use simple sentence structure and grammar.
- Use simple everyday words instead of technical jargon.
- Use full words such as “Street” instead of abbreviations such as “St.”
- Use a positive tone.
- Use the active voice.

### Example:

Original– City residents who have limbs and debris from privately owned trees are asked to use the City’s Green Waste Collection program for their disposal needs.

Plain Language– The City has a Green Waste Collection program. Use this system to dispose of limbs and debris from trees on private property.



## **Add automatic page numbering using the Header and Footer tool.**

Numbering the pages of a document helps readers to effectively navigate and reference the contents.

Microsoft Office products have a variety of page numbering templates that can be automatically inserted into documents.

This document uses the automated page numbering feature available in Microsoft Office.



# Use Accessible Tables and Charts

**Avoid tables and charts where possible. If they are needed, format them to be accessible.**

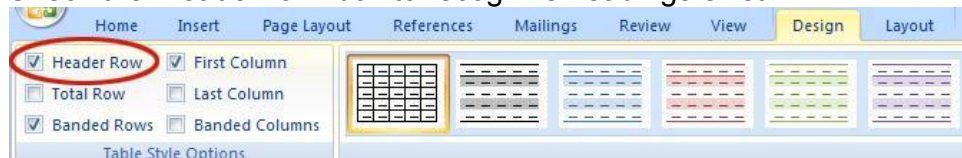
Sometimes tables and charts are needed to make a large amount of information clear to readers. Use the accessible document rules in this guide, such as font size, to make them accessible.

Also, avoid merged cells and use formatting options to create different types of lines or apply textures rather than colours.

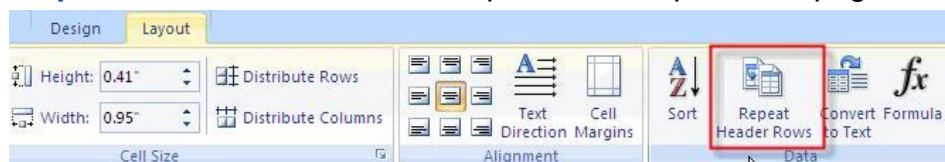
## 4 Simple steps to make a table more accessible:

**Step 1:** Add headings to the columns (and rows if needed). **Step 2:**

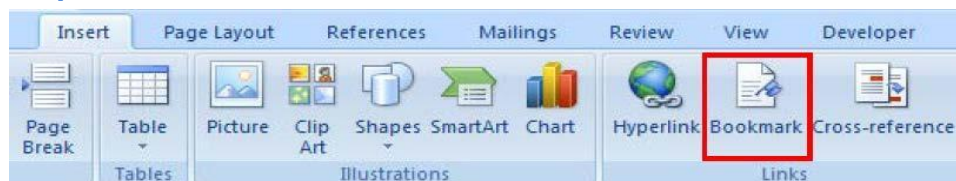
Check the “header row” box to recognize headings exist.



**Step 3:** Set the “header row” to repeat at the top of each page.



**Step 4:** Add a bookmark to the table.

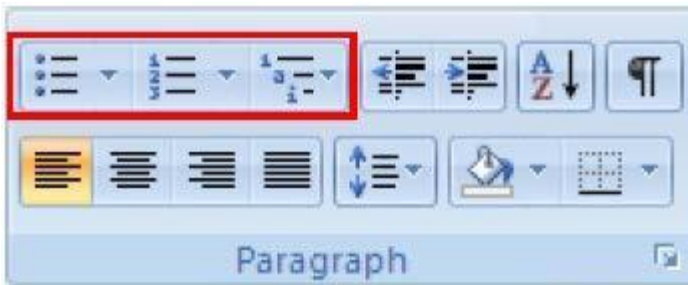


## Use **Real Lists**

**Format lists as “real lists” by using automatically generated bullets or numbering systems.**

When creating lists, it is important to format them as a “real list”. Otherwise, assistive technologies such as screen readers will interpret the list as a series of short separate paragraphs instead of a coherent list of related items. Microsoft Office products have a variety of automatically generated list options.

Use numbered lists if the information is sequential and use bulleted lists if the information is a related set of points. A screen reader will announce the information as a list.



## All forms placed on Fleming College's website should be fillable.

Using fillable forms allows users to complete the information digitally without having to print the form and write it by hand.

Tips when creating forms:

- Organize the fields chronologically.
- Ensure forms are keyboard accessible.
- Make sure label and field locations are easy to use.
- Make sure the information asked is short and basic.
- Avoid using asterisks (\*) to indicate required fields.
- Offer standard entry fields for phone numbers.
- Where signature is required, ensure there is sufficient space.

# Accessible Document Checklist

- Font Size
- Font Family
- Bold (no italics or underlining for emphasis)
- Upper Case Letters (no sentences with all upper case)
- Text Alignment (align to the left)
- Use Smart Headings, Paragraph and Spacing Tools
- Contrast
- Alt Tags
- Clarity, Organization, Readability
- Table of Contents Leader
- Date Format
- Plain Language
- Page Numbering
- Tables and Charts
- Lists
- Accessible Forms

Contact the Accessibility Facilitator, Denise Wedderburn if you require more information on any of the above topics.

Denise Wedderburn, Accessibility Facilitator

705-749-5530 extension 1065

[denise.wedderburn@flamingcollege.ca](mailto:denise.wedderburn@flamingcollege.ca)

# **Small changes, big rewards.**

**A.O.D.A. is the Accessibility  
for Ontarians with Disabilities  
Act, passed in 2005.**

This Act is meant to create accessibility for all  
Ontarians with disabilities by January 1, 2025.