

Accessibility Quick Start Guide

The following guidelines and recommendations facilitate accessibility within multiple platforms.

Headings

Sources: Erin Blauvelt, University of Illinois, Web Access

Overview

Screen reader users browse "sections" of a page, website or Learning Management System (LMS) using headings and sub-headings (h1, h2, h3, h4, etc.). Including properly nested headings on a page adds semantic structure and provides an essential organization for navigation. Without headings, pages are presented as one long paragraph to the visually impaired. Additionally, constructing content using headings allows all learners to more readily locate, identify, and understand logical units of information.

Best Practices

- Use heading tags to structure all pages and documents based on main topics and subtopics, e.g. "Module 1," "Readings," "Required," etc.
- Adhere to the correct order of headings and do not skip heading levels (e.g., go from an h2 to an h4), as screen reader users will wonder if content is missing.
- Use headings to divide blocks of text into manageable sections. By breaking up page content into smaller chunks, the material becomes more easily interpretable.
- Do not pick a heading style based on aesthetics or because you like the font color, size, etc. Use headings to communicate structure and semantics.
- Use unique heading names for h1, and h2.

Lists

Overview

Bulleted and numbered lists distinguish content and add clarity by organizing key points into identifiable subsections. Bulleted and numbered lists should be utilized for their intended function.

Best Practices

Bulleted Lists

- Bulleted lists do not imply ranking or chronology of importance (when compared to numbered lists).
- Avoid using bulleted list when there is only one item in the list.

Numbered Lists

- Numbered lists demonstrate relationships by implying ranking or chronology of importance.
- They imply items in a series, such as procedural steps.

Avoid Inline Styling

Overview

Inline styling occurs when a user manually changes styles (including bold, italics, underline), font types, colors, and sizes or copies content from an external source and inadvertently pastes content with its own styling rules. Using inline styling diminishes the consistency advantages of a page's style sheet.

Best Practices

- Use inline styling sparingly, if at all.
- Ways to avoid inline styling:
- When copying content from a word processor or website, remove all inline styling artifacts before pasting into the target platform. This can be done by first pasting the desired content into text editors such as TextEdit or Sublime Text. Once the target content is loaded in the text editor, select all, copy and paste into the target platform.
- "Paste Special>Unformatted Text" can also work.

Tables

Overview

Use tables to show data relationships in a grid-like format.

Best Practices

- Do not use tables for layout.
- If the table has only one column, use a list instead.
- Avoid fixed-width or fixed-length pixel sizes. Instead, use percentages.
- When possible, provide a caption. The caption should contain the title/and or a very brief description of the table.

Table 1: Lectures and Associated Media

Presentation	Audio	Transcript	Handout
Introduction Lecture	Introduction MP3	Introduction Transcript	Introduction Slide Handout
Conclusion Lecture	Conclusion MP3	Conclusion Transcript	Conclusion Slide Handout