Tips for Making Print More Readable

Use the following guidelines to help make print more legible for those with vision loss.

Print Size

At a minimum, use 16-point fonts, although 18-point is preferred. Changing the font on a computer is easy. Here are some examples of fonts in various sizes:

This is Arial 16-point font.

This is Courier 16-point font.

This is Arial 18-point font.

This is Courier 16-point font.

This is Arial 24-point font.

This is Courier 24-point font.

Font Type and Style

The goal of font selection is to use easily recognizable characters.

• Use sans serif fonts, such as Arial or APHont (available online through www.aph.org.)

• Avoid decorative fonts, italics, and all-capital-letter text.

• Try monospaced fonts, such as Courier, where each character is the same width.

• Use bold type because the thickness of the letters makes the print more legible.

• Limit the use of graphics with print.

Contrast

Contrast is critical to reading print. Print text with the best possible contrast. Light lettering, such as white or light yellow, on a dark background may be easier to read than black lettering on a white or light-yellow background. To enhance print contrast, use a black or yellow acrylic overlay.

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Typoscope

Also, try using a typoscope, which brackets the material you want to read.

Typoscopes can be obtained through the specialty catalogs listed at visionaware.org/helpfulproducts.

Increase Leading (Space Between Lines of Text)

The recommended spacing between lines of text is 1.5, rather than single-spaced. This can make it easier to distinguish between lines of text.

Increase Tracking (Space Between Letters)

Text with letters very close together can make reading difficult. Use a monospaced font such as Courier, which allocates an equal amount of space for each letter.

Widen Margins

Many low vision devices, such as stand magnifiers and video magnification systems, are easiest to use on a flat surface. An extra-wide binding margin makes it easier to hold the material flat. A minimum of one inch should be used; one and a half inches is preferable.

Improve Lighting

Good, directed task lighting can greatly enhance the ability to read. To find out more about lighting and products that can make reading easier for people with low vision, visit visionaware.org/GSlighting.

For more information on print readability, visit visionaware.org/GSprintreadability.

Find more tips at visionaware.org/gettingstarted

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