

What is plain English?

This is language that is clear, concise as possible and appropriate to the reader. A reader should be able to understand the content in a single reading.

For more information and resources visit Plain English Power (www.plainenglish.org.nz).

Content and language

- All text should be written in clear, straightforward language.
- Short sentences are recommended.
- If text uses technical, complex language and cannot be rewritten, then a plain English version should be provided (i.e. without jargon).
- Information on access and services should be included in all publicity material.
- You may wish to develop a separate access and information guide for disabled people, specific to their requirements.
- Images and graphic material should be relevant to the text.
- Images and graphic material should include disabled people, who should be represented in the same way as any other community member.
- Language should be appropriate and non-offensive.
- Using international access symbols, as well as accompanying text captions, makes the information available to all your audience members. These symbols are available online (www.gag.org/resources/disability-access-symbols).

Accessible design: general guidelines

- Text should be left justified.
- The main body of the text should use standard punctuation, capitals and lower case.
- No hyphenation should be used at the end of lines.
- Minimise use of italics and underlining.
- Colour contrast of type to background should be at least 70%. The recommended contrast is black on white or black on yellow.
- Maps or line drawings should be simple and bold.
- Images should have captions with relevant explanations.
- Paper should be matt or dull. Glossy paper is not recommended.
- Graphics should not be printed over or floated on other images, graphics or text.
- The paper weight should be dense enough to avoid show-through.
- Photos should be clear and have contrast to the background (at least 60% is recommended).

- Documents should have a flexible or spiral binding, or should be easy to open. It is ideal if documents can lie flat.

Accessible print guidelines

- The main body of the text should be in a minimum 12 point type.
- Text should be set in a sans serif font, or in 13 point if a serif font is used.
- Use bold sparingly. Only highlight a few words rather than a paragraph.
- Keep the text layout simple and consistent.
- Don't use blocks of capitalised letters.
- Avoid/minimise use of italics or underlining.
- Material presented as large print should be in a minimum of 18 point using a sans serif font (minimum of 20 point if using a simple serif font).
- If you do not provide printed material in a minimum of 12 point type, provide an accessible electronic copy of the document or web page.

Alternative formats

- At a minimum, printed material should be available as audio, in large print and electronically (on a website, via email or on a disc in Word format).
- The availability of alternative formats should be promoted clearly on publicity material.
- Audio material should have clear, high-quality sound and if possible should be sound-indexed.
- At least three copies of audio material should be available, and more should be produced on request.
- Material on a website should follow website accessibility guidelines (see below).
- Material sent via email should be sent in a plain text format (not html).
- Material available on a disc should be presented as a Word document compatible to most computer systems.
- If you have information in Braille, it is recommended to have at least two copies.

Websites: basic guidelines

- Webpages should be as accessible as possible.
- Accessibility should be part of all design considerations and plans.
- A text-only version of your site should be provided.
- Use "alt" text to provide meaningful descriptions of images/graphics.
- Documents available as pdf files should also be provided in a Word format.
- Ensure that information is laid out clearly, and that links are clearly identified.
- Provide captions or a text translation of any audio or audio-visual material.
- Ensure that navigation through a site is consistent and does not change in structure from page to page.
- Ensure that text and background contrast is high (recommended at least 70%).
- Ensure that text is proof-read and uses proper punctuation.

- Do not use blinking text or throbbing, pulsing or flashing graphics or buttons.
- Provide a site map for ease of navigation.

Websites: design resources

- It is highly recommended that all people designing or updating web pages refer to the Web Accessibility Initiative's guidelines (www.w3.org/WAI/eval/). It is recommended that all sites meet its minimum standards.
- Consult disabled people and accessibility experts when planning and designing your website.
- Free website testing is available online (www.wave.webaim.org).
- Information on the New Zealand Government's web standards is available online (www.webstandards.govt.nz).

Email: general guidelines

- The only way to ensure your emails are accessible to everyone, is to send them in plain text format. Emails send in html or rich text format (rtf) may not be accessible.
- Keep emails concise and easy to follow.
- Send Word documents with additional information as clearly named attachments, and state that you are including an attachment in the body of your email.
- Ask your email recipients what they prefer and offer a plain text alternative if you send RTF or HTML emails.
- If you do use hyperlinks, include the full email or website address in brackets alongside it. For example, "Visit the [Arts Access Aotearoa website](http://www.artsaccess.org.nz) (www.artsaccess.org.nz)" is more accessible than "click [here](#)".



For the full picture about arts and accessibility in New Zealand, you can download *Arts For All / Ngā toi mo te katoa*, published by Creative New Zealand in partnership with Arts Access Aotearoa, 2009.

> www.artsaccess.org.nz/index.php/arts-and-disability

Arts Access Aotearoa acknowledges Accessible Arts (www.aarts.net.au) for the use of its resources in developing these guidelines.

