

Dyslexia-Friendly Document Checklist

Run through this before you send, post or print a handout, letter, slide deck or web page. Every item is explained, with its source, at inchyapp.com/dyslexia-friendly-style-guide

Type

- ☐ Plain sans serif font (for example Arial, Verdana, Calibri, Tahoma)
- ☐ Body text 12–14 pt in print, or about 16–19 px on screen
- ☐ Headings at least 20% larger than body text
- ☐ Emphasis in **bold**; no italics or underlining for emphasis
- ☐ No whole sentences or paragraphs in CAPITALS
- ☐ Links look different from headings and body text

Spacing and layout

- ☐ Line spacing 1.5, with extra space between paragraphs
- ☐ Text left-aligned, not justified
- ☐ Lines no longer than about 70–80 characters
- ☐ One column for running text
- ☐ Short paragraphs (aim for under 50 words)
- ☐ Headings break up long documents; contents list if it's long
- ☐ Bullets or numbered steps instead of long prose where possible
- ☐ Diagrams or flow charts support step-by-step processes

Color and print

- ☐ Plain background, with no pictures or patterns behind text
- ☐ Dark text on a light background (cream or pastel is fine)
- ☐ Contrast at least 4.5:1 for body text
- ☐ Color is never the only way information is shown
- ☐ Matte paper, thick enough that the back doesn't show through

Words

- ☐ Main point first
- ☐ Short sentences, one idea each
- ☐ Active voice ("Send the form," not "The form should be sent")
- ☐ Everyday words; jargon explained or in a glossary
- ☐ Abbreviations spelled out the first time
- ☐ No double negatives
- ☐ Instructions as numbered steps

File

- ☐ Built with real heading and list styles, not hand formatting
- ☐ No paragraphs of text inside images
- ☐ Images that carry meaning have alt text
- ☐ An editable version (Word, Google Doc or web page) is available
- ☐ Link text says where the link goes

Reviewed against sources on October 6, 2026. Based on the British Dyslexia Association Dyslexia Style Guide (2023, archived); WCAG 2.2 success criteria 1.3.1, 1.4.1, 1.4.3, 1.4.5, 1.4.8 and 2.4.4; W3C, Making Content Usable for People with Cognitive and Learning Disabilities (2021); Digital.gov plain language guides; Rello & Baeza-Yates (2013, 2016). Full list with links on the web page.