

How to Make Your Presentation Accessible

People who attend webinars and conferences come with various personal characteristics that impact their ability to understand and participate in the event. Some have physical disabilities, such as a hearing or visual impairment that requires captions or larger font sizes. Some may have a perception, such as dyslexia, requiring clear contrast and limited content on each slide. Some may speak another language as their primary language, requiring the presenter to talk slowly to be fully understood. Below are some tips on preparing your presentation so all participants can understand it.

Planning your presentation

1. Limit the amount of text on each slide. People have difficulty reading crowded text, even on a zoom screen. Some people have difficulty reading text and listening to the speaker simultaneously. Avoid putting lots of text or other content on slides. Be concise in text and expand as you speak, or provide a handout that can be sent to participants later.
2. Limit the use of graphs with crowded numbers. Instead, summarize the points you are trying to make. If the data is relevant, make it available separately.
3. If you use videos, provide them in advance, so the live captioner can be prepared to provide captioning.
4. Do not turn on automatic captioning. We are providing professional captioning.
5. Use an easy-to-read font. Sans Serif fonts (without decorative extensions to letters) are the best. Consider using Tahoma, Calibri, Helvetica, Arial, Verdana, and Times New Roman.
6. Use a contrast of colors. Put dark text on a light background or light text on dark background. If you use a background image, keep it neutral and in contrast to the color of the font.
7. Do not use large logos or illustrations that do not move the content forward and interfere with clear print.
8. If using PowerPoint, use the accessible feature to evaluate your presentation for accessibility.

Making Your Presentation

9. Most important, speak slowly. For many participants, English is not their first language, and they may have to translate in their heads what you say to understand it. Your English

accent (regardless of nationality) may be challenging to understand for others. Speaking slowly will also help the live captioner.

10. Use simple language. Avoid or explain jargon and idioms. For example, expressions such as “raising the bar” can be interpreted literally by people in different countries. Avoid acronyms like your library’s short name (Jefferson County Public Library instead of JCPL).
11. Describe all relevant visual information. Say all the information on each slide, including text, graphics, and photographs. (This does not mean you must read the slide exactly as it is. It just means you cover the visual information in what you say.) Do not say, “As you can see.” Describe what you want them to see (“In this photo, you can see our partner libraries sharing....” Spell out URLs or your email address if you give it.
12. Give people time to process information. Pause between topics and introduce them clearly. When you ask if anyone has questions, some people may need extra time to form their thoughts into words.
13. Online, be visible and in good light when you talk so that participants can see your face. This helps people hear and understand better, including many who are hard of hearing or have difficulty understanding accents. Be careful not to face away from your webcam or cover your face with your hand.
14. Use a good-quality microphone. Ensure the microphone is positioned, so it picks up your voice well. We will tell you if you need to speak louder or adjust your microphone.
15. Consider telephone attendees. Consider also that some features of the meeting platform, such as raising a hand in a Zoom meeting, may be challenging for some persons with visual impairments.

Adapted from:

WAI Web Accessibility Initiative: Strategies, standards, and resources to make the Web accessible to people with disabilities

<https://www.w3.org/WAI/teach-advocate/accessible-presentations/>