

Making your Documents more Readable

Choosing fonts that make your forms and materials more accessible

Types of fonts

Fonts that do not have serifs are usually easier to read for people with low vision. Serifs are the small lines on the ends of letters in some fonts. This sentence is written in a font with serifs – the name of the font is “Times New Roman.”



T with serifs



T without serifs

Avoid fonts with serifs whenever you can. Instead choose a “sans serif” font (sans means without, in French), like Verdana, Arial, or Helvetica. Look below to see how the different fonts look:

Verdana is a sans serif font.

Arial is a sans serif font.

Helvetica is a sans serif font.

Times New Roman has serifs and should be avoided.

Century Schoolbook has serifs and should be avoided.

Courier has serifs and should be avoided.

Sizes of fonts

Most materials are printed with a font size of 10 or 12. The fine print in a legal document might have a font size of 8 or even 6. This handout is written almost entirely in a font size of 18. When someone with low vision requests a document in a large print format, it should be printed with a minimum font size of 18.

Choose a font that has good spacing between letters. Look at the difference in the fonts below . . . some are much more readable than others, despite all having a font size of 18.

“Arial Narrow” does not have serifs, but the letters are crowded together.

“Helvetica Condensed” also crowds the letters together.

“Verdana” is a very readable font.

“Tahoma” is also a good choice for an easy-to-read font.

For a hand-written look, “Comic Sans MS” is an informal font that is very accessible.