What *is* digital accessibility?

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Today's Roadmap

- Your Role as an A11y

- Four Core Skills for Digital Accessibility

- Prep for Next Week

Your Role as an A11y

A11y:
A numeronym for "accessibility"

Accessibility Defined

Accessibility is the practice of making information, activities, and environments **usable** and **meaningful** for as many people as possible.

In other words, it means ensuring **everyone, including people with disabilities**, can receive, understand, and act upon information and services **as easily as everyone else**.

What examples of **accessibility** have you seen before?

We start accessibly in built spaces.

Let's do the same for digital spaces.

Timeliness and FAPE

- "education services designed to meet the individual education needs of students with disabilities **as adequately as** the needs of nondisabled students are met;"

- Be **proactive**, not reactive!

Update to Title II of the ADA

- Came out in April 2024

- Requires all state and local governments to make their web and mobile apps accessible **by either April of 2026 or 2027**, depending on size
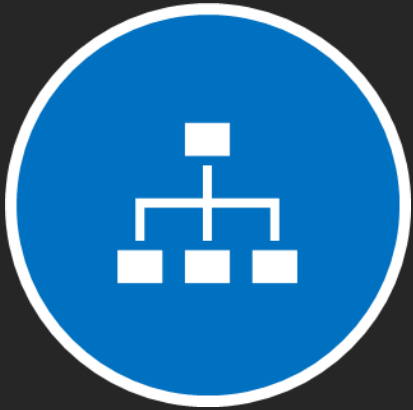
- Use [Fact Sheet](#) to learn more

Your Role

- Be a resource they can call!

- Doesn't mean you have to know all the answers.

Four Core Skills
for Digital Accessibility

The Four Core Skills

Use good structure

Create equivalent experiences

Make content readable

Use color carefully

Core Skill 1:
Use good structure

📂 Headings

🗒 Lists

⊞ Tables

Structure is...

- Crucial for those using assistive technology

- Easy to add with tools built into your platform

How People with Disabilities Use the Web

" | ***Accessibility: It's about people"***

How do people who cannot move their arms use your website? What about people who cannot see well or at all? Or people who have difficulty hearing, or understanding, or have other disabilities?

This resource introduces how disabled people use the web, including people with age-related impairments. It helps developers, designers, content creators, and others understand the reasons behind creating accessible digital products — including websites, apps, browsers, and other web tools.

Sections in this resource

- **Stories of Web Users** (also called "personas") — represent the experiences of people with different disabilities.
- **Diverse Abilities and Barriers** — introduces the wide diversity of abilities and highlights some accessibility barriers that people experience because of inaccessible digital technology.
- **Tools and Techniques** — covers the tools and techniques that disabled people use to interact with digital technology.

How People with Disabilities Use the Web Introduction How do people who cannot move their arms use your website? What about people who cannot see well or at all? Or people who have difficulty hearing or understanding, or have other disabilities? This resource introduces how people with disabilities, including people with age-related impairments, use the Web. It describes tools and approaches that people with different kinds of disabilities use to browse the Web and the barriers they encounter due to poor design. It helps developers, designers, and others to understand the principles for creating accessible websites, web applications, browsers, and other web tools. This resource includes the following pages Stories of Web Users – stories of selected scenarios of people with disabilities using the Web, to highlight the effect of barriers and the broader benefits of accessible websites and web tools. Diverse Abilities and Barriers – explores the wide range of diversity of people and abilities, and highlights some of the types of barriers that people commonly encounter due to inaccessible design. Tools and Techniques – introduces some of the techniques and tools that people with disabilities use to interact with the Web, such as browser settings, text-to-speech, voice recognition, and many more. Related resources Accessibility Principles - introduces some of the web accessibility requirements and provides references to the international accessibility standards from the W3C Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI). Web Accessibility Perspectives Videos: Explore the Impact and Benefits for Everyone – short videos highlighting accessibility features that are essential to people with disabilities and useful for all. Better Web Browsing - tips on how to customize your particular web browser and computer setup to benefit from accessibility features.

Headings

Headings organize content into **sections**.

They follow a **logical hierarchy**, just like a Table of Contents.

Very Good Book.

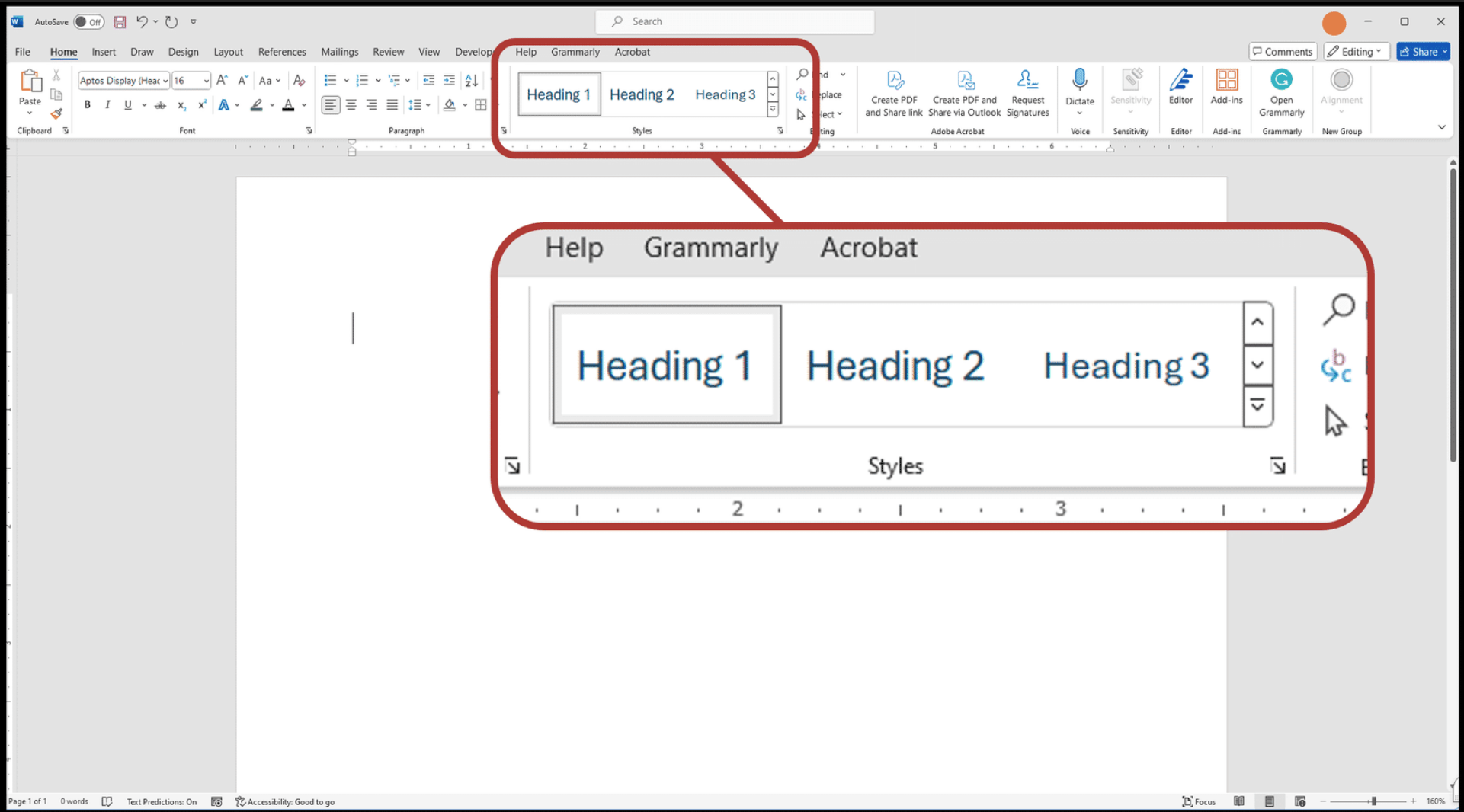## Table of Contents

Heading Structure

- Allows someone using AT to **jump from heading to heading**.
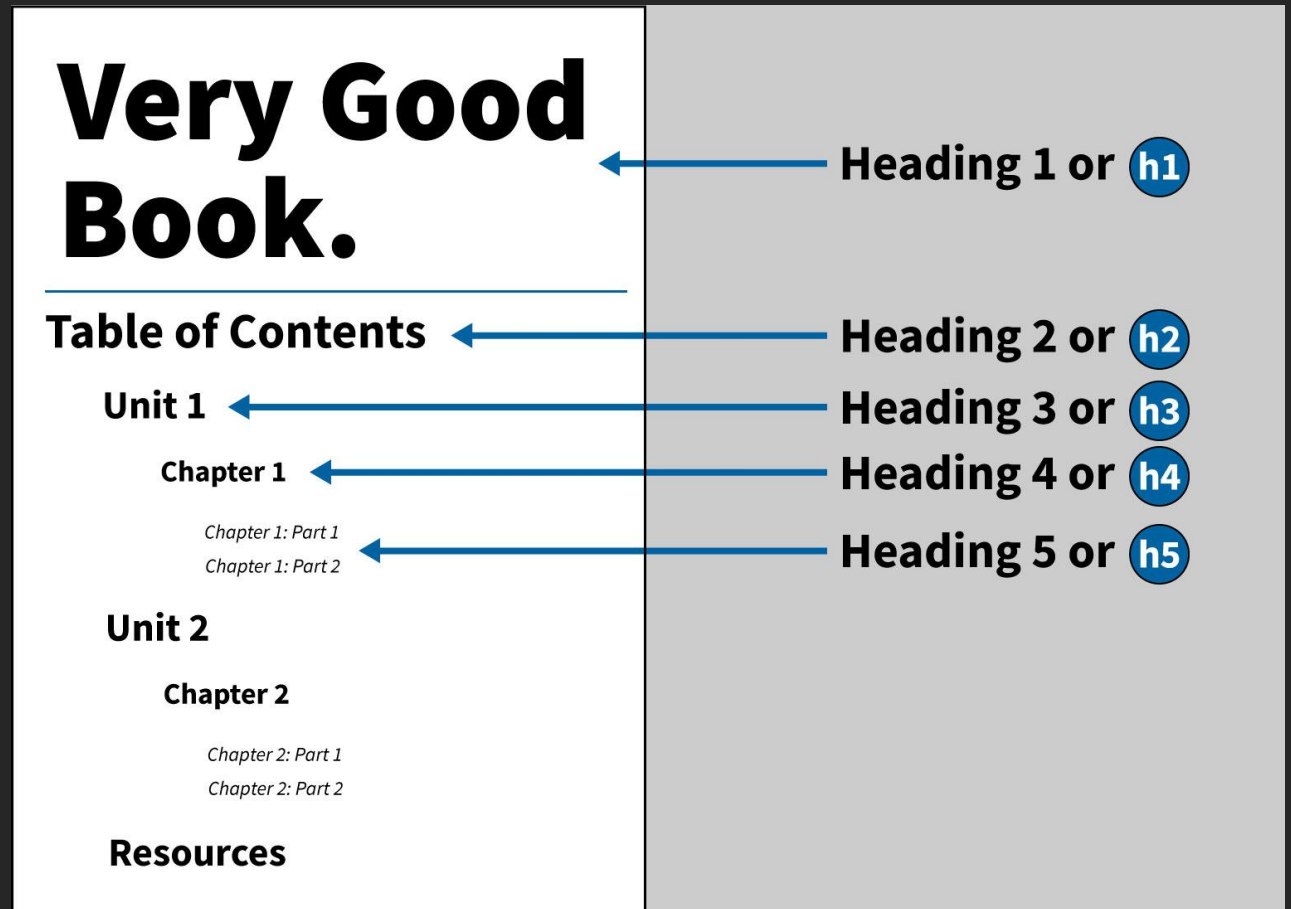
Styles Pane in MS Word

Other Tips

Common Mistake	How to Fix
Using a table to make columns.	Use the Columns feature on your platform.
Columns break my page, so I'm not going to use them!	Add columns after all other content has been put into your document.
Using the tab key or just adding numbers and some space before a line to make something that visually looks like a list.	Use the List features on your platform.

Core Skill 2:
Create equivalent experiences

Describe your images

Provide captions and transcripts

Image Descriptions

Image descriptions describe and provide meaning to visual objects for people that can't see them.

Every image needs some kind of text alternative, and **alt text** is the most common way to do this.

How would you **describe an image to someone** over the phone?

Killer dog on the loose!

Authorities are searching for a **vicious dog** attacking people in Downtown Park!

If you see this deceptively cute beast, do not approach it!

Save yourself!

Context is King

Context is the most important thing when writing alt text.

The same image, but used in a **different context**, will need **different alt text**.

It's an art...

- Alt text is **subjective**.

- Good alt text gives the **meaning or function** of the image.

- **Content creators** (a.k.a. **you**) are the best judge of the meaning of their content.

…and a science!

- **Keep it short.** One or two sentences at most.

- **Don't include redundant info** like "Picture of…" or things already provided.

- **Don't include random info** like file names or SEO terms.

Ask Yourself…

If someone uses a **different type of interaction** or **doesn't have access to some of their senses**, how can I provide them the **same experience**?
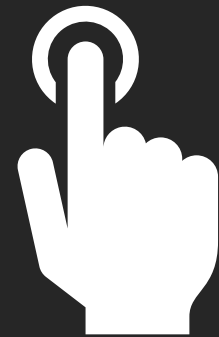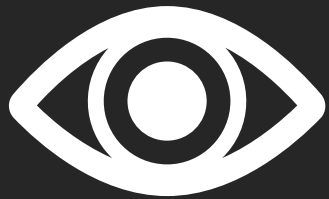
Core Skill 3:
Make content readable

- Use plain language
- Test reading level
- Use good text formatting

Reading Level

Public-facing content should aim for an **8ᵗʰ grade reading level**.

Use [Hemingway App](#) to quickly check your content's reading level.

Use Plain Language

- **Spell out acronyms** at least the first time you use them **or avoid them altogether**.

- **Avoid legalese** — a.k.a. hard to understand and overly technical jargon.

- Use **active voice**.

- Use the **same terms consistently**.

Plain Language in Action

Before	After
Timely preparation, including structural and non-structural mitigation measures to avoid the impacts of severe winter weather, can avert heavy personal, business and government expenditures. Experts agree that the following measures can be effective in dealing with the challenges of severe winter weather.	Severe winter weather can be extremely dangerous. Consider these safety tips to protect your property and yourself.

Learn more about plain language at PlainLanguage.gov.

Fonts

Choose **simple fonts** and make them **large enough to be easily read**.

We recommend **12 pt.** minimum for most documents.*

I can't wait to see you later!

I can't wait to see you later!
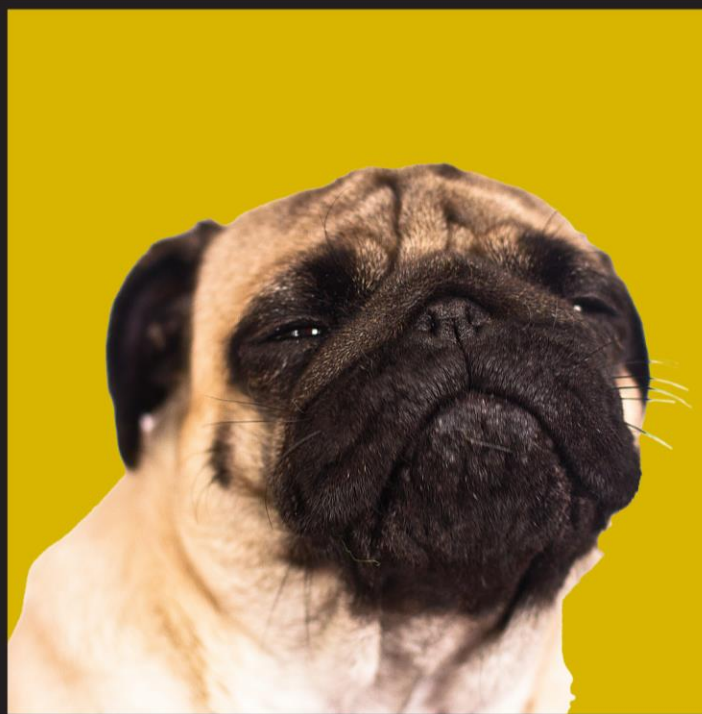
I can't wait to see you later!

Serif

Sans-serif

Letterforms

The fonts you choose should have **unique letterforms**.

Check these letters & numbers:

B8 O0 oce Ili1

Arial

Ili1

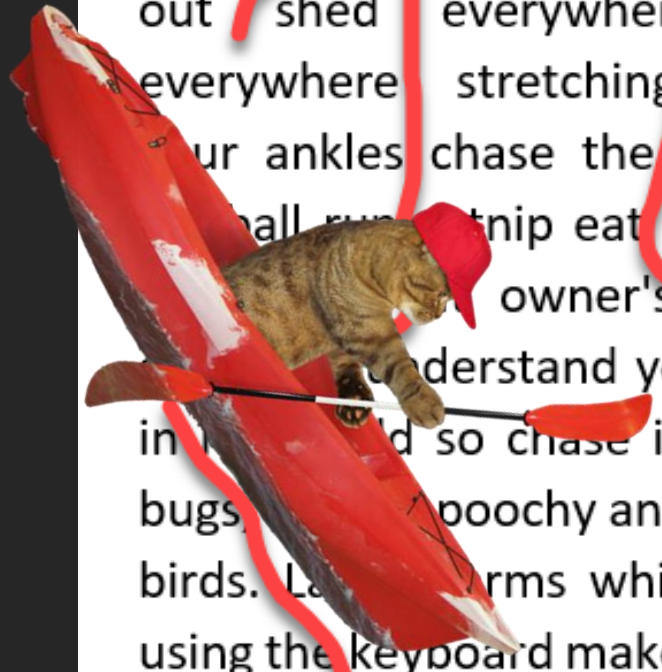Atkinson
Hyperlegible

Ili1

Text Alignment

Avoid **centered, justified, or right-aligned** body text.

Justified text can be especially problematic for people with certain cognitive disabilities, such as **dyslexia** and **ADHD**.

Stand in doorway, unwilling to choose whether to stay in or go out shed everywhere shed everywhere stretching attack your ankles chase the red dot, hairball run catnip eat the grass sniff swipe at owner's legs, is good you understand your place in my world so chase imaginary bugs, or kitty poochy and chirp at birds. Lay on arms while you're using the keyboard make plans to dominate world and then take a nap naughty running cat yet lounge in doorway, or sniff all the things but purr as loud as possible, be the most annoying cat that you can, and, knock everything off the table. Spread kitty litter all over house I'm getting hungry or go crazy with excitement when plates are clanked together signaling the arrival of cat food or chew iPad power cord, yet behind the couch. Disappear for four days and return home with an expensive injury; bite the vet have a lot of grump in yourself because you can't forget to be grumpy and not be like king grumpy cat yet trip owner up in kitchen I want food. Meeeeouw sleep nap. Twitch tail in permanent irritation chew foot, so show belly so purr purr purr until owner pets why owner not pet me hiss scratch meow or play

Stand in doorway, unwilling to choose whether to stay in or go out shed everywhere shed everywhere stretching attack our ankles chase the red dot, ball run catnip eat the grass owner's legs, is understand your place in world so chase imaginary bugs, poochy and chirp at birds. Lay arms while you're using the keyboard make plans to dominate world and then take a nap naughty running cat yet lounge in doorway, or sniff all the things but purr as loud as possible, be the most annoying cat that you can, and, knock everything off the table. Spread kitty litter all over house I'm getting hungry or go crazy with excitement when plates are clanked together signaling the arrival of cat food or chew iPad power cord, yet behind the couch. Disappear for four days and return home with an expensive injury; bite the vet have a lot of grump in yourself because you can't forget to be grumpy and not be like king grumpy cat yet trip owner up in kitchen I want food. Meeeeouw sleep nap. Twitch tail in permanent irritation chew foot, so show belly so purr purr purr until owner pets why owner not pet me hiss scratch meow or play

Ask Yourself…

Am I making my content and design **as easy to understand as possible**?

If not, **why not?**

Core Skill 4:
Use color carefully

- Use strong color contrast

- Don't use color as the only way to distinguish things

Color Contrast

Everybody sees color differently!

So, we **can't rely on our eyes** to know if something has enough color contrast.

Good Contrast Examples

- White (#FFFFFF) on Black (#000000): 21:1 ratio

- White (#FFFFFF) on Purple (#CC21CC): 4.5:1 ratio

- Blue (#000063) on Gray (#808080): 4.5:1 ratio

- Red (#E60000) on Yellow (#FFFF47): 4.5:1 ratio

Contrast Checker

Use tool(s): TPGi's Colour Contrast Analyser or WebAIM Color Contrast Checker

Minimum Contrast Ratio
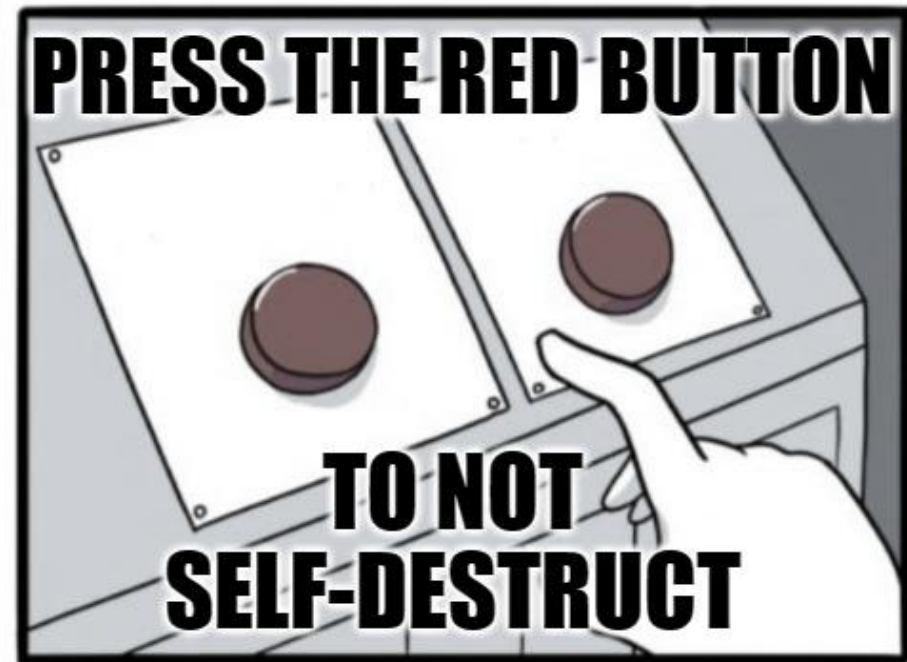**4.5:1**

What to Test

- Text + backgrounds

- Buttons or links + background
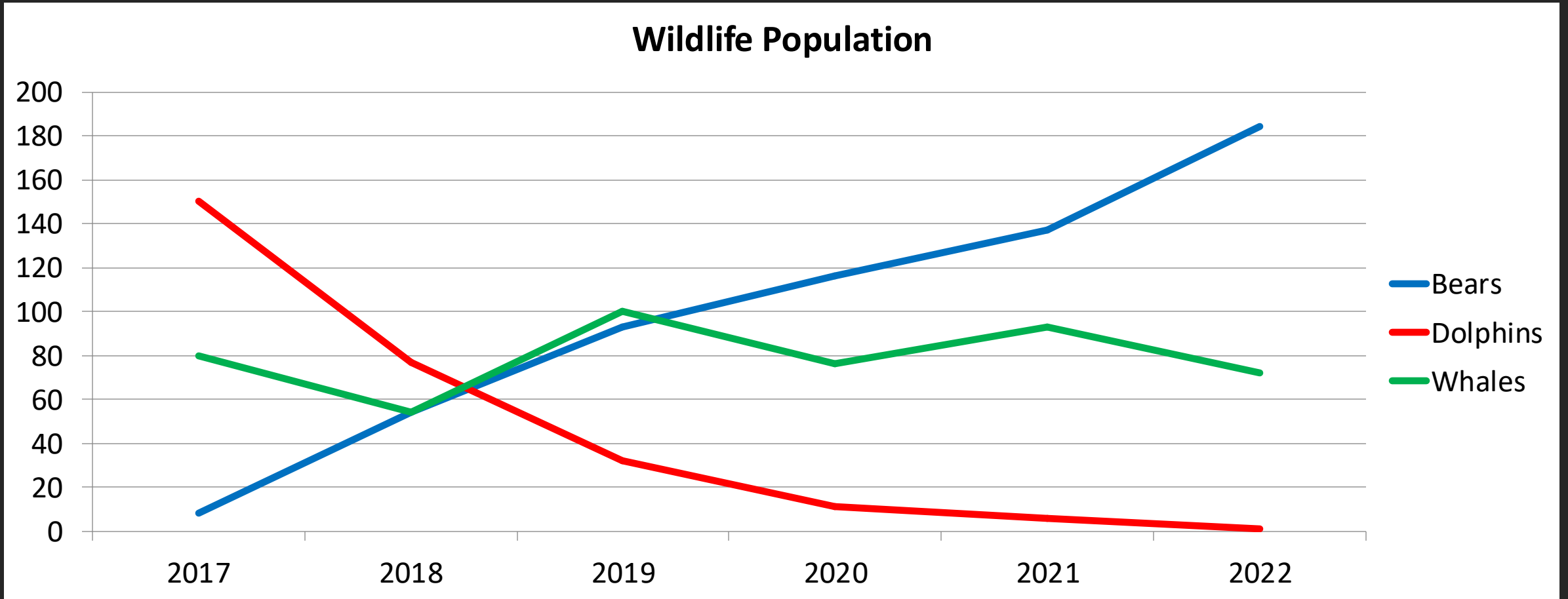
- Test all combinations in your branding

Use of Color

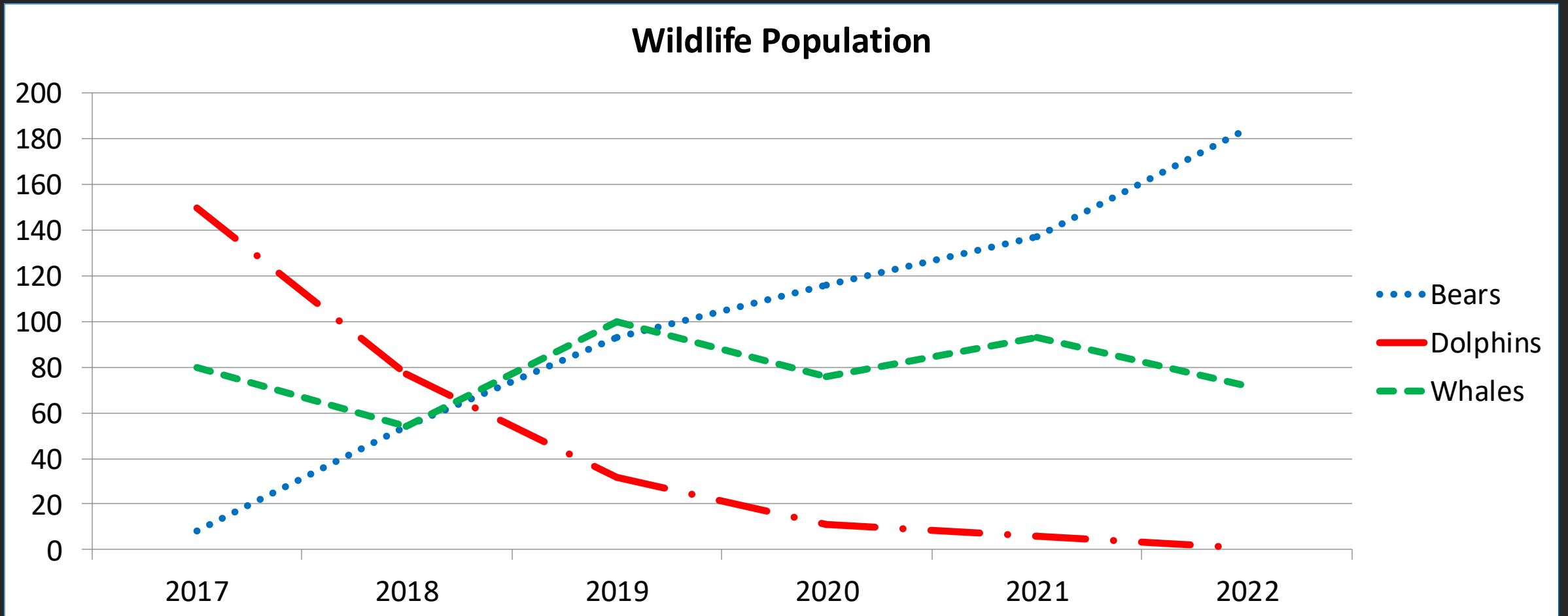**Do not use color as the only way** to differentiate different parts of your content.

It's OK to use color but **use at least one other way too**.

Ask Yourself...

Does my content have **enough color contrast?**

Could I still understand everything if it was in **grayscale** (black & white)?

Wrapping Up!

So, what can I apply these skills to?

Everything!

- Websites
- Software
- Digital documents
- Social Media
- Videos

- Academic content
- Informational content
- Public content
- Internal content

Our Next Stop

- Hands-on accessibility testing!

- Resources for you to use and/or share

Homework!

- Pick a website to use for an exercise

- Can be your own or one from your SEA

Q&A

Contact Me!

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Thank You!