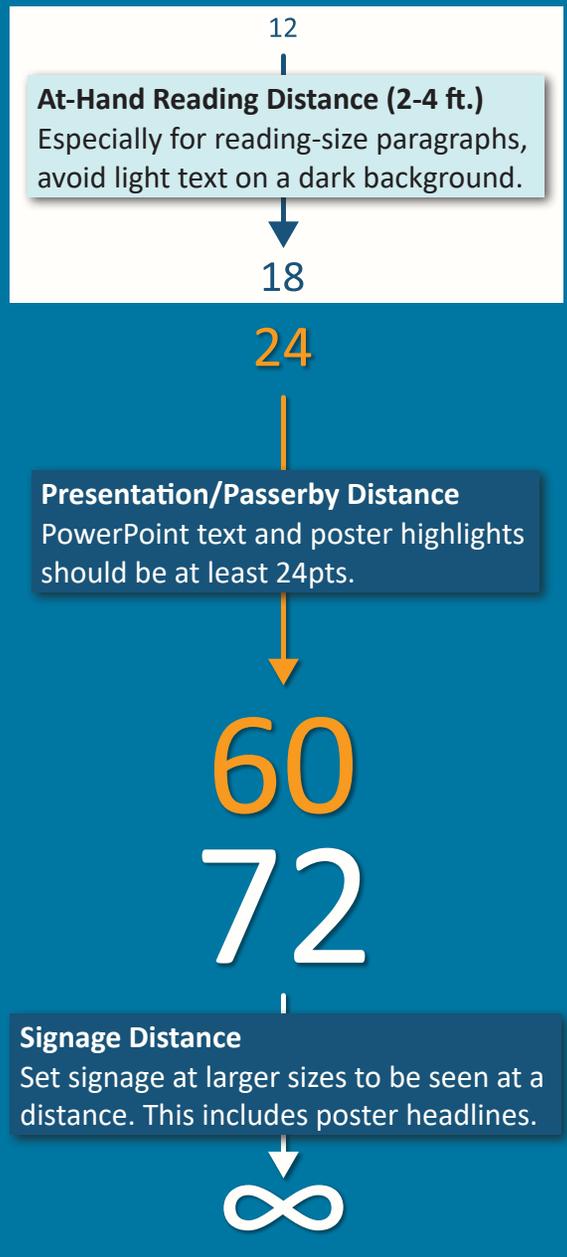## Best Practice

It's important to realize that this guide describes <u>visual</u> design. For <u>universal</u> design, you must consider the needs of users who cannot access visual materials. Some options for accessible alternatives include audio recordings, screen reader-compatible PDF copies uploaded to easily accessed web pages, and verbal explanation. Best practice means having at least one alternative available, even if you don't personally anticipate it being needed.

Some terminology to be aware of:

- **Screen Reader**: An application which synthesizes data from across the user interface, such as text, and outputs it via text-to-speech or a Braille display. Some computers, mainly Apple computers, come with built-in text-to-speech.
- **Alt Text**: A description of a placed image. This is what a screen reader will use to "describe" the image to a vision-impaired user. In verbal explanations (such as during presentations), be sure to describe any images to the user.

Universal design also employs accessible writing. Shorter sentences with fewer clauses make for easier reading. This aids users with reading difficulties as well as second-language readers. You can use readability calculators such as the free Hemingway App to generate a Flesch-Kincaid grade level. Aim for 6-7th grade, or up to 9-10th for complex ideas.

Font Size Guide (in Points)

12

At-Hand Reading Distance (2-4 ft.)
Especially for reading-size paragraphs, avoid light text on a dark background.

18

24

Presentation/Passerby Distance
PowerPoint text and poster highlights should be at least 24pts.

60
72

Signage Distance
Set signage at larger sizes to be seen at a distance. This includes poster headlines.

∞

Learning Enrichment and Disability Services
Pearsons 2nd, North • Mon-Fri, 8am-4pm
www.beloit.edu/learning • (608) 363 2572
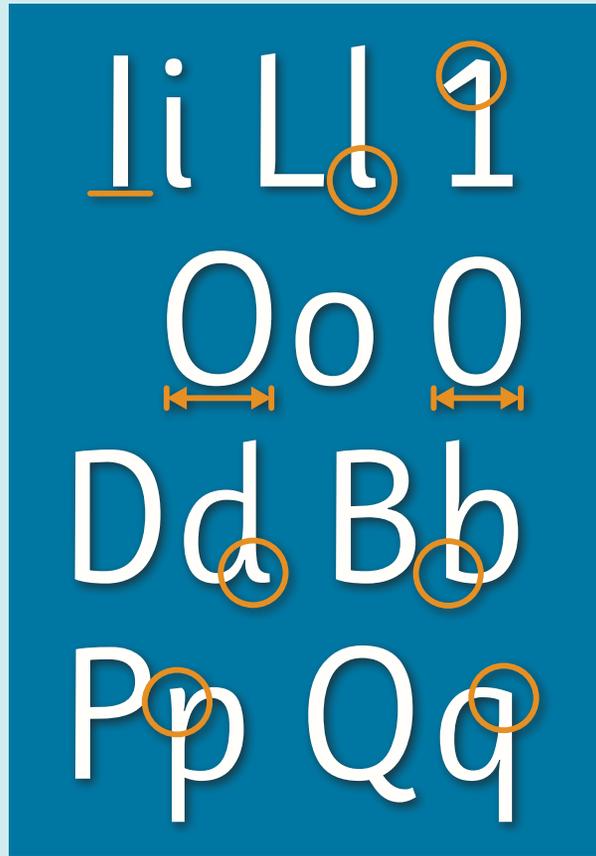learning@beloit.edu • tutoring@beloit.edu

XXL
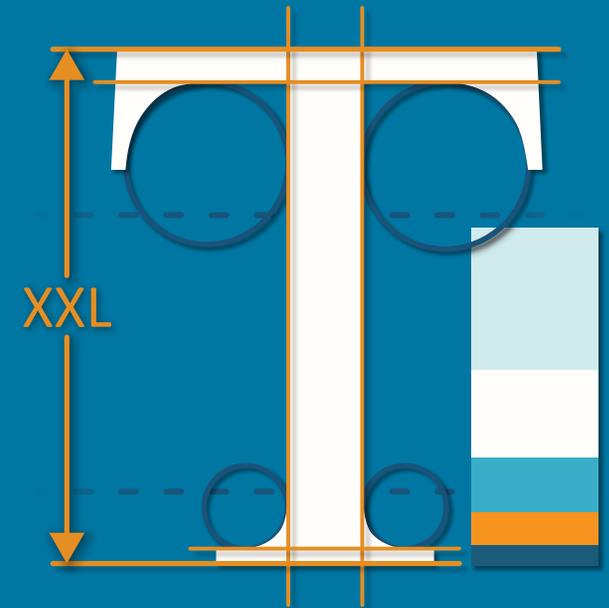
Designing for Greater Accessibility

**Print & Digital Design
Quick Reference**

LEARNING ENRICHMENT AND DISABILITY SERVICES

Typeface Selection & Settings

- To avoid confusion, limit variety.

- Avoid funky, stylistic typefaces.

- Pay attention to characters that are easily confused. The chart on the right features some easily confused characters and how they may be differentiated.

- When formatting more than three lines of text, make sure line-spacing is at least 1.2, or 120% the font size.

- Key features of a more accessible typeface:
  - Low contrast in stroke width.[1]
  - Lowercase characters should ascend to roughly 65-75% the height of uppercase characters.[1]
  - The width of capital letters should be roughly between 50-100% of their height.

Quicksand typeface by Andrew Paglinawan
fontsquirrel.com

The character Xx is a very regular shape. This makes it useful in gauging accessibility features. You don't need to take a ruler to your screen, but having a sense of what these ratios look like is helpful.

Ruluko typeface by Angélica Díaz
1001fonts.com

Why is Ruluko a more accessible typeface?
Distinguishing features on letters that in other typefaces look the same when rotated or flipped make this typeface more accessible for users with reading difficulties.

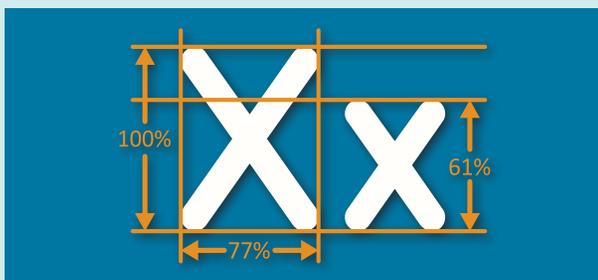Some more legible typefaces, sampled at 12pt. regular:

- Century Schoolbook (Xx / Il1 / O0 / dbqp)
- Book Antiqua (Xx / Il1 / O0 / dbqp)
- Verdana (Xx / Il1 / O0 / dbqp)
- Tiresias InfoFont (**Xx / Il1 / O0 / dbqp**)
- Andika (Xx / Il1 / O0 / dbqp)
- Open Dyslexic (Xx / Il1 / O0 / dbqp)

Paragraphing & Organization

- Left-aligned type is easier to track while reading bodies of text. The user should be able to easily predict where the next line of text will begin.

- Avoid hyphenating across line breaks.

- Use font styles for emphasis rather than capitalization, and use emphasis sparingly. THIS IS NOT EASY TO TRACK. **This** is. <u>This</u> is. *This* can be, but it can also pose a challenge for some users.

- Utilize consistent header styles, subheaders, and lists. This allows users to quickly find key information.

- Relevant illustrations can help users deduce meanings and ideas.

Color & Contrast

- Contrast enhances legibility. Pay particular attention to light-dark contrasts, or color value. Your design should be as legible in grayscale as in color.

- Avoid light text on dark backgrounds for paragraph type. Light-on-dark can cause text to blur for some vision-impaired users.[2]

- Red and green together is best avoided, as red-green color blindness is the most common form of color blindness.

1. Smithsonian Accessibility Program, "Smithsonian Guidelines for Accessible Exhibition Design," https://www.si.edu/accessibility/sgaed

2. UX Movement, "When to Use White Text on a Dark Background," 28 April 2011, http://uxmovement.com/content/when-to-use-white-text-on-a-dark-background/