



Writing Accessible Text: A Guide

Creating accessible social media content is essential for ensuring that all users, regardless of their abilities, can engage with your posts. Accessible writing starts with plain language, which is clear and straightforward, making it easier for everyone to understand. However, accessible writing also involves considering other details such as the use of emojis and the casing of text. While social media is a space for creative expression and embracing new communication trends, some of these trends can hinder accessibility. This section will provide guidelines and best practices for writing accessible text on social media.

What is Plain Language?

Plain language is writing that is clear, concise, and easily understood by a broad audience. It avoids complex vocabulary and jargon, favoring straightforward terms and simple sentence structures. Plain language helps ensure that everyone, including people with cognitive disabilities, non-native speakers, and those with low literacy skills, can comprehend your message.

Tips for Writing Accessible Text

1. Use Inclusive Language

- Promote inclusivity through language choices. Avoid ableist terms, incorporate gender-neutral pronouns and inclusive language
- Example: "Each employee must submit their report by Friday" rather than "Each employee must submit his report by Friday"

2. Use CamelCase for Hashtags

- CamelCase involves capitalizing the first letter of each word in a hashtag. This makes the hashtag easier to read and understand, especially for screen readers.
- Example: Instead of #socialmediatrends, use #SocialMediaTrends.

3. Place Hashtags at the End of Posts

- For better accessibility, especially for screen readers, place hashtags at the end of your post rather than embedding them within the text. This ensures that the primary message is conveyed clearly without interruption.
- Example: Instead of "Join us for the #FunEvent happening #Tomorrow," use "Join us for the fun event happening tomorrow. #FunEvent #Tomorrow"

4. Use abbreviations sparingly

- Use abbreviations thoughtfully for accessibility. Screen readers read acronyms as individual letters unless properly formatted. Provide the full term first with the abbreviation in parentheses and use the abbreviation consistently.

- Example: I.T. instead of IT
- 5. Use Clear and Descriptive Links:**
 - Rather than using long URLs or generic "click here" links, use descriptive text that indicates what the user will find when they click the link.
 - Example: Instead of "Click here for more info," use "Learn more about our event."
- 6. Shorten Long Links**
 - Use link shorteners to condense long URLs when sharing on social media or in posts. Shortened links improve accessibility by easing navigation for screen readers, which may struggle with lengthy web addresses.
 - Example: Learn more about ADA compliance in healthcare facilities: <https://bit.ly/3abcdef>
- 7. Avoid All Caps**
 - Writing in all caps can be difficult to read and may be interpreted as shouting. Use regular sentence casing for better readability.
 - Example: Instead of "JOIN US FOR THE EVENT," use "Join us for the event."
- 8. Avoid Alternating Caps**
 - Alternating caps, such as "ThIs Is A pOsT," can be challenging to read and understand. It may also be problematic for screen readers and individuals with cognitive disabilities.
 - Example: Instead of "ThIs Is A pOsT aBoUt oUr eVeNt," use "This is a post about our event."
- 9. Avoid Dashes and Hyphens**
 - Screen readers often do not pronounce the dash or hyphen in messages. Spell out words like "A minus" rather than "A-".
 - Example: Use "3:30 to 5:00 pm" rather than "3:30-5:00 pm".
- 10. Limit Use of Emojis**
 - Excessive use of emojis can clutter your message. Screen readers read out the names of emojis, disrupting the flow of content and making it harder for users relying on assistive technology to understand the intended meaning
 - Example: Sometimes the sparkle emoji is used to convey sarcasm. However, " It's just what I needed! " becomes "Sparkle, it's just what I needed! Sparkle." Instead, opt for clear language: "It's just what I needed! (sarcastic tone)."

Resources

- Websites to shorten links
 - [Bit.ly](https://bit.ly)
 - [TinyURL](https://tinyurl.com)
- [Disability Language Style Guide](#)

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