The Dyslexia-Friendly Style Guide

Ako
AOTEAROA

**Dyslexia-Friendly
Quality Mark**

Supporting people
with dyslexia

www.dfqm.nz

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Welcome to the Dyslexia-Friendly Style Guide

Kia ora!

Welcome to the Dyslexia-Friendly Style Guide.

Simple resource writing strategies can make a vital difference for ākonga with literacy or neurodiversity challenges. In addition, dyslexia-friendly approaches and resources create a more inclusive learning environment for everyone.

The strategies here will help guide you create print and digital resources that are easy to read and accessible to people with dyslexia or who struggle with literacy.

But also, don't forget that resource design and development is only one aspect of dyslexia-friendly teaching.

Teaching strategies such as chunking learning, visual prompts, clear and explicit instructions, alternative assessment options, and mind maps and flowcharts can also help create a learning-friendly environment.

Technology tools, cooperative learning, and asking the ākonga how they learn best can help further improve the experience.

We hope this guide, informed by research, will help you to create dyslexia-friendly resources that are effective, accessible, and enjoyable for all ākonga.

Kia tika, kia pono, kia manawanui!

Annette Tofaeono and the team at Ako Aotearoa

Reader-friendly fonts

» Use fonts that are simple and clear and appear less crowded, such as sans serif fonts.

» These do not have the small lines (serifs) at the ends of the letters. Some popular sans serif fonts include: Arial, Century Gothic, Calibri, Helvetica, Verdana.

Font size

» Use reasonable font sizes as this makes it easier to read; for example, font sizes 12-14 points or larger.

» This document is written 12-point.

Capitalisation

» Avoid or limit the use of capital letters for whole words and headings.

» Graphic designers often love using capitalisation, which makes words harder for some people to read.

Colour options

» Use single-colour backgrounds and avoid background patterns or pictures.

» One possibility is to use a black or dark font on a yellow background like this resource.

Headings and layout

» For headings, use a font size of at least 20% larger than the rest of the text. If further emphasis is required, use bold.

» Avoid using, or at least overusing, italics and underlines though.

Bullet points and numbering

» Consider using bullet points or numbering if it makes it easier to shorten the text.

Formatting

» Add extra space around the heading and between paragraphs to avoid clutter and make it clear to read.

» Break up text with regular section headings in long documents to split up or chunk the information.

» A line spacing of 1.5 can be helpful as it makes the text evenly spaced.

Table of contents

» Include a table of contents in books or long documents to make it easier to locate information.

Boxes and borders

» Borders can be helpful. Boxes and frames around text can be beneficial to highlight the importance of particular words or information.

Writing style

» Be concise – avoid the use of long paragraphs.

» Use short, simple sentences and provide clear instructions.

» Break long blocks of text into shorter paragraphs.

Images

» Use images to support text, including flowcharts, mind maps, arrows, and icons.

Abbreviations

» Avoid abbreviations where possible. Always use the full word when first used in a document or resource.

Glossary

» Provide a glossary of terms in plain English.

» A glossary is helpful for abbreviations, jargon, and technical words.

Readability

» Keep language simple and consider using checking readability levels using a tool like the Flesch-Kincaid calculator in the reference list at the end of this guide.

Technology

» Use assistive technology where suitable; for example, Microsoft Dictate and Read Aloud.

Additional teaching tips

» Make sure your instructions are clear and explicit.
» Allow alternate assessment options.
» Chunk the learning.
» Use visual prompts.
» Allow extra time.
» Provide a timeline for tasks to be completed.
» Reading the instructions and information out loud is helpful.
» Where tasks are included, clearly indicate the 'must-do' parts.
» Ask your ākonga how they learn best.
» Apply a strengths-based teaching approach.

References and resources

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**Nā āheitanga ā-mātauranga,
ko angitū ā-ākonga**
Building educational capability
for learner success