

## 4. Accessibility

### 4.2. Cognitive Accessibility

Cognitive accessibility means creating an environment where students with diverse levels of cognitive abilities can fully understand, engage with, and benefit from educational materials and activities. This includes using clear instructions, visual aids, simplified language, flexible teaching methods, and supportive technologies to ensure all students can participate and succeed in their learning.

For students with literacy difficulties (especially in reading comprehension), with intellectual disabilities and with a first language other than the one used in class, educational content can be made accessible through the use of simplified or “Easy Language” or through pictograms for students with severe communication difficulties.

These methods help to bridge communication gaps and promote inclusion in educational settings.

#### 4.2.1. Easy language

“Easy Language” is a method of writing or speaking designed to make information clear and easy to understand. It uses **short sentences, simple vocabulary, and a clear structure**, often **supported by visual aids**, to ensure accessibility for a wide audience.

See here as an example the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 2006) in Easy Language: [LINK](#)

To translate your educational material into Easy Language, follow these recommendations.

| VOCABULARY                       | RECOMMENDATION   | EXAMPLE |
|----------------------------------|--|---------|
| SIMPLE AND CONSISTENT VOCABULARY | Use frequently used and simple vocabulary. Consistently use the same word to refer to the same object or fact throughout the text. |         |

Recommendations

| VOCABULARY                     | RECOMMENDATION   | EXAMPLE  |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>ABBREVIATIONS</b>           | Avoid acronyms and abbreviations; if unavoidable, explain them.  |  |
| <b>EXPLAIN DIFFICULT WORDS</b> | Avoid using too many abstract, technical, or complex terms. If they are essential, provide an explanation.   |  |
| <b>GLOSSARY</b>                | Include a glossary.<br>Use glosses – brief explanations placed near the word or expression.  |  |
|                                | For long texts, create a dictionary.<br>Underline dictionary entries in the text.<br>Always explain how to use the dictionary.   |  |
| SYNTAX AND GRAMMAR             | RECOMMENDATION   | EXAMPLE  |
| <b>SENTENCES</b>               | Create short and simple sentences regarding grammar and syntax depending on the language. If possible, write only one idea per sentence and line. Do not write more than two ideas per sentence. | For German and English follow the “Subject + Verb + Object” order. |
| <b>PARAGRAPHS</b>              | Use paragraph breaks to divide sentences or phrases that have different ideas.   |  |
|                                | Do not split paragraphs. If it does not fit completely on a page, let it begin on the next page.   |  |
| <b>ACTIVE VERB FORM</b>        | Use the active verb form.  |  |

Recommendations

| SYNTAX AND GRAMMAR           | RECOMMENDATION  | EXAMPLE        |
|------------------------------|---|----------------|
| <b>AFFIRMATIVE SENTENCES</b> | <p>Use affirmative sentences.</p> <p>Exception: when a negative sentence is clearer and more direct. For example in simple prohibitions like "no smoking."</p>  |                |
| <b>VERBS</b>                 | <p>Prefer simple verb tenses. Use the present when possible.</p>  |                |
| <b>PRONOUNS</b>              | <p>Avoid replacing names with pronouns.</p> <p>Exception: the reference can be easily identified (for example: Elisa plays with the ball. She wants to be a football player).</p>                       |                |
| <b>NUMBERS</b>               | <p>Write numbers in digits.</p> <p>Write large numbers with many digits in words, use qualitative comparisons, or replace them with terms like "several," "thousands," or "millions" when possible.</p> |                |
| <b>DESIGN</b>                | <b>RECOMMENDATION</b>   | <b>EXAMPLE</b> |
| <b>BACKGROUND</b>            | <p>Do not use a background that makes it difficult to read the text. Use a flat colour that has a good contrast with the text.</p>  |                |
| <b>COLOURS</b>               | <p>Avoid using many different colours. Use colours sparingly and, if possible, not as the only distinguishing feature.</p> <p>Ensure sufficient contrast (use a contrast calculator).</p>               |                |

Recommendations

| DESIGN       | RECOMMENDATION   | EXAMPLE  |
|--------------|--|--|
|              | Avoid red-green contrasts.   |  |
| FONT         | Sans-serif fonts like Arial, Calibri, Cambria, OpenDyslexic or Verdana are generally easier to read due to their clean lines and lack of decorative flourishes, as well as being licence-free fonts. |  |
|              | Use a font size between 12 and 16 points. The standard size is 14, but the optimal size may vary depending on the font type.   |  |
| FONT STYLE   | Avoid using italics, underlines, shadows, outlines, and embossing.   |  |
|              | Use bold only to highlight important words or words explained in glosses or the glossary.  |  |
|              | In languages that use uppercase and lowercase, do not write everything in uppercase. Limit uppercase to the beginning of a paragraph or title, after a period, or in proper names.                   |  |
| ALIGNMENT    | Use left justification for Latin alphabet languages and full justification for character-based languages.  |  |
| HYPHENATION  | Do not split words; always write the full word in one line.<br>Avoid hyphenations at the end of a line.  | To be used: "This is an example of a full word on one line." |
| LINE SPACING | Use a minimum line spacing of 1.5 and adapt it to the font size and the medium of text display.  |  |

Recommendations

| DESIGN               | RECOMMENDATION  | EXAMPLE  |
|----------------------|---|--|
| PAGE NUMBERING       | Number the pages of the text, using a larger font than that of the rest of the text.  |  |
| STRUCTURE            | Make the structure of the content visually clear, e.g. by using headings or hierarchical levels, paragraphs and white space; use bullet points.                   |  |
| HEADINGS             | Include at least one heading per page. Have a maximum of 3 levels of headings.  |  |
| PARATEXTUAL ELEMENTS | RECOMMENDATION  | EXAMPLE  |
| IMAGES               | Use images (photos, drawings, illustrations) only if they help or complement the understanding of the text.   |  |
|                      | Images should be placed near the text. Try to put them in a place where they do not affect readability. Place them in the margin or at the top of the text block. |  |
|                      | The same concept should always be represented with the same image.  |  |
|                      | Use high-resolution colour images when possible.  |  |
|                      | Include an alternative text for images in digital content.  | Here instructions to add an alternative text: <a href="#">LINK</a> |