# Digital Accessibility Checklist Explanations: Accessible Use of Color, Color Contrast and Text/Font Style

This document contains three sections: Color, Contrast, and Text/Font Style. It has eight checkbox items followed by an explanation for each item. Use the up and down arrows to navigate the document.

## Color

**Color used to emphasize or convey information is supplemented with secondary formatting.**

*Explanation:* Students unable to distinguish between colors rely on secondary formatting as cues to help figure out emphasis or meaning.

**Color-coding is supplemented with a secondary mechanism, such as a shape or symbol.**

*Explanation:* Students unable to distinguish between colors rely on shapes or symbols as cues to help figure out content.

## Contrast

**Strong color contrast is present between the foreground (text or graphics) and the background. The content is readable.**

*Explanation: Students with low vision or colorblindness need sufficient contrast between the foreground (text or graphics) and the background. Good contrast also benefits mobile users. Tip: If unsure of the contrast, use The Paciello Group’s Color Contrast Analyzer; download from: developer.paciellogroup.com/resources*

**Black text on a red background or red text on a black background is avoided.**

*Explanation: Some students with color blindness lack the ability to detect the lower color wave frequencies associated with red; red appears black, so this combination should be avoided.*

**Color combinations that seem to vibrate or create an after image are avoided**.

*Explanation: Placing areas of brightly colored hues together can cause an afterimage effect (or “visual vibration”), which makes it difficult to focus on the content.*

## Text/Font Style

**Basic, simple, easy-to-read fonts are used.**

*Explanation: Use fonts that are available by default in modern operating systems. Avoid decorative, frilly fonts. Good options to consider are: Arial, Calibri, Tahoma, Trebuchet MS, and Verdana.*

**Blinking or moving text is avoided.**

*Explanation: Text that blinks or moves can be distracting to all learners and especially so for learners with attention deficits or cognitive disabilities. Additionally, for those susceptible, there is a possibility that blinking text will trigger a seizure.*

**Real text, not text in a graphic, is used whenever possible.**

*Explanation: When text is actually an image, it cannot be read by a screen reader. Providing an alternative text may be an option; however, using real text is the recommendation because when the image needs to be significantly enlarged for students with low vision, the text in the image may become distorted and unrecognizable.*