

Color & Contrast Quick Fix Guide¹

Creating accessible color and contrast in your digital content doesn't have to be complicated. This guide provides the essential standards you need to know, quick checks you can perform right now, and practical solutions to common contrast problems. Whether you're designing a new course, updating a slide deck, or reviewing existing materials, these straightforward fixes will help ensure that everyone, including those with low vision, color blindness, or viewing content in challenging conditions, can access your content clearly and effectively. Keep this guide handy as your go-to reference for making smart color and contrast decisions.

1. Understanding Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Contrast Standards

- A contrast ratio measures the difference in luminance (lightness/darkness) between the foreground (like text) and the background. A higher contrast ratio makes text easier to read.
- WCAG Guidelines provide minimums that you can test using the [WebAIM Color Contrast Checker](#):
 - Normal text: Minimum 4.5:1 color contrast ratio
 - Large text (18pt+ or 14pt+ bold): Minimum 3:1 contrast ratio

2. Quick Checks

- Can you read the text clearly if you print preview it in black and white/grayscale?
- Is information or emphasis conveyed by more than just color?
- Are interactive elements (links, buttons) visually distinct?
- Does text remain readable when zoomed to 200%?

3. Common Problem Areas

- Gray text on white backgrounds
- Light blue hyperlinks
- Using color alone to convey information (emphasis, required fields) without additional visual cues
- Low-contrast buttons and form fields
- Text that runs over background images

4. Fast Fixes

1. Darken text colors or lighten backgrounds
2. The color "Red" in many applications fails to meet the contrast standard; consider "Dark Red" instead.
3. Add underlines to links (not just color)
4. Use icons + text for important actions (e.g., ✓ + "Complete" instead of just ✓)
5. Add borders to low-contrast buttons
6. Test with tools like the [WebAIM Contrast Checker](#) before publishing

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