



### Accessible Fonts

Typography choices have a huge impact on accessibility. According to [Section 508](#) guidelines, “An accessible font means using a typeface designed for easy reading by a diverse audience, including individuals with visual impairments such as low vision or reading disability such as dyslexia. Accessible typography ensures that textual information is accessible to all users, irrespective of their abilities or disabilities.”

Section 508 doesn’t recommend specific typefaces or minimum font sizes. But government websites need to have clear and consistent headings and highly legible text. There are two basic categories of typeface: Serif and sans serif.

Serif	Sans Serif
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Have small “feet” at the tops and bottoms of the characters</li><li>▪ Considered more traditional</li><li>▪ More legible at smaller scales</li><li>▪ Better for printed products and longer reading sessions</li><li>▪ Can be harder to read for people with dyslexia or other disabilities</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ No “feet”</li><li>▪ Considered more modern</li><li>▪ Easily legible from far away</li><li>▪ Better for screen reading, especially mobile screens</li><li>▪ Best practice when designing for accessibility</li></ul>

Most print publications use serif typefaces, which are slightly easier to read for people with good vision. But serifs actually decrease readability for people with low vision, who have to zoom in and out a lot, especially on mobile screens.

Today, most people get their information online, not in print. So, organizations are transitioning to sans serif. All the [ADA-compliant fonts](#) are sans serif. Microsoft replaced Times New Roman (serif) with Calibri (sans serif) in 2007, then made Aptos its default font in 2024. The new [CDC Templates](#) use Roboto for headings and titles and Nunito Sans for body copy and subheadings, both of which we’re using in this article. (See the [CDC Typography](#) page for more details and to download Roboto and Nunito Sans if they’re not already installed on your laptop.)

The individual letters in these new fonts are easier for everyone to read. For example, the uppercase for the letter “I” and the lowercase for the letter “L” are both straight lines in Calibri. Aptos, Roboto, and Nunito Sans distinguish the “I” with a little curve.

So, there are lots of options. If you can't stand the "new" fonts, you don't have to use them. Stick with Calibri, Arial, or another ADA-compliant typeface. But try to avoid serif fonts—they're OK for headings, but sans serif is best for body copy. Pick one font per document and be consistent!

#### **Other resources**

- [Serif vs. Sans Serif Fonts: What's the Difference?](#)
- [Picking the right font: Serif vs. sans serif](#)
- [A change of typeface: Microsoft's new default font has arrived](#)
- [Microsoft Design: A Deep Dive Into Aptos](#)