



# One Idea Per Line: A Guide to Making Easy Read Resources



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# Why Make Accessible Resources?

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If you make toolkits, factsheets, or other kinds of written resources, you should make your resources accessible to people with all kinds of disabilities. Access is a civil right, and everyone deserves access to information. You may have already heard about some ways to make information accessible—like Braille, audiobooks, sign language videos, or screenreader-accessible formatting. This guide will talk about Easy Read, which is a format designed to make information accessible to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

At ASAN, Easy Read is the best way we have found so far to make complicated information accessible to people with IDD. That's why it is so important. Don't think of Easy Read and other accessible formats as "add-ons" to the "main" resource, or as "extras" to add if you have the time. When you make information accessible, you are including people—when you don't, you are excluding. We want to give you the tools you need to include more people!

# What Does This Guide Do?

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This guide will teach you how to write in Easy Read. Easy Read is a style of writing that uses clear and easy-to-understand language. Each sentence in an Easy Read document is shown next to a picture icon to illustrate the information in that sentence. This helps people who are visual learners to better understand the content.

There is a long history of self-advocates creating more accessible ways to share information. Easy Read is part of that history. Easy Read has been used in New Zealand, Australia, and the United Kingdom for longer than it has been used in the United States. But by now, many organizations in the U.S. and internationally have done Easy Read work. In the U.S., some organizations that have done a lot of work in Easy Read are Self Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE) and Green Mountain Self Advocates (GMSA). ASAN has been lucky to work with both of these organizations on some of our Easy Read resources.

At ASAN, we have been making Easy Read resources since 2016. We have learned a lot over the last 5 years. We have worked closely with people with intellectual disabilities to make our Easy Read words and icons easier to understand. We have developed standards for how to make Easy Read resources the way we do. This guide explains and shares those standards. We hope by showing you how we do our Easy Read work, you can start writing in Easy Read for your own work.

People write in Easy Read in many different ways. For example, the standards used for Easy Read in New Zealand may not be exactly like the guide we are writing. This guide doesn't explain "one right way" to write in Easy Read—it just explains the current standards that ASAN uses. Future versions of this guide may have different information. Since 2016, we have been working to make our Easy Read better, and we still make changes to how we do Easy Read when things need to improve.

# Part 1: Writing

## Why Should I Write in Easy Read?

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Making resources in Easy Read should be an important part of any organization's work. Easy Read was originally created to make documents more accessible for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). But there are lots of different groups that may have trouble reading documents at a high reading level. For example, people who speak English as their second language, people with language processing disabilities, or older adults who may have trouble seeing or understanding information, may struggle to read inaccessible resources.

Many of these documents have information that is crucial to making decisions about their lives. These can be government documents, policy documents from nonprofit organizations, or even information about community resources. Now, government agencies and some companies are learning how important this is.

Easy Read shows information in two ways - with pictures and words - and repeats the main ideas of the document to make sure the most important information gets understood. Writing in Easy Read helps create a more equitable society. It makes sure everyone can access the same information.

# What are the main things to know about Easy Read?

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The most important thing to know about Easy Read is that it can be done! It may seem like the topics you want to write about are so complex that Easy Read would be impossible. You might have to think about your topic in a different way, but you should always go into an Easy Read project assuming you can do it.

Another important thing to know about Easy Read is that you should include all the same information in an Easy Read resource as you would in a non-Easy Read resource. An Easy Read resource should give the reader *all the information*, just explained in a different way. If you are writing about the federal budget in Easy Read, you still need to explain committees, discretionary vs. non-discretionary spending, and what “appropriations” means. In fact, it’s even more important that you do a good job explaining these things in an accessible way.

When you write in Easy Read, you might have to give more background information about a topic. Many people who could use Easy Read documents may not have been given clear information on topics that others assume they already know. As a result, writing in Easy Read requires a different process than writing in other styles. When writing in Easy Read, you might need to “go back” and break down concepts before you can explain your main idea. For example, to write in Easy Read about Medicaid, you might have to start by explaining what health insurance is. You might also talk about what kinds of health insurance exist, or how the government pays for Medicaid.



While it may seem like the process of Easy Read makes things more “simple”, it is really difficult! It takes a lot of examining what you already know, and figuring out how to make that knowledge accessible. Think about your writing from the reader’s point of view. For every sentence, paragraph or idea, ask **“so what?”** and **“how does this affect me?”** Make sure that your writing answers those questions, and doesn’t have information that isn’t important to the reader.

# How do I write in Easy Read?

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## Outline

The first step for your Easy Read project, as with many kinds of projects, is to create an outline. This is the chance to figure out your main idea. It also helps you find places you may need to expand your content to flesh out your main idea. Again, remember that your audience may be coming in with little to no knowledge of your topic. Include background information that is relevant to your main subject, even if it may not come up again in the document. That makes sure everyone is coming into the core of the document with the same prior knowledge.

When outlining, think about how you will split your content into sections. Having smaller sections that readers can choose within a larger document helps reinforce main ideas. It also makes the amount of content less overwhelming. It may be helpful to frame each section and sub-section as questions that you hope to answer within your writing. For example, let's say you're writing a document on housing policy, and you have a section on affordable housing. Here is what one part of that outline might look like:

What is affordable housing?

- What does "affordable" mean?
- Who makes affordable housing?
- Who can get affordable housing?

Once you have an outline, it's time to start writing! Here are tips to help you write in an accessible way:

Use short sentences - about 10-15 words per sentence is best. Each sentence should not take up more than a line in a standard Word document in most 12-point font. Try and stick to common words, unless you need to include terms specific to your main idea/topic. In addition, try to stick to one idea per sentence. Having more than one idea per sentence can make the sentence less clear, so in most cases, it is best to split it into two sentences.

**For example:**

**Original text:**

Our fellowship program will involve working with a mentor to develop skills through a year-long project.

**Reworded text:**

Fellows work with a mentor.

They work on a project together for one year.

This helps our fellows learn new skills.

## **Passive vs. Active Voice**

You also want to avoid using passive voice in your Easy Read writing. "Passive voice" means that instead of there being a subject doing an action in the sentence, the subject is just receiving the action being done by someone or something else. Active voice is much better for accessibility, because it is clearer and more direct.

**Active voice:** You want to avoid using passive voice in your writing.

**Passive voice:** When writing, passive voice should be avoided.

## **Straightforward language and repetition**

Another important part of writing in Easy Read is using straightforward language and repetition. Watch out for using words like “this,” “they,” or “it” when it might not be clear what or who you’re talking about. In these instances, it is better to say the subject again, or divide the sentence into two sentences.

People with IDD may not always understand metaphor, sarcasm, or other figures of speech. Avoiding these ways of speaking can make any document more accessible. This doesn’t mean you can’t use any figures of speech in your Easy Read documents! If you do use them, just clarify what the figure of speech means. **For example:**

### **Original text:**

The brain of someone with ADHD is like a wild horse.

### **Reworded text:**

People with ADHD sometimes feel like their brain is “hard to steer.”

They feel like using their brain is like riding a wild horse.

Repeating the main ideas of your paper throughout the document is also helpful for writing in Easy Read. These reminders can help readers better connect to different chapters/sections of your document. They also give a clear message that is more likely to be remembered once someone finishes reading the document. Remember, “going backwards” by reinforcing these ideas can help you move forward in the Easy Read process!

## Define terms

For terms specific to the topic of your document, define each term using accessible language. For example, in the Medicaid document mentioned earlier, Medicaid would need to be a term that is defined. Each defined word should appear in **bold** the first time it is defined. You should also put all definitions in a glossary. We usually call this section “Words to Know”, and put this list at the front of our Easy Read documents. This lets people read the definitions before starting the main paper, and gives people an easy space to look back to. For the most important terms, use repetition within the document to remind readers of these definitions.

## Bulleted lists

Some people who write in Easy Read use bulleted lists to organize ideas. ASAN uses these because it makes more separation between ideas. It also gives more space and uses more pictures to help readers understand. Other people who write in Easy Read try not to use bulleted lists. They think having lists that are too long makes the document less accessible.

ASAN usually does not use numbered lists for this reason. Readers may forget what number they are on within the list, which can accidentally make the document less accessible. Try to only use numbered lists when talking about a specific sequence of events.

Overall, we have found bulleted lists to be more helpful than harmful. This may depend on individual documents or preference, so try them out and see what works best for you. **For example:**

### **Original text:**

Some examples of public places are a hair salon, a restaurant, or a movie theater.

### **Reworded text:**

Some examples of public places are:

- A hair salon
- A restaurant
- A movie theater

People who avoid bulleted lists in their Easy Read would rewrite the example like this:

A hair salon is a public place.

A restaurant is a public place.

A movie theater is a public place.

## Using examples

Using many examples is also common in Easy Read. Examples help readers to better understand the content by “walking in someone else’s shoes”. It makes ideas more concrete instead of abstract. For example, if you write about housing insecurity, but the readers of the document may not have all experienced housing insecurity, writing about this topic in the second-person point of view could cause confusion. Writing in the third-person fixes this problem.

### **For example:**

### **Original text:**

If you were experiencing housing insecurity, you might try and call the local shelter, but they might not have a bed for you.

### **Reworded text:**

Jim is dealing with housing insecurity.

He does not know where he can sleep tonight.

He tried to call the local shelter.

But the shelter did not have a bed for him.

This example assumes that “housing insecurity” was defined earlier in this document. It also helps remind readers of what “housing insecurity” means by adding that Jim does not know where he can sleep. Using a third-person example instead of a second or first-person example makes things more clear in this case.

## Breaking up examples

One thing to be careful of with examples is that they can become too long. Readers might forget parts of the example story before it is finished. In this case, it can be helpful to create 2 hypothetical people to compare different scenarios. Or, you could add short sections in between examples to break up the ideas.

## Reading level

Lastly, the most common part that gets talked about in Easy Read is reading level. Reading level is very important, but as you now know, it isn't the only thing you should think about when writing in Easy Read! To make Easy Read as accessible as possible, ASAN aims to write our documents between a 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade reading level. Reading level is figured out in a variety of ways, including some that we mentioned earlier, like sentence length and word complexity.

To start lowering the reading level of your work, try to avoid using longer words where simpler ones will do. Instead of saying a task is "laborious," you could say it is hard or difficult. Use <http://thesaurus.com/> to find simpler synonyms for longer words. You can also look up complex topics using the Simple English Wikipedia pages.

You can practice re-writing ideas in simpler language by testing your writing here: <http://splasho.com/upgoer5/>. This page will challenge you to use only the 1,000 most common words in your writing.



## Checking reading level

There are lots of websites that can check the reading level of a document. The most commonly-used ones are called Hemingway, Readable, and Automatic Readability Checker. All of them check reading level using a group of scales. These scales can show a wide range of reading level scores for the same content.

It is generally easiest to take the average of all of these scores as your overall reading level. However, you should also go through the document and check places that the websites flag as being less accessible. Some of these flags may be for reasons that don't matter. For example, many readability checkers flag adverbs as being difficult to understand, even though our readers have never had trouble with them. Other times, these flags may be a good hint to shorten a sentence or change a word.

## Getting accurate scores

When putting your work through a reading level checker, you should take out certain pre-defined words that would "throw off" the score. For example, let's say you are explaining the federal budget process, and must include the term "budget resolution." You define the term the first time you use it. When checking the reading level, you could replace the term "budget resolution" with a shorter placeholder word, so that the phrase will not get flagged every time.

You can also do this for words that your readers already know. For example, let's say you are writing in Easy Read for a group of people with disabilities. You can choose not to define the word "disability", but you can remove it from the reading level check.

The reason we take pre-defined words out when we do reading level checks is not because we are trying to “cheat” the score. Flagging these words every time won’t help us make the document better, because we have to use those words no matter what. Replacing these words lets us focus on everything we **can** still change to lower the reading level. But, you should use this process to make sure that you’re only using jargon or long words if you absolutely have to. Every time you remove a word from a reading level check, think again about whether it really needs to be in your resource, or if there are more accessible words you should use instead.

The easiest way to change wording for a reading level is to use the “find and replace” function in a Word document to find a word. Then, you can go through every time that word is used, and put a simpler word in its place. ASAN likes to use different common fruit names, but the replacement words are up to you!

Reading level checkers usually let you enter as much text as you want at once. We recommend that you start by checking no more than a few paragraphs of your document at a time. Larger blocks of text can throw off the overall readability score. This also makes it easier to highlight specific sections that may need editing.

## Let's try it out!

Here are some sentences that are written using more complex language. Try simplifying these and defining terms if needed. You can also research something you enjoy or are working on. Take a sentence from a book or article you're reading, and try rewriting it.

Some people communicate in ways that are not verbal, such as through pointing at pictures or typing on an iPad.

One difference between part-time and full-time jobs is that full-time jobs have to offer employees health insurance, while part-time jobs do not.

When I met with a representative from the California Department of Education, they told me about their plan to stop requiring certain standardized tests.

### **Remember:**

One sentence per line, one idea per sentence.

You may need to "go backwards" to move forward!

When you're done, try comparing the readability level using the Automatic Readability Checker. See how much lower you can get the reading level without sacrificing the content of your sentence.

# Translating Documents into Easy Read

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There are different ways to write an Easy Read document. Some people choose to start from scratch and write in Easy Read, then make a more complex version based on that document. Others write an original document and then “translate” that document into Easy Read. Or, someone may take a document that they have already published, and then work to translate it. When translating into Easy Read, many of the same things outlined above are important to keep in mind. But there are also other things you need to pay attention to specifically when doing “translation” work.

## Starting from the original document

The most important part of translating work into Easy Read is that the content of your Easy Read document *must* have the same information as your original document. For example, your organization may write a document on housing policy. If you were to also write this document in Easy Read, you must put all of the information in that original document into the Easy Read document. There are times where this will be difficult to do! You may have to change the order of ideas, the kind of language you use, and other things about your writing. But helping people have equitable access to information is the reason Easy Read was created. The only way to do that is to make sure that Easy Read writing has all of the same information as any other document.

Starting with a complex document means you’ll need to break it down into smaller parts. You can start with making a new outline that condenses the main ideas in your original document. This can help you figure out if the order of your original document makes sense for Easy Read, or if the framing needs to be changed.

Creating this outline can also help you fill in the information “gaps” that you may have in your original document. You may need to flesh out concepts that were not fully explained in the non-Easy Read version of your work. You will also need to break down longer sentences into multiple shorter ones, which may affect the sequence of ideas.

You should also think about which terms in your original document should be defined vs replaced. On the one hand, readers should be able to understand words that they will come across often. On the other hand, defining too many terms or putting in too much jargon can be inaccessible.

## **Defining words**

For words that show up often in the field that you’re writing about, it is usually best to define them. For example, you might decide that “affordable housing” is a commonly-used phrase in housing policy, so you could define it. On the other hand, a document on natural disasters could rephrase a less-common term, like “emergency management,” to something simpler. Someone could reword this phrase to say “dealing with an emergency”. Then, they could define what an emergency is in the context of a natural disaster.

Note that even though “dealing with an emergency” is more words than “emergency management”, the wording is more accessible. Keep this in mind that in cases like these, shorter sentences are not always better.

## Make sure Easy Read has the same information

As mentioned earlier, if both a technical/complex version of your document and an Easy Read version will be available to the public, they must have the same information in them. We try to release all versions of a document publicly at the same time to make sure they are uniform. You may have to compare a few drafts of the Easy Read and non-Easy Read texts to make sure the Easy Read version has all the information it needs. If you have already released a document publicly and want to create an Easy Read version, *do not* remove any content that was in the original document. It is okay to add in content in order to explain concepts that were left out of the original, but removing content is not giving Easy Read readers equal access.

If you are translating a document that you *haven't* released yet, and you feel like you need to take out content in order to make it accessible, that is okay, as long as you remove the content from both versions of the document. Remember, both versions have to include the same information. But think very carefully about what content to keep in, and what to take out. Asking your reader to learn too much new information all at once can be inaccessible. But you should keep in the important points that your reader needs to know to understand the topic. For example, let's say you are translating a resource about how dogs evolved, which you haven't published yet. If there is a long section comparing dogs to cats, you might decide that people don't need that information to understand dog evolution, and cut it from both versions of the resource. But you should leave in the section about how dogs developed from wolves by living with people for thousands of years. People need to know about that to understand dog evolution.

## Summarizing

As a last resort, organizations without the resources to translate their documents into Easy Read could write an Easy Read summary. This means cutting down the content of your document to a paragraph or two. This is similar to an abstract in other papers, but put into Easy Read format. We want to emphasize that writing an Easy Read summary is *not* equal access. While it is better than not writing in Easy Read at all, it is just a starting point to creating accessible content.

## Plain Language

You may have also heard of another way of making different documents more accessible, called Plain Language. In comparison to Easy Read, Plain Language does not have pictures, and is usually written between a 6th and 8th grade reading level. It is important to make documents in both Plain Language and Easy Read. The spacing, sentence structure, and images in Easy Read documents may be inaccessible to certain people. For example, some people have a hard time processing images, or focusing on writing that is very “spaced out,” like in Easy Read. But people who can’t use Easy Read for those reasons can still benefit from resources with less complex language, like Plain Language resources.

Fortunately, creating a Plain Language version of an Easy Read document is pretty straightforward. Once you finalize the Easy Read version, take another look through the text. Find places to combine sentences and paragraphs. Since Easy Read only allows for one sentence per line, shorter sentences can be put together with conjunctions in Plain Language. Sections can be spaced together into paragraphs, and you can change grammar or syntax to make the Plain Language version flow better. Just avoid adding any more terms that would need to be defined.

Plain Language documents should use at least 14pt text in a clear, easy-to-read font. We use Open Sans for Plain Language documents. There should still be plenty of space, though not nearly as much space as in an Easy Read document. We use text with a 23pt leading (the space between lines). Make sure to keep paragraphs together on the same page, rather than breaking across pages.



Here is a quick example of Easy Read vs Plain Language:

### **Easy Read version:**

Jack was a farmer.

He lived with his wife and children.

One day, someone stole Jack's family's cow.

The children got upset that their cow got stolen.

### **Plain Language version:**

Jack was a farmer who lived with his wife and children. One day, someone stole their cow, which made the children upset.

It is up to your organization whether you want to release a document in Easy Read, Plain Language, a more complex version, or in all 3 ways. ASAN tries to release most of our documents in bothin Easy Read and Plain Language. We will sometimes write a technical document if the topic is important for a certain group to know about, such as researchers. If you do choose to release a document in all 3 ways, it is also up to you to decide if you want your original document to be written in Easy Read, Plain Language, or technical language. Each of these choices has pros and cons in terms of how easy it will be to "translate" between them. Which works best for you depends on your own thinking style.

## Focus Groups

The last part of the Easy Read project process is holding a focus group to review the document. An Easy Read focus group should be made up of people with intellectual disabilities. The focus group should give participants an opportunity to give feedback on your Easy Read document—and directly edit it to make it more accessible—before it is published. A motto in the IDD community is “Nothing about us, without us!”. This applies to writing in Easy Read, too. You have to meaningfully add the voices of people with IDD in your work. By doing so, not only will the finished project be better, but you’ll also have gotter feedback you can use to make your next project better.

ASAN has written toolkits on running accessible meetings or focus groups for people with IDD. You can find those resources at <https://autisticadvocacy.org/resources/accessibility/>. However, here are some specific things to think about when running an Easy Read review focus group.

Think about how you will recruit participants. Some places you can find people with IDD to work with you are:

**People First Chapters** - Self-advocacy groups for people with IDD. There are groups all over the U.S. You can find a list at <https://www.peoplefirst.org/usa/>

**ASAN affiliate groups** - local organizations run by and for autistic people.

**Your state's Protection and Advocacy (P&A) organization** - P&As help people with disabilities fight for our rights, and make sure states follow disability laws. There is a P&A in every state. You can find the P&A in your state by going to <https://www.ndrn.org/about/ndrn-member-agencies/>

**Your state's Developmental Disabilities (DD) Council** - DD councils work to figure out problems that the state can fix to help people with DD. Every DD council has to have people with developmental disabilities on it. You can find the DD council in your state by going to <https://www.nacdd.org/councils/>

**Your local Center for Independent Living (CIL)** - These centers help people with disabilities live in the community. You can find a list of CILs by going to <https://www.ilru.org/projects/cil-net/cil-center-and-association-directory>.

## Preparing for your focus group

Have at least 2 facilitators for the group, and try to include at least one facilitator from the organization that helped you recruit (for example, a self-advocate leader from your local People First chapter). It can be difficult or embarrassing to say when you don't understand something, especially in front of strangers! Having a leader from within the group as a co-facilitator can help participants feel more comfortable giving honest feedback. We try to have facilitators with intellectual disabilities as often as possible. You can also build relationships with these groups by working on more projects together.

Provide the Easy Read document as a printout to focus group participants a week or two in advance of the group meeting. This gives participants a chance to look over it before the meeting and note any initial impressions. They should bring this copy with them to the focus group to follow along with.

Use a large screen or projector to show a version of the Easy Read document to those within the focus group. While one person facilitates, the other person can make edits to the projected document in real-time. This lets focus group members see their edits and compare the first draft (their printouts) with the current draft.

The general flow of an Easy Read focus group is going line-by-line through each section of the document. Then, the group has a chance to give feedback on each line as a group and check for comprehension. You can use this list of guiding questions to help direct critique about the document. You can also project these questions on a screen or whiteboard so participants can think about them.

- Does this make sense to you?
- Does the picture help you understand the words?
- Are we saying the ideas in the right order?
- Is there too much information? Not enough information?
- Would you change anything to make this better?

At the end of each section or page (depending on length), ask participants to discuss what the section was about, and which parts were important. You can also ask specific questions to check comprehension. (“What parts don’t make sense?” “Does the toolkit explain this well enough that you would feel comfortable teaching it to someone else?” “Just to make sure we’re all on the same page, can someone recap what the difference between a primary election and a general election is?”)

Remember, people with disabilities are the experts on our own experience. There may be concepts that are confusing for your focus group members, or the focus group process may take a lot of effort. However, that does not mean you should treat focus group participants in a condescending way. People with intellectual disabilities deal with stereotypes and condescending people every day. Society thinks about people with intellectual disabilities in a condescending way, so you might act that way to people with intellectual disabilities without even realizing it! Make extra effort to be humble and learn from focus group participants as experts. The purpose of focus groups is for facilitators and participants to learn from each other. That is how we all get better at this work, and can only happen if you view people with IDD as your equals.

Lastly, give credit where credit is due! Ask focus group participants if they would like to be acknowledged within the document. You should also pay focus group participants for their time. Members of advisory boards, such as these kinds of focus groups, are experts in their field. They should get paid fairly to show that.

At ASAN, the members of our focus group are the editors of the resource they are reviewing. When we credit them in the resource, we list their names under the heading “Focus Group Editors.” We do this to make it clear how important the focus group is in our process. The editor of a book gets to make changes to the book—and the book isn’t done until they say it’s good enough. It’s the same with our focus group editors and the resources they review.

## Easy Read FAQs

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### What happens when adding background information makes the Easy Read document too long?

Sometimes you might need to add a lot of background information in a document. There might be so much information that it would be its own separate Easy Read project. This is a common problem! When writing in Easy Read, you have to try and balance out different accessibility needs. On the one hand, re-defining important concepts can make documents less confusing. On the other hand, it's also important that each document can be read as a standalone paper.

One way to do this is to link to other Easy Read documents within a different document. For example, in an Easy Read document about racism in healthcare, you could link to an Easy Read document you published earlier. This document could define, and give context about, racism and discrimination. You can also make a summary sheet with the most important definitions and concepts from past documents. You can attach that to your current document, in the same way that you would have a glossary. If you can, try using creative ways to link different Easy Read documents together, such as through interactive websites.

In the end, while Easy Read helps make things more accessible for many people, it will still be difficult for many people to access. Decisions about what information to add, how and where to add it, and what words to use can change based on the topic and your audience. Be creative, and listen to the voices of the community members who need accessible information.

## Can everything be written in Easy Read?

We are trying to create a world where everything can be written in Easy Read, but we are still figuring out how. For example, this resource is written in plain language, but not in Easy Read. We weren't sure that we would be able to explain everything in this guide in Easy Read. Like we said earlier, we are still learning and growing our Easy Read work every year. We've used Easy Read to write about a lot of complex subjects, with different levels of success. Remember that even if you write an Easy Read resource that doesn't come out as well as you'd like, it is still a good learning experience for next time. And you are taking important steps to include more people in the work that you do!

It is especially important that you keep writing documents in Easy Read, even if you put out work that isn't the best at first. People may be angry if you try to write in Easy Read, but still end up with inaccessible content. The fact that your organization is getting critique shows how important it is to write in Easy Read. It means that your community wants you to keep trying and do better! Easy Read is a skill, and you will develop it over time.

## What if I can't write/format in Easy Read?

Before deciding you can't write or format in Easy Read, try practicing first. It can take a while to get the idea. Try doing some of the exercises listed above with different topics. It can be helpful to take breaks and come back and try more later as well. Give yourself more time than you think you'll need, especially for your first Easy Read projects. You could also ask someone to teach you, or work in a team to brainstorm and revise documents if you get stuck by yourself.



If you've practiced a lot and still can't make Easy Read work for you, that is okay! Everybody's brain works differently. Some people may have disabilities that keep them from writing in Easy Read or thinking visually. For others, Easy Read may just not be a skill they can pick up. You may need to reassign Easy Read work to someone else in your organization. For example, ASAN generally has one person write Easy Read documents, while someone else formats them. That's because these two skill sets are very different from each other. Many people with disabilities are great at writing in Easy Read because we find this format most accessible to us. Your organization could also hire someone with a disability to do Easy Read work or offer advice.

## **What if my organization doesn't have the time/ money to write in Easy Read?**

Does your organization have the time and money to write for a general audience? People who need Easy Read are a part of that audience. Writing in Easy Read shows that you care about communities that may need this kind of resource, such as people with disabilities and English language learners.

At the same time, we know it can be difficult to find funding to write in Easy Read. ASAN encourages other organizations to join our efforts to get this funding! Propose the idea to funders to set aside grant money specifically to make Easy Read documents. You can also build in the cost to create an Easy Read resource alongside a grant proposal for a general audience document.

## What if our target audience doesn't like or won't read work in Easy Read?

To be inclusive of all the members of our community, we need to make Easy Read resources. This need should be respected regardless of the opinions of those who won't read these resources. In most cases, releasing a Plain Language version of a document alongside the Easy Read version works well for a general audience. Like we said earlier, you can also release technical documents for groups like policy-makers or researchers. Whichever versions you decide to write, continue to release Easy Read resources!

### To learn more:

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[A guide to making Easy Read information - from the Office of Disability Issues in New Zealand](#)

[Guide for Creating Cognitively Accessible Language - from Self Advocates Becoming Empowered \(SABE\)](#)

[Plain Language Resources - from Self Advocates Becoming Empowered \(SABE\)](#)

<https://www.plainlanguage.gov/guidelines/> - Official guidelines from the U.S. government on plain language.

NOTE: some of these documents use the phrase "learning disabilities." This is a term for intellectual disabilities in the UK.

# Part 2: Formatting

## Easy Read Visual Style

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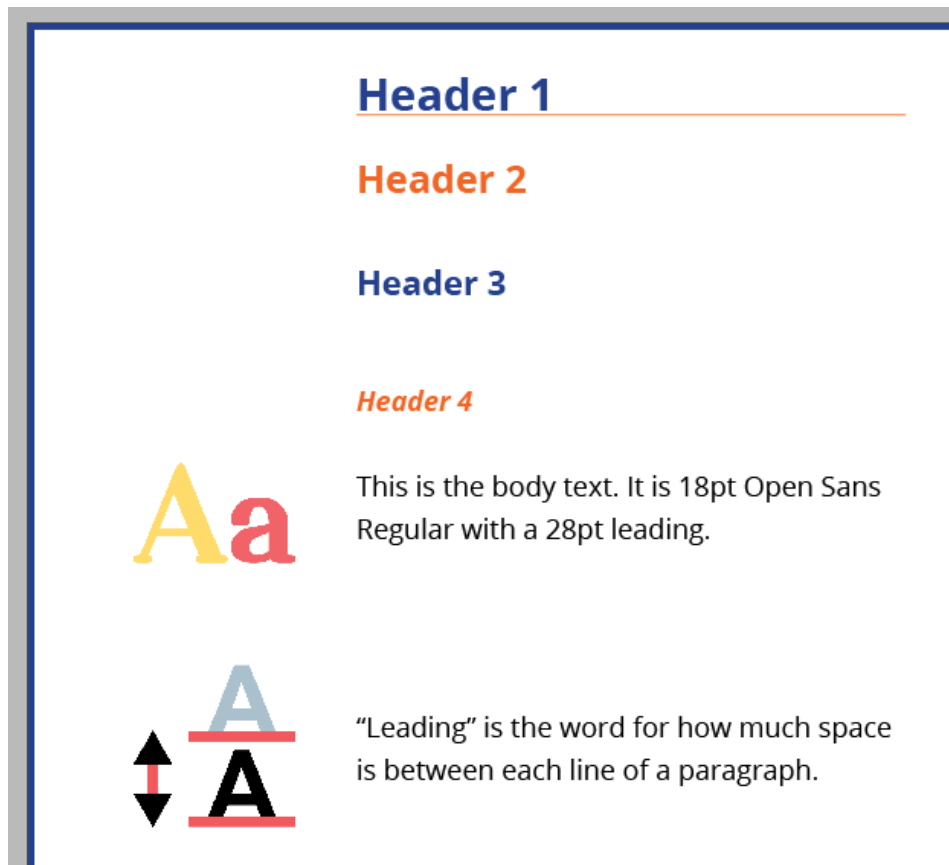
Part 1 of this guide was all about how to make your text into Easy Read text. The other half of the Easy Read process is formatting the text so that it's **visually** Easy Read. In this section, we'll be explaining how to format your text using Adobe InDesign and Adobe Bridge. This section assumes a basic familiarity with InDesign and Bridge; if you're totally new to either one, check out the resources at the end for links to introductory resources to get you started.

There will be a lot of mentions of specific sizes for fonts, spacing, and images throughout this section—these are the specifications that ASAN uses in our Easy Read materials. You may find that bigger text and more white space works better! We'd recommend not adjusting the text or spacing to be *smaller* than what we've laid out, however.

There are also less technical parts of this section that talk about how to pick good images to accompany your text. The parts about choosing icons don't rely on any specific software or software knowledge.

Note: Throughout this section, we'll be describing our Easy Read formatting using pica measurements. If you use pixels, points, inches, or another measurement system, you can use [this converter](#) to translate.

## Text size & san serif font



The image shows a sample of Easy Read formatting within a blue-bordered box. It includes four levels of headers: 'Header 1' (blue, underlined), 'Header 2' (orange), 'Header 3' (blue), and 'Header 4' (orange). Below the headers is a paragraph of body text: 'This is the body text. It is 18pt Open Sans Regular with a 28pt leading.' To the left of this text is a large 'Aa' in yellow and red. Below the body text is a diagram illustrating 'leading' with a light blue 'A' above a red line and a dark blue 'A' below a red line, with a double-headed arrow between the lines. To the right of this diagram is the text: '“Leading” is the word for how much space is between each line of a paragraph.'

Easy Read formatting is designed to make a document more accessible to people with a variety of disabilities.

Large font sizes help make Easy Read resources more accessible to people with visual impairments, dyslexia, and other disabilities. We use sans-serif fonts for the same reason—serifs can make letter shapes harder to recognize and parse. [Learn more about selecting a good typeface.](#)

Here are the specifications for our headings and text:

Heading 1: Open Sans Bold, 29pt; space before, 1p8; space after, 0p6

Heading 2: Open Sans Bold, 25pt; space before, 1p8; space after, 3p3

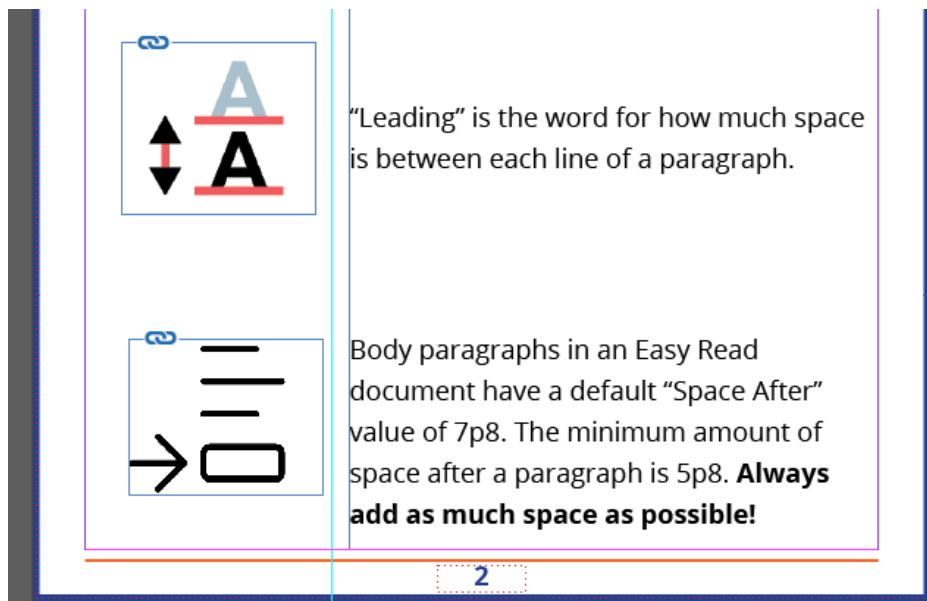
Heading 3: Open Sans Bold, 22pt; space before, 0p0; space after, 4p0

Heading 4: Open Sans Bold Italic, 18pt; space before, 0p0; space after, 2p4

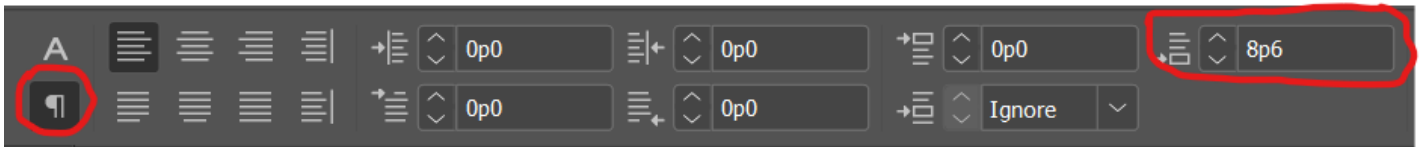
Body text: Open Sans Regular, 18pt; space before, 0p0; space after, minimum of 5p8

## Spacing

White space is crucial to accessible design. It helps to visually group related content together as well as reduce visual clutter. You may have heard people say it's hard for them to read a "wall of text", referring to long blocks of text with inadequate spacing. For many people in your audience, visual clutter and densely-packed pages are more than annoyances; they're barriers to access.



Here's where to set space after in InDesign:



Our text boxes are 30p0 wide by 60p0 tall in most cases. There is a 1p0 gutter between the text box and the clipart column. Note that clipart doesn't have to touch the line; rather, that is the closest the edge of an image can come to the text box. It is considerably more cramped if you scrunch the images right up to the line:

## Paragraphs per page

**Aa** This is the body text. It is 18pt Open Sans Regular with a 28pt leading.

**A** "Leading" is the word for how much space is between each line of a paragraph.

**→** Body paragraphs in an Easy Read document have a default "Space After" value of 7p8. The minimum amount of space after a paragraph is 5p8. **Always add as much space as possible!**

2

The diagram is enclosed in a blue border. It features three distinct sections. The first section shows 'Aa' in yellow and red, followed by a line of text. The second section shows a blue 'A' above a red 'A' with a double-headed vertical arrow between them. The third section shows a right-pointing arrow next to a box representing a paragraph, with three horizontal lines above it. A red horizontal line is at the bottom of the diagram, with the number '2' centered below it.

It's important to have a lot of white space between paragraphs (and remember, in Easy Read, a paragraph is only one or two sentences, usually one), both for the sake of avoiding a "wall of text" as well as preventing clipart congestion. We use an absolute minimum of 5p8 space after each paragraph; the default is 7p8. However, any time you find you still have space available at the bottom of the page, consider spacing out your paragraphs even more. You should always use "space after" instead of hitting the enter key—trust me on this one.

In order to keep pages reasonably spaced, we have an absolute maximum of 5 paragraphs per page. The only exception is for bulleted lists, as the first paragraph won't have a clipart image.

## Changing topics

Each topic should start on its own page, even if there's plenty of space at the bottom of the page for a previous topic. This helps keep the ideas pertaining to a topic visually linked and makes it easier for the reader to tell when a new topic is being discussed.

## Multiple Parts

We divide our Easy Read publications into parts. Each part can stand on its own, as a separate file with its own Words to Know section at the beginning. This helps break up often unwieldy documents and makes it easier for readers to jump right to the parts they want to read.

**Easy Read Edition**

The **Easy Read Edition** is split into parts. Each part has its own glossary, and there is also a separate glossary with all of the terms from every section. Click on the title of any of the parts below to download it:

- [Part 1: Introduction](#)
- [Part 2: Before the Meeting](#)
- [Part 3: During the Meeting](#)
- [Part 4: After the Meeting](#)
- [Part 5: Words to Know](#)

Or, click here to [download all five parts of the Easy Read Inclusive Meetings toolkit as one document](#).

We use InDesign "book" files to keep multi-part documents in order.

[Click here to learn about using InDesign book files.](#)

## Glossaries

Glossaries, which we call “Words to Know” sections, are always included at the very beginning of each part, right after the title page. This helps readers get acquainted with important terms before seeing them again in context. The first time a term from Words to Know is used in each part of your document, the term should be **bolded**.

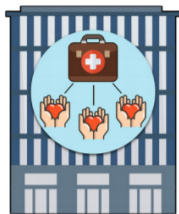
## Icons

One important aspect of Words to Know entries is their use of icons. The icon associated with a particular term will be used throughout the document to refer to that term and form the basis of related terms, so it’s important to pick a clear image. For example, here’s the Words to Know entry for “managed care” and “Managed Care Organization”:



### **managed care**

When a state pays an insurance company to run their Medicaid program. Then, the insurance company pays for the health care for people on Medicaid.

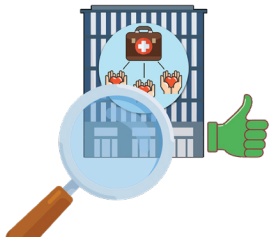


### **Managed Care Organization (MCO)**

Private insurance companies that make a deal with the state to run the state’s Medicaid program.



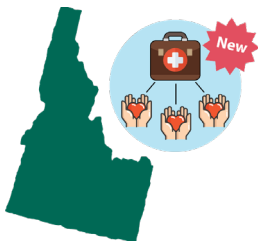
As you can see, the icon for Managed Care Organization already builds upon the icon for “managed care”. Here are some more icons used throughout the toolkit that build upon these terms:



**check if the MCO is good**



**MCO helps people move into the community**



**state starts a new managed care program**

We'll talk more about choosing and creating good icons later.

## **Repetition**

Because each part of an Easy Read document can stand alone, the Words to Know sections must reflect that. If a term appears in both Part 1 and Part 2, it must also appear in both Words to Know sections. This both ensures that a reader can start anywhere and still get the necessary context, as well as serving to reinforce terms between sections.

# Basic text formatting

---

Left align text. Justified text creates visual gaps between words that interrupt the normal pattern of text, making it more difficult to read.

Turn off hyphens. Breaking up words can pose difficulties in comprehension for some readers.

Similarly, avoid runts, widows, and orphans at all cost. These create visual interruptions in the text that can break a reader's focus.

## Left aligning text

Text alignment refers to how text flows in relation to the rest of the page. Left alignment lines text up along the left side of a page. Right alignment lines text up along the right side of a page. Center alignment lines text up in the middle of a page. Justified alignment lines up text perfectly along the left and right sides.

**This text is left aligned.** Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aenean commodo ligula eget dolor. Aenean massa. Cum sociis natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus.

**This text is center aligned.** Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aenean commodo ligula eget dolor. Aenean massa. Cum sociis natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus.

**This text is right aligned.** Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aenean commodo ligula eget dolor. Aenean massa. Cum sociis natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus.

**This text is justified.** Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aenean commodo ligula eget dolor. Aenean massa. Cum sociis natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus.

Left-aligned text is the easiest to follow. The shapes created along the right edge by differing word lengths help to distinguish lines from each other, and the text follows the natural left-to-right reading order of English and many other languages. While justified text might look the neatest in the above example, it often produces strange gaps between words:

#### Justified alignment

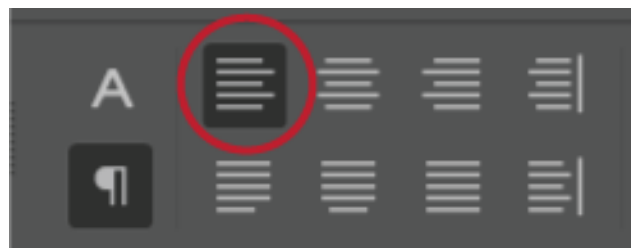
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aenean commodo ligula eget dolor. Aenean massa. Cum sociis natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus. Donec quam felis, ultricies nec, pellentesque eu, pretium quis, sem. Nulla consequat massa quis enim. Donec pede justo, fringilla vel, aliquet nec, vulputate eget, arcu.

#### Left alignment

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aenean commodo ligula eget dolor. Aenean massa. Cum sociis natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus. Donec quam felis, ultricies nec, pellentesque eu, pretium quis, sem. Nulla consequat massa quis enim. Donec pede justo, fringilla vel, aliquet nec, vulputate eget, arcu.

These gaps can form “rivers” of white space which are distracting to the reader.







InDesign’s default setting is to left-align text. If for some reason your text isn’t left-aligned, simply select some text, click on the Paragraph (¶) button in the top toolbar, and then choose the first alignment option.

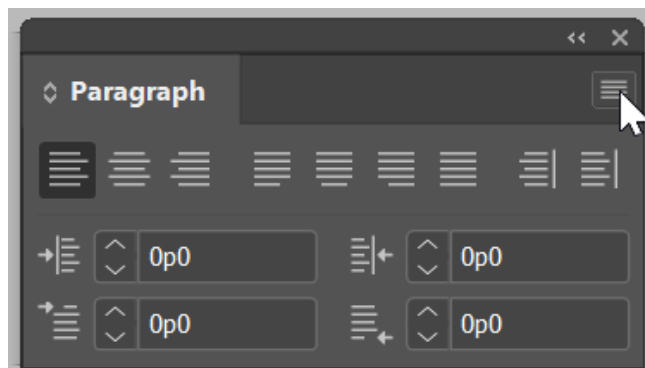


## Turn off hyphenation

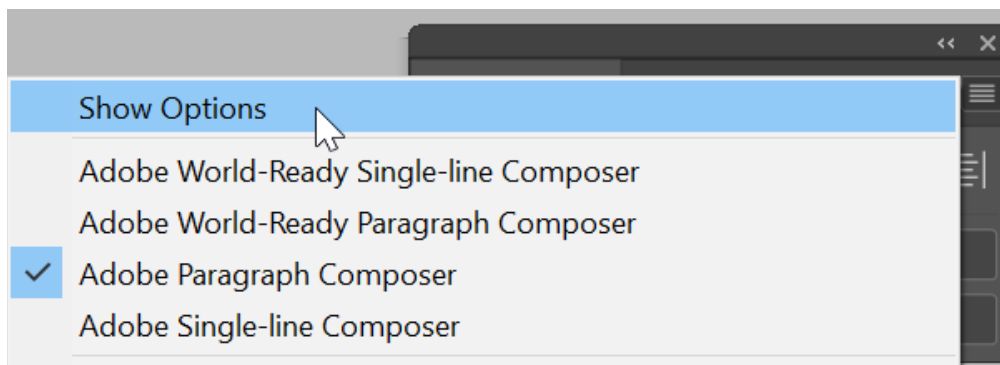
When words are broken across two lines, it disrupts the flow of text and can hinder comprehension by the reader.

This is a block of text with some hyphenated words. It can be difficult to read hyphenated words because their visual appearance is similar to two separate words. Readers may also have to pause to comprehend what the full word is, disrupting reading.

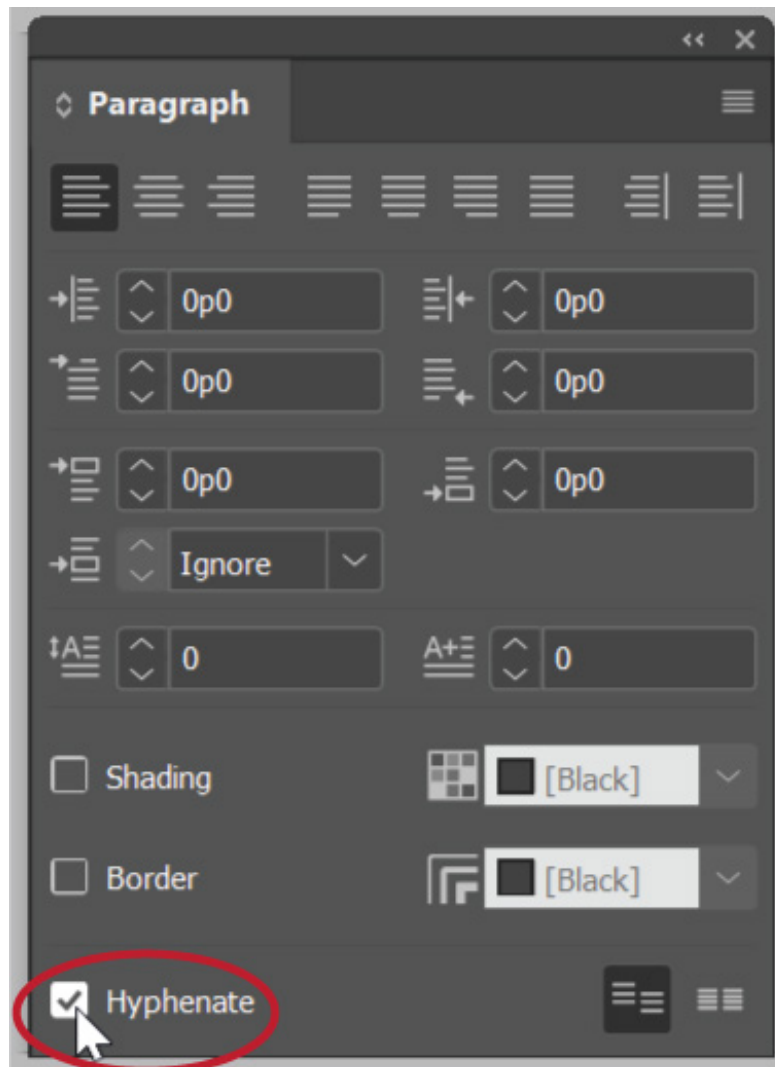
To turn off hyphenation in InDesign, first press Ctrl+Alt+T (    ) or    ) to bring up the Paragraph window. Next, click the three lines in the upper right corner of the window.



Next, click “Show Options” on the menu that pops up.



Select your text and then uncheck the Hyphenate checkbox at the bottom of the options.

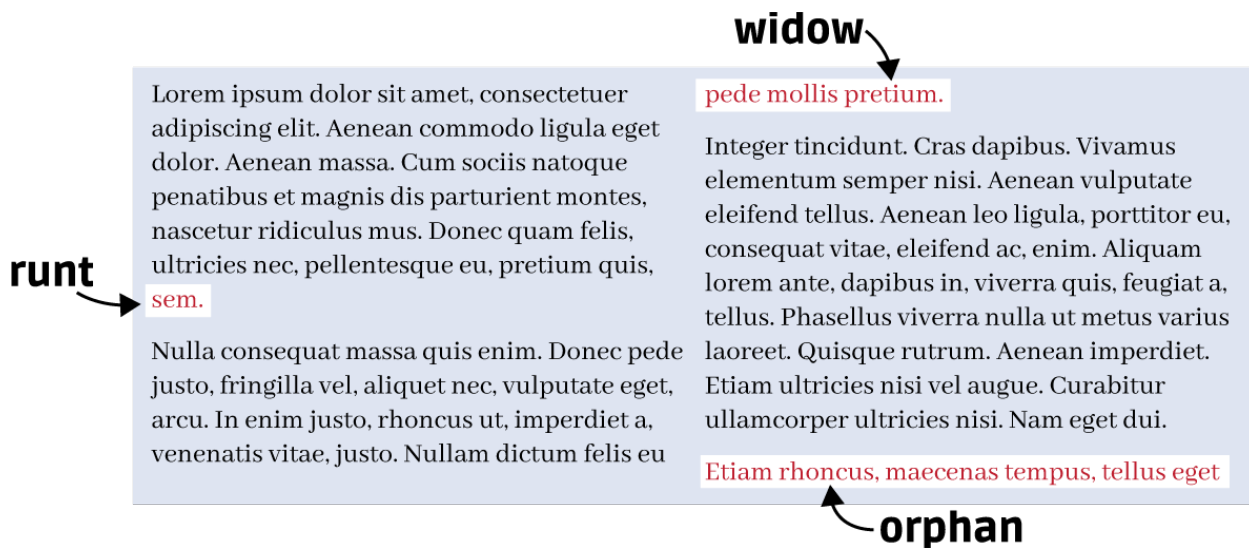


## Runts, widows, and orphans







A runt is when the last line of a paragraph contains a single word.

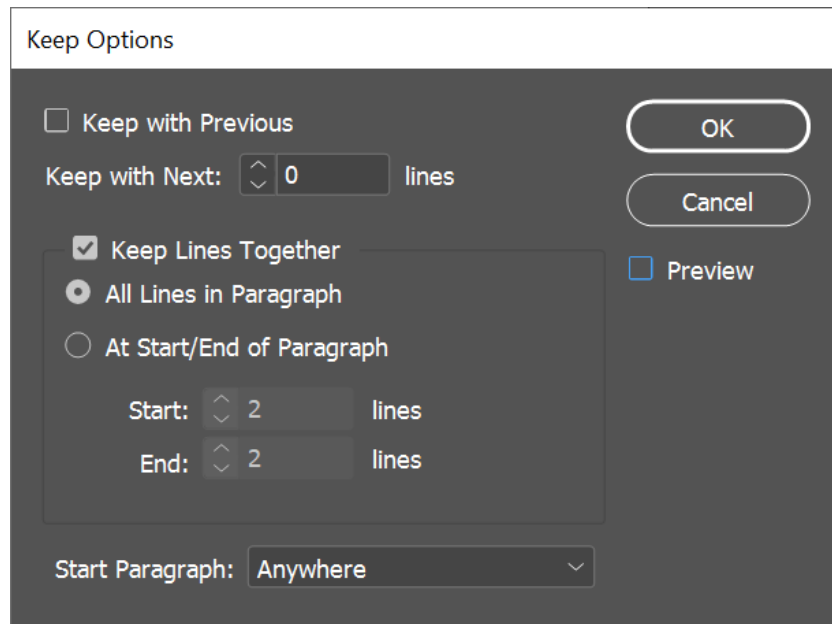
A widow is when the last line of a paragraph doesn't fit on the page with the rest of the paragraph and instead sits on top of the next page.

An orphan is when the first line of a paragraph sits at the bottom of the page by itself, separated from the rest of the paragraph.









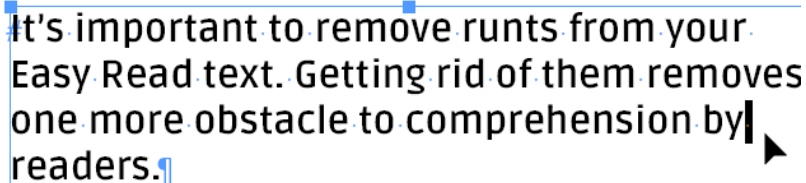
Each of these three creates an interruption in the normal flow of reading. Runts precede an unusually large chunk of white space not usually found in text, which can break the reader's focus by drawing unnecessary attention to the final word in a paragraph. Widows and orphans each require that the reader hold a thought on one page and continue it on the next, rather than reading the sentence all together. For our purposes, we completely avoid ever splitting paragraphs or sentences across pages. Let's first talk about how to get rid of widows and orphans.

First, select your text. Next, press Ctrl+Alt+K (  ) or (  ) to bring up the Keep Options window. Click on “Keep Lines Together” and “All Lines in Paragraph”. Click OK.









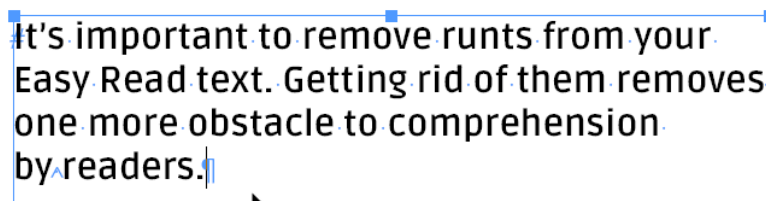
This takes care of both orphans and widows.

Dealing with runts is a little bit trickier. First, select the space before the runt. You can turn on “Show Hidden Characters” by pressing Ctrl+Alt+I (  ) or (  ) to make it easier to see where the spaces are located.



It's important to remove runts from your Easy Read text. Getting rid of them removes one more obstacle to comprehension by readers.

With the space highlighted, press Ctrl+Alt+X (  ) or (  ) This will replace the normal space character with a non-breaking space—that is, a space that keeps the words surrounding it together:



It's important to remove runts from your Easy Read text. Getting rid of them removes one more obstacle to comprehension by readers.

You should do all of the text formatting before starting on clipart. One of our house rules about clipart is that the same image cannot be used twice on a page; you won't be able to tell where you might need to use a different image if you haven't laid out the text yet.

## Icons

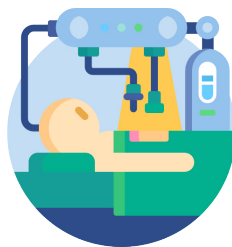
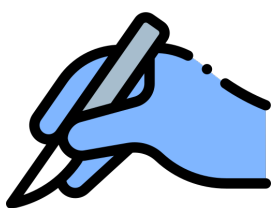
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### Guidelines

Finding and creating effective Easy Read icons is a bit of an art form. These guidelines come from trial-and-error and a lot of focus group input.

### Icons' meanings should be clear

This means an icon should have enough information to be understood without too much extra added in. For example, here are some ways we could represent "surgery":



The first one, a hand holding a scalpel, does not provide enough information to be understood as "surgery". It's not clear whose hand it is, and not everyone will recognize a scalpel. The object itself could easily be a paintbrush or another utensil.

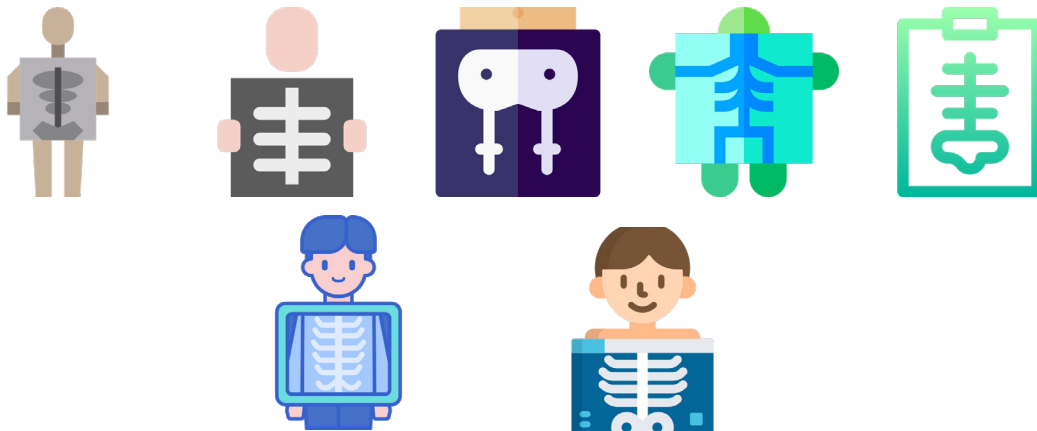


The second icon shows a complicated mechanical apparatus performing surgery. There are a lot of details in this image that detract from the meaning of “surgery” - typically, people don’t associate surgery with robots, and the addition of the yellow light source in the background doesn’t do anything but make the image more visually complicated.

The last icon is what we use to represent “surgery”. It’s clear that there is a person laying down on a gurney, and a medical professional standing next to them. We can tell it’s not a normal doctor’s appointment because the medical professional is wearing a mask and the patient is asleep. There’s no distracting background image detracting from the icon.

## Art style shouldn’t be too stylized

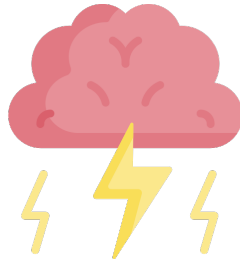
There are a lot of different icon art styles. Some of them are not suited to Easy Read. For example, look at these different ways of depicting an x-ray:



The first five icons are too stylized for Easy Read use. Their art styles are simplified to the point of losing clarity. The bottom two icons are good examples of art styles for showing an x-ray. It’s clear that something is being held in front of a person allowing us to see their bones. The people in the icons are calm, which conveys that the reason we can see their bones is not due to some horrible trauma.

## Avoid metaphors when possible

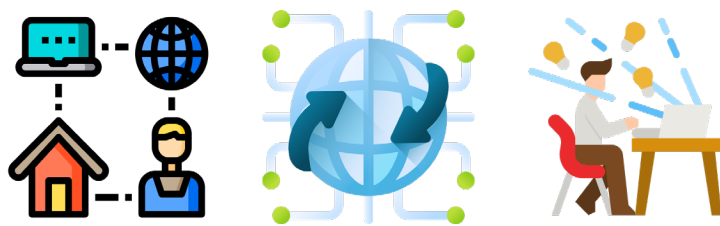
You'll often find different clever ways to represent concepts. For example, you might find this image for "brainstorm":



While it does represent the *word* "brainstorm", it doesn't really represent the concept "brainstorm". The image may confuse readers rather than clarify the concept. Instead, you could use something like this:



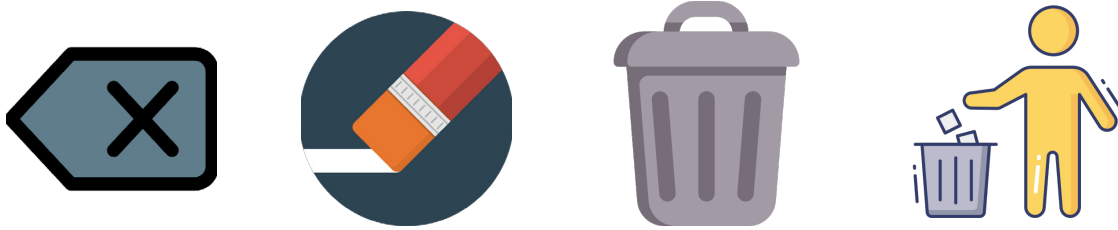
This image shows people having a discussion, which is what "brainstorming" actually looks like. Or how about these icons, which are all meant to represent the Internet:



These images all depict the internet in abstract ways. Instead, think about what the internet actually "looks like" to most people: a computer used to go online. These icons would work better:



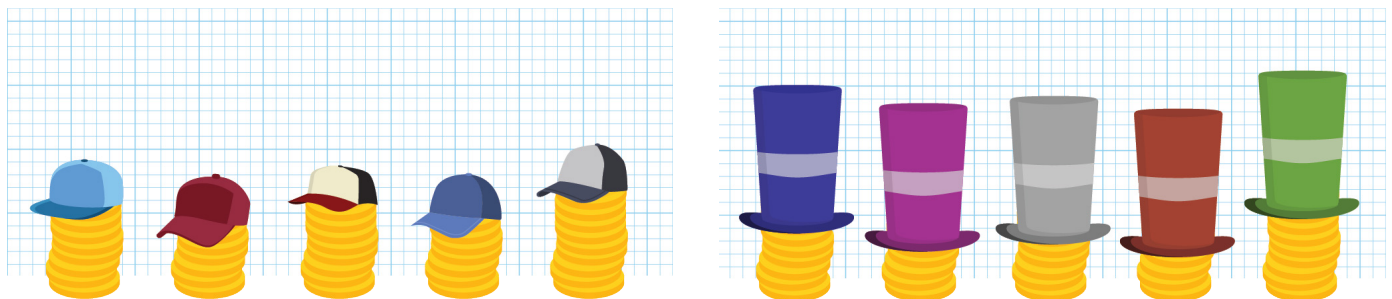
When you do have to represent abstract ideas, try to limit your illustrations to simple, commonly used symbols. For example, here are four ways you could represent “getting rid of something”:



The first icon is a mobile phone symbol for delete. It isn't a widely-used symbol that would be easily recognizable. An eraser could be associated with “getting rid of something”, but it has a stronger connotation of “mistake”. A trash can on its own gets closer, but it doesn't actually show “getting rid of something.” The fourth icon is what we would use. We're familiar with this symbol from its use on actual trash cans, and it shows the action that the plain trash can icon abstractly represents.

There are some exceptions!

For example, take a look at these two images that represent “caps on spending” and “raising the cap”:



Here, the hats symbolize the more abstract concept of a “cap” on spending. It's not too metaphorical in and of itself, however - the grid lines behind the images make it easier to see that the caps are, in fact, raised. The key is to ask, “Does this metaphorical image help clarify the literal meaning of an idea?” In this case, the hats show that there is a limit to the spending and that the limit can be raised.

## Build upon previously used icons to create new concepts

You don't have to come up with a new image for every single concept. In fact, it's often better if you don't! You can use repetition to build upon a concept you previously established. For example, we use this icon to represent "pay for something":



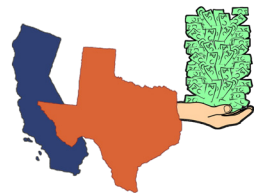
Here are some concepts using "pay for something":



**pays one time**



**pays for hospital visit**



**states pay a lot**



**Medicaid pays the doctor**

In the last image, you'll notice a pattern: both the icon for "Medicaid" and "pays for" use an outstretched hand. This is another example of building on a previously-established concept. In this case, the outstretched hand represents "giving something". For Medicaid, it's the government giving healthcare. For "pays for", it's something giving money to something else. By repeating the same images, you can reinforce their meaning throughout the Easy Read document, creating easy shorthand ways to represent certain ideas.

## House Rules

We have developed some specific rules about our own icon usage. You don't necessarily have to follow these.

We don't illustrate the sentence that leads into a bulleted list. This rule is more for saving space than anything else - we find that oftentimes, adding an image to the first sentence would make it so that a full list wouldn't all fit on one page.

We don't use the same icon twice on the same page. Using an original icon and then an icon that *incorporates* the original one on the same page is okay. We do this because icons, for some readers, help "anchor" the text in their minds, and repetition of the exact same icon next to multiple paragraphs can cause some confusion.

We don't use shields (on their own) or cops to represent "safety." This rule followed discussions with focus groups, who indicated that for many people, cops don't represent protection as much as they represent aggression and combat, and shields can often be mistaken for police badges. However, we have found success in using a knight with a shield to represent safety/protection; this works better because nobody has had real life experience with knights.

Icons should be diverse - like your readership! We're careful to make sure our icons aren't only depicting white men. Easy Read documents are created to include more people in the dissemination of information, so visual elements should be inclusive as well. This often means editing existing icons when pre-made inclusive ones can't be found.

## **Do I have to make them all myself?**

Absolutely not! Here are some of the websites we use to source icons:

- [Adobe Stock](#)
- [Flaticon](#)
- [Vecteezy](#)
- [Clker](#)
- [Freepik](#)
- [Envato Elements](#)
- [Human Pictogram 2.0](#)

## **The Icon Process**

### **Identify central concept**

First, we go through each paragraph and identify the central concept. We usually organize these in a spreadsheet. Central concepts are a few words describing the most important takeaway from a paragraph that can be represented in an image. It will take some practice to get good at this. Here are a few examples.

Sometimes the President and Congress disagree on what is important.

The central concept here is “disagreement”.

Congress is supposed to pass the budget by April 15. It usually takes longer than that.

The central concept here could be “by April 15.” But that would gloss over the fact that it usually takes longer. So the central concept here is “takes longer,” or, even better, “takes a long time.”

When writing central concepts, keep in mind that these are the concepts you’ll have to illustrate. “Takes a long time” is easier to illustrate than “takes longer.” In order to show “longer”, you have to also depict what it’s longer than. Then, you have to show that one thing has “more time” and another has “less time.” If your concept is “takes a long time”, all you have to illustrate is “long time.” Simpler central concepts lead to easier, less abstract, and clearer illustrations.

## Identify repeated concepts

When you’re identifying central concepts, you’ll most likely find that certain concepts are repeated. Here’s an example from one of our planning spreadsheets. Column A shows what page and what paragraph on that page the concept is referring to.

A	B	C
3-2	share ideas	speech bubble with light bulb inside it
9-2	share ideas	
32-1	share ideas	
59-1	new ideas	
34-3	share more	
42-4	come back and share	

Since we had identified multiple spots where the central concept was more or less “share ideas”, we made a note that all of those images could be the same.

This serves two purposes: 1) When you're looking at hundreds of paragraphs that need icons next to them, it's important to figure out how you can reduce the number of separate images you'll need to find/make and 2) Like we said before, re-using images for the same concept can help reinforce their meaning throughout the document.

## Decide on visual representations

Once you've got a list of all your central concepts (including the repeated ones), you'll need to start deciding what images you'll use to represent each of them. Here are some examples from our planning spreadsheet:

C	D
more people	icon of silhouettes with + sign
wheelchair users	person in a wheelchair
building and room	a building
wheelchair accessibility	ramp
quiet	a person making a shush hand or a mute icon
not bright lights	fluorescent lights with big light beams coming down from it and an X over that
helps	hand reaching out grabbing another hand
no flashing lights	a strobe light with little WHAM POW shapes to show its flashing, X over this
hurt people	person with their arm in sling
no flash photography	camera with flash going off with X over it
ask before take picture	speech bubble with camera and question mark
no strong smell	NO circle over perfume spraying
perfume smell	gas wafting in room / a smell going into a nose

The left column has the central concepts we identified. The right column has our ideas for how to visually represent those concepts. Some of them will be simple: for "wheelchair accessibility", we decided we would use a ramp icon. Some of them will be more complex, and may require you to combine different icons or create entirely new ones.



## Figure out what edits you need to make

Sometimes you'll need an image with multiple components. Here's an example from our planning document. The visual representation is on the left, and the individual components are listed on the right.

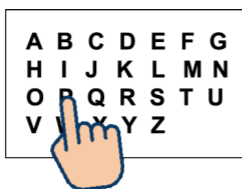
a person with a speech bubble, bubble has a picture of a sandwich with a question mark next to it	person	speech bubble	sandwich	question mark
---	--------	---------------	----------	---------------

While some of the paragraphs will have simple icons, this paragraph requires that we combine a few different icons together into one new image.

Sometimes, you'll need to make edits to an icon itself. For example, taking a pre-existing clipart image of a person and changing their facial expression or what they're doing with their arms. You should keep track of these kinds of edits, too. It'll help you to estimate how long your Easy Read project will take overall.

## Figure out what images you'll need to make yourself

Sometimes your search for a specific icon won't turn up much. In those cases, you may need to make a new image. For example, we had to create a new icon for "letter board":



Some people who use AAC have a letter board.

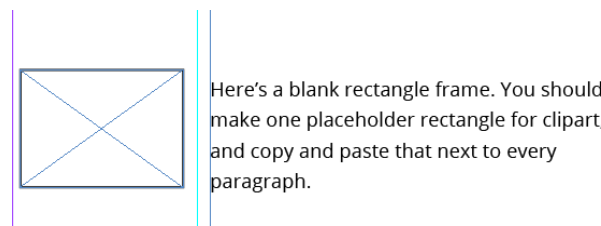
The hand icon was a pre-existing image we just combined with our letter board icon.

## Find and make the icons

We recommend saving each image with a filename that will help you find it later. If it's only used once, we name our icons after the page they appear on and which paragraph they're in on the page. For example, "45-2.jpg". If they're icons for a repeated term, you can use the name of the concept they're depicting. For example, "share ideas.png"

## Placing icons

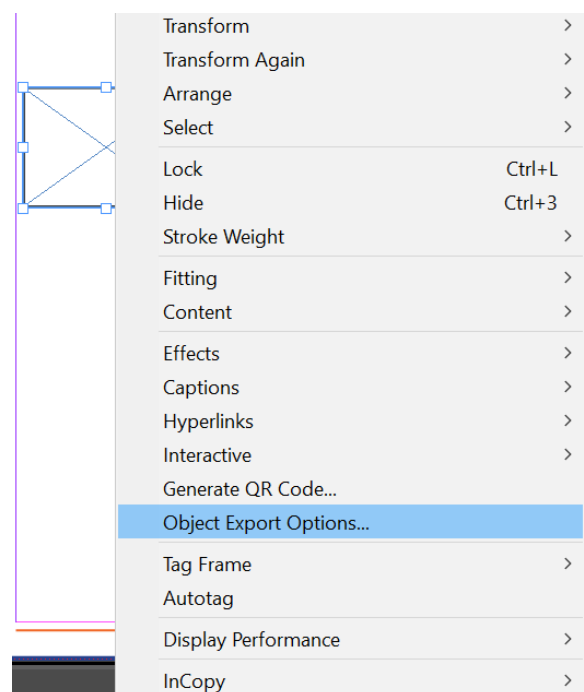
First, you want to add a placeholder frame for the icons next to every paragraph. Start by clicking on the Rectangle Frame button (or press **F**). Create one frame.



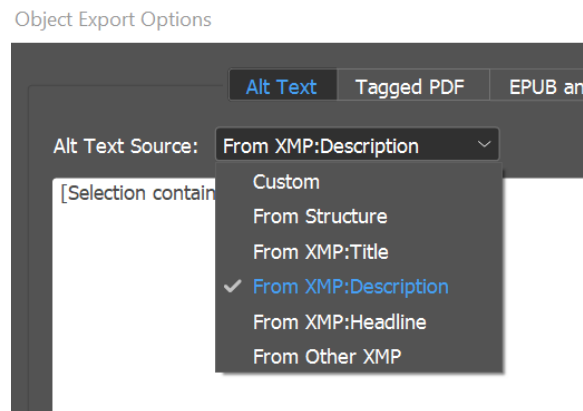
Here's a blank rectangle frame. You should make one placeholder rectangle for clipart, and copy and paste that next to every paragraph.

You're going to be copy-and-pasting this frame next to every paragraph. But first, we have to tweak some settings on the frame.

Right-click on the frame and choose "Object export options".

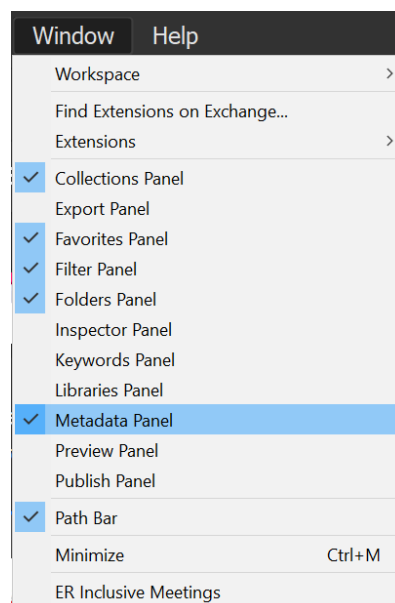


A box will pop up. Change “Alt Text Source:” to “From XMP:Description.” We’ll explain what this means in the next section. For now, click “Done” and then copy-and-paste the frame next to every paragraph.

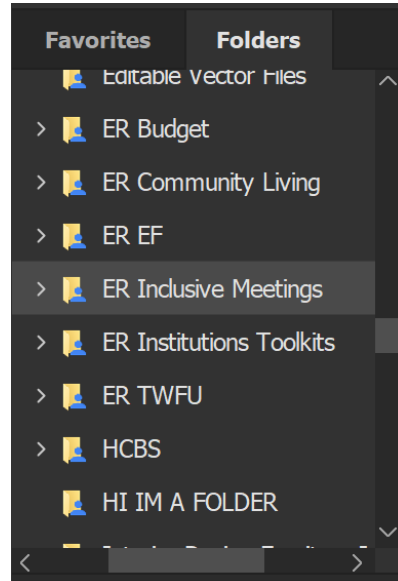


## Adding alt text

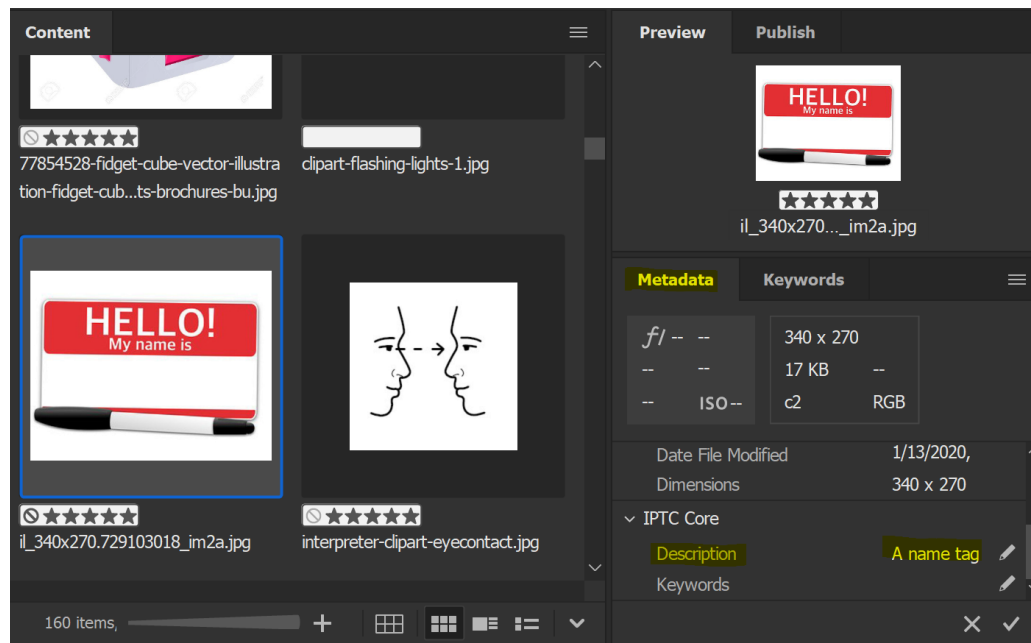
We use Adobe Bridge to add alt text to our icons. You can find basic tutorials on using Bridge [here](#), so we’ll just cover what you need to know to add alt text. First, make sure that the Metadata panel is visible. You can toggle different panels on or off by clicking “Window” on the top bar and then clicking on each panel. If the Folders Panel isn’t visible, toggle that one on as well.



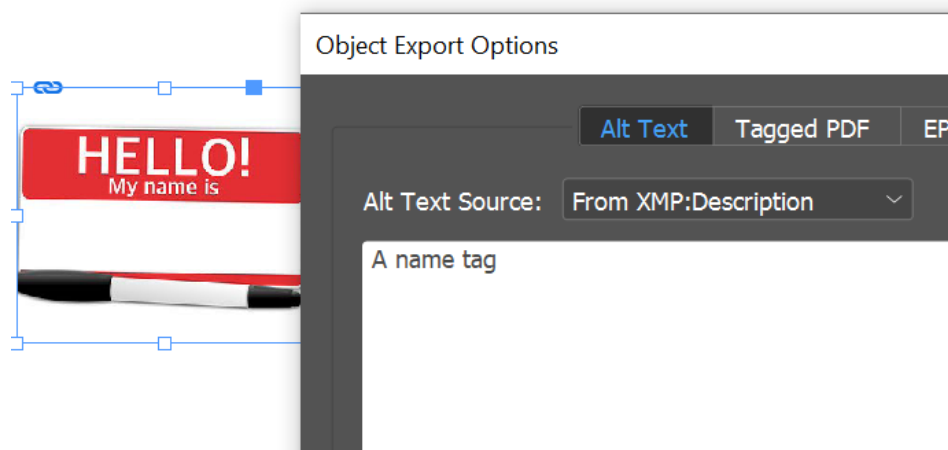
In the Folders Panel, you can navigate to the folder that contains your clipart.







Once you've found the folder, click on one of your images. Then, scroll down in the Metadata panel until you see the section called IPTC Core - Description. Click on the little pencil icon to the right of the Description field. This is where you enter in your alt text for that image. Remember how we set the Object Export Options to find alt text from "XMP:Description"? This description field is what it's referencing.



Now, if you drag in your clipart from Bridge, it'll automatically assign the alt text you entered.











You can drag clipart from Adobe Bridge straight into one of the empty rectangles you created.

You can also add images by clicking on the empty frame and pressing Ctrl+D (   or   ) and then selecting the image you want to place in the frame.

## Fit content to frame


Sometimes when you drag in an image, it might be cut off at the edges like this:

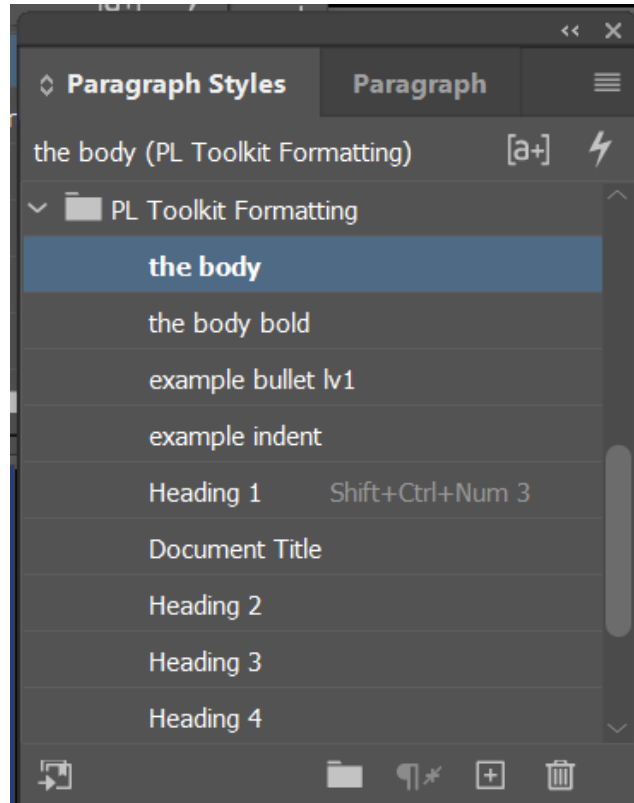


There's an easy way to fix that! Select the frame and then press Ctrl+Alt+Shift+E (     ) or     ). This will resize the image to fit perfectly in the frame.



# Saving time with styles

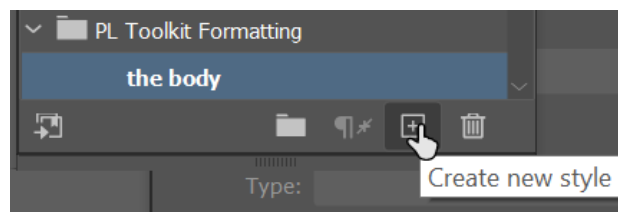
Easy Read formatting can be really time intensive! One way you can speed up the process is by saving Styles. First, open up the Paragraph Styles window by pressing F11 ()



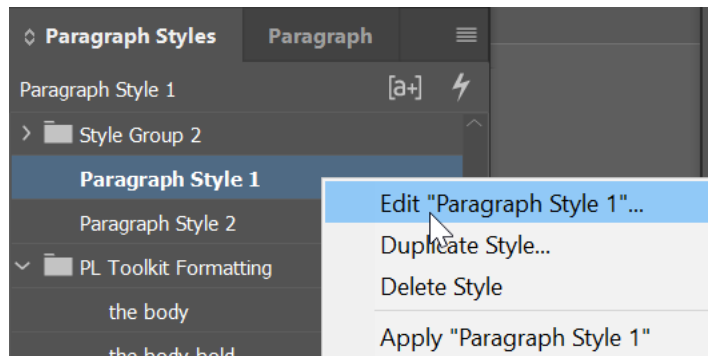
As you can see, my Paragraph Styles window contains the styles I've used to format the document you're currently reading. The benefit to this is I can save the styles to a library, or import it to a document later.

Next, select some of your text that's in a style you want to save. For example, one of your headers.

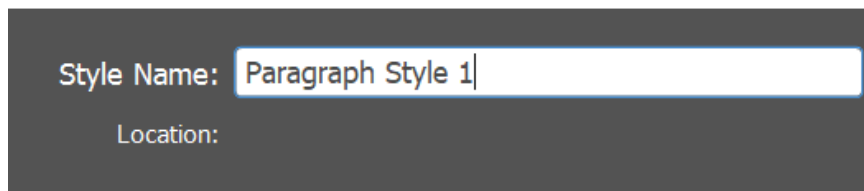
Next, go over to to your Paragraph Styles window and click on the + symbol at the bottom:



It will add a style to the list called “Paragraph Style 1” or something similar. To rename it, you can either slowly double-click on the name or right-click and select “Edit ‘Paragraph 1’”.



Then, you can change the name of the Style at the top.



Now, when you select some text, you can quickly apply the Style you set to that text.

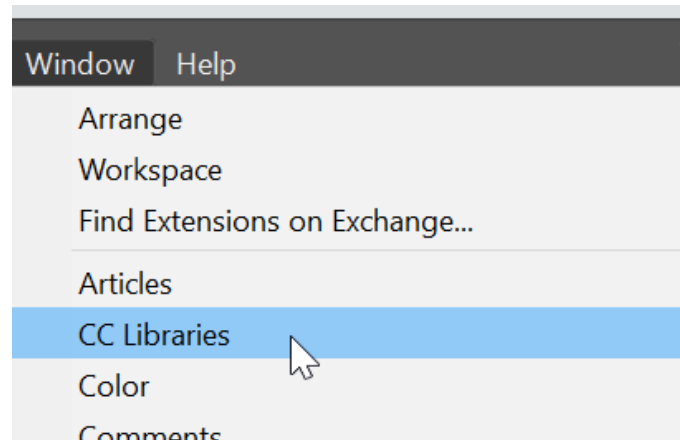
Read more about [using character and paragraph styles here](#).

## ASAN's Style Library

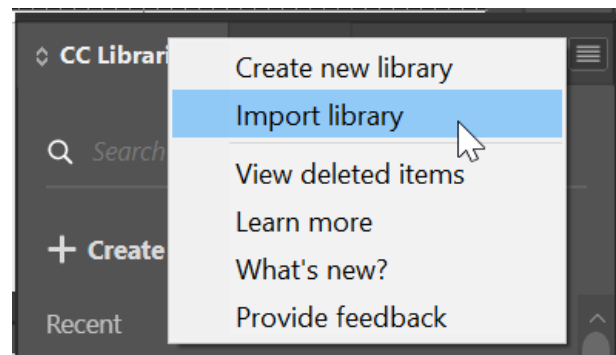
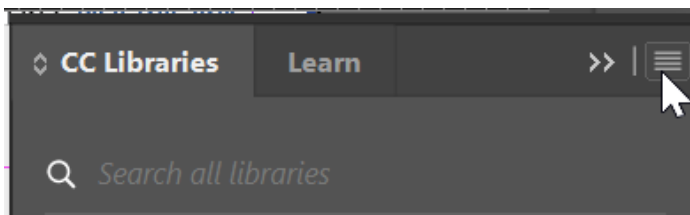
ASAN has also put together an Easy Read Formatting Style Library that you can use as the basis for your own projects, changing the fonts and colors to suit your own organizational brand or preferences. You can [access this library on the web here](#), where you can copy it to your own Adobe libraries.

You can also import the library straight into InDesign. First, [visit this link to download the Library file](#).

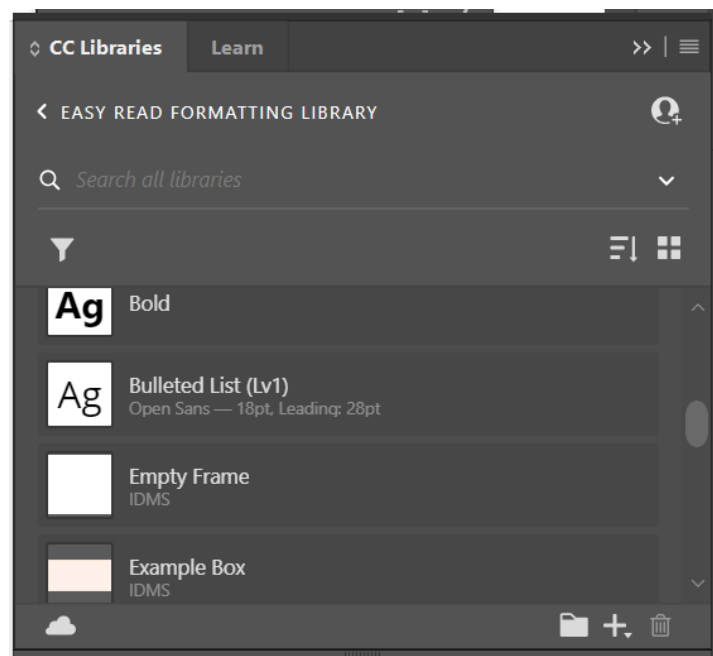
Next, open the CC Libraries panel by clicking on Window > CC Libraries in the top menu of InDesign:



Click on the three horizontal lines in the upper right corner of the CC Libraries panel and then select “Import library”:



Click on “Select library” to find the .CCLIBS file you just downloaded and then click “Import.” You should now be able to access our Easy Read Formatting Library from inside InDesign.





The library contains Character and Paragraph Styles as well as Objects you can drag in. Some of the Objects are templates for different pages, including Master Pages. You can [learn more about using Master Pages here](#).

## To learn more:

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[What Is Easy Read? - Photosymbols](#)

[A guide to making Easy Read information - from the Office of Disability Issues in New Zealand](#)

[Choosing an Accessible Font - Recite Me](#)

[Get Started with InDesign - Adobe Help Center](#)

[Adobe Bridge User Guide - Adobe Help Center](#)

[About character and paragraph styles - Adobe Help Center](#)

[Create book files with Adobe InDesign - Adobe Help Center](#)