

Excerpts from Parks Accessibility Guidelines, Interpretive Sign Design and Fabrication

II. BASIC ELEMENTS OF ACCESSIBLE EXHIBIT DESIGN

A. Fonts

1. Typeface or font families used for exhibit text and labels shall be easy to read for persons with varied levels of vision. Such typefaces include sans serif fonts or fonts with simple, clean serifs.
 - a. Some examples of legible sans serif fonts include Arial, Comic Sans, Futura, Optima, Tahoma, and Trebuchet.
 - b. Some examples of legible serif fonts include Albertus Medium, Bookman, Caslon, Clarendon, Lydian, Novarese, Tiresias, and ITC Tiepolo.
2. Avoid fonts with strokes that are very heavy, thin, light or decorative and those whose letters are either very close together (condensed) or widely spaced. The number of typefaces in a given exhibit should not exceed two or three.
3. Spaces between lines of type (leading) should make it easy to locate the next line. Leading at least 25% taller than the height of the lowercase font is suggested, and this percentage may increase slightly as the font size increases.
4. Font Styles. Italics are often hard to read and shall be limited to book titles, foreign names and short quotes. Boldface should generally not be used for entire sections. Text that uses upper and lowercase letters in typical sentence style is easier to read than all uppercase letters.
5. Font sizes for main body of text shall be measured using the uppercase X, which shall be at least 5/8" in height. Titles and Headings will be larger than minimums. Captions may be smaller, but those conveying interpretive information need to be at least 24 point. Credits and copyright information may be small.

B. Text and Labels

1. Words are easier to read in horizontal lines. Artistic word shapes must be kept to a minimum or repeated in linear format, if used.
2. Maintaining a line length between 45 and 60 characters with margins flush left and ragged right is optimal for many readers with visual or learning disabilities. Where columns of text are used, space between columns must be large enough so viewers do not read across columns.

C. Lighting and Contrasts

1. Characters and symbols shall contrast with their background, either dark characters on a light background or light characters on a dark background. A minimum of 70% contrast is recommended. Contrast percentage is calculated using the following formula $([B1-B2]/B1) \times 100 = \text{Contrast}$. B1 = Light Reflective Value (LRV) of the lighter color and B2 = LRV of darker value.
2. When choosing colors for fonts and backgrounds, research suggests that visibility for persons with low vision will be enhanced by considering the following:
 - a. Differences between foreground and background colors on labels or panels should be exaggerated. Lighten the lights and darken the darks to increase to 70% contrast.
 - b. Avoid contrasting colors from adjacent hue families in the color circle (such as orange and yellow, orange and red, yellow and green, blue and green, blue and violet) as they often lack adequate contrasts.
 - c. Even if they are from different hue families, contrasts between colors of similar lightness (such as gray-blue and gray-brown) are difficult for persons with certain color deficiencies to see.
 - d. If colors from the same hue families (blue and light blue, brown and tan, etc.) are used adjacent to each other, contrast should be exaggerated to reach 70%.