We want to ensure that all our training presentations are accessible to the widest possible audience. We therefore offer the following recommendations to increase the accessibility of PowerPoint and Prezi presentations. However, none of these are hard and fast rules; there are often many alternative ways to achieve the same goal. Rather, these recommendations are intended to give you a sense of the issues you should consider when you are developing your slides – particularly slides with text.

1. Minimize the amount of text on each slide. Remember, the point of your slide is to focus your audience’s attention on the point you are making and provide a roadmap for your presentation. You should not write everything you plan to say on the slide – because you want your audience listening to you, not reading the slide. In fact, this may be the single most important recommendation, because presenters often include way too much information on their slides. Not only does this make their slides too busy for people to easily digest, it also means the font is too small to read easily. For example, if you are using bullet points, each slide should have a maximum of 3-5 points per slide.

2. Use at least a 28-point size Arial or Tahoma font. Bigger is almost always better.

3. When presenting text on a slide, use a simple background. For example, use a design with minimal images on the top and side, and make sure the images do not overlap with any text. Do not use any watermarks or other images that appear behind the text.

4. Choose a background that is in sharp contrast with the font of your text. For example, use a very dark font color if your background is light – or vice versa. Some people prefer a dark background with light text, to increase visibility.

5. Print your slides in greyscale to see what your presentation looks like in handout form, and check to make sure all text is legible.

6. Keep in mind that some percentage of the population is color-blind. While this can mean a variety of different things, it is safest to avoid using one color of text font on top of another color background (e.g., red text on a green background).

7. Whenever possible, video or audio elements of your presentation should be captioned, so people can read the text in addition to hearing it. Many video editing software programs and websites such as YouTube will create captions for spoken words.