Labelling Guidelines

It is important to reduce barriers that prevent people who have low vision from accessing printed information. Adhering to these labelling guidelines can help ensure as many people as possible are able to read what is published.

Contrast

Text should be printed with the highest possible contrast. It is difficult to achieve high contrast with colour combinations other than black and white.

Black text on a white background is best practice. However some people who have low vision find it easier to read white letters on a black background.

Colours

Colours should only be used on large text such as headlines and headings. The colour of the text should be significantly darker or lighter than the background.

Type size

Type should always be a minimum of 12pt, but 18pt is ideal.

Arthritis Australia note: There is recognition that these type sizes are not always possible on all categories of food packaging, but critical information such as directions and warnings should be printed in a minimum 12 pt type size.

Typefaces

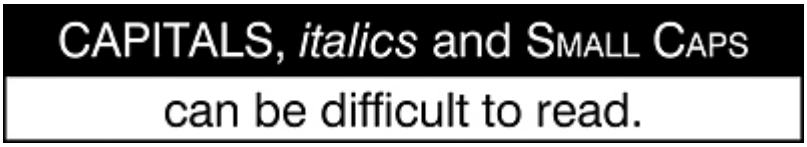
Simple sans serif typefaces (without 'feet') such as Arial or Helvetica are recommended for maximum readability.

Source: Vision Australia 'Guidelines for Producing Readable Text' April 2009

Complicated or decorative fonts should be avoided. Unusual or irregular character shapes can be difficult to read.

Type styles

Bodies of text are easiest to read when they have a combination of upper and lower case characters. Avoid using capital letters and italics for bodies of text.



Use bold text if necessary for emphasis, but ensure the type does not become so thick it reduces the white space within characters. This may make it difficult to distinguish between some characters. For example, e may look like s or a.

Spacing

Spacing between letters should be kept at the software's standard default setting.

Closely spaced, condensed and widely spaced letters are often difficult to read.

Margins

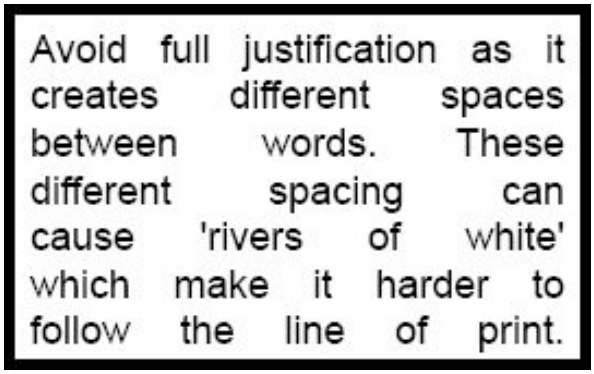
Wide margins around the edges of products make it easier for consumers to hold without obscuring text.

Alignment

Text should be aligned to the left margin as it is used to orientate the reader.

Source: Vision Australia 'Guidelines for Producing Readable Text' April 2009

Full justification creates different spaces between words and can cause 'rivers of white'. For some people this makes it hard to follow the line of print.



'Leading' and Spacing

'Leading', or spacing between the lines of text, should be at least 25 to 30 percent of the point size. This is because people with partial sight or some forms of learning disability have difficulty finding the beginning of the next line while reading.

Allow for equal spacing between words and generous spacing between paragraphs.

Paper and materials

Paper or materials with a glossy finish tend to reflect light. This can obscure type and make it difficult to read. Choose paper or materials with a matt finish for best results.

Other recommended sources of information:

Elizabeth Russell-Minda 'An evidence-based review of the research on typeface legibility for readers with low vision' June 2006

Vision Australia 'Legibility Guidelines'
http://www.visionaustralia.org/docs/businesses-and-professional/legibility-guidelines.docx

Source: Vision Australia 'Guidelines for Producing Readable Text' April 2009