## Headings

We suggest the following minimums:

* WCAG 2.1: Contrast level of AA or 4.5:1
* USWDS: A magic number of 50+
* Reasonable Colors: A shade difference of 3

## Paragraph

We suggest using black (#000000) or charcoal (#333333 or #404040) for the body copy. If you want to select a different colour, we suggest levelling up to WCAG 2.1 contrast level of AAA or 7:1, so a colour that is either:

* USWDS: magic number of 70+
* Reasonable Colors: A shade difference of 4+

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Text | HEX code | Font | Size | Notes |
| Paragraph or body |  |  |  |  |
| Heading 1 |  |  |  |  |
| Heading 2 |  |  |  |  |
| Heading 3 |  |  |  |  |
| Heading 4 |  |  |  |  |
| Quote |  |  |  |  |

## Main background

We suggest using white (#FFFFFFF), or if you want to customize, use a very light grey (#F2F2F2) for the background. In the colour design systems, the light grey could be:

* USWDS: gray-3 (#F6F6F6), gray-cool-3 (#F5F6F7)
* Reasonable Colors: gray shade 1 (#F6F6F6)

## Callout background

We suggest two to three light colours or shades of colour and one dark colour to use with white text. The light colour should be at different grades or shades to help distinguish them. Such as grade 10 and grade 30 in the USWDS, shades 1 and 2 in the Reasonable Color system.

The colour contrast should be against your text colour and should be:

* WCAG 2.1: Contrast level of AA or 4.5:1
* USWDS: A magic number of 50 or less with text colour
* Reasonable Colors: A shade difference of 3

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Backgrounds | HEX code | Notes |
| Main background |  |  |
| Call out boxes or side bars 1 |  |  |
| Call out boxes or side bars 2 |  |  |
| Call out boxes or side bars 3 |  |  |
| Call out boxes or side bars 4 |  |  |

### Chart colours

Create a palette of six colours meeting the non-text contrast level minimum of 3:1 ratio between them while meeting ratio of 3:1 against the background. In the colour design systems, we have found these pattern works for white backgrounds:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| USWDS Colour 1: a grade of 70+  Colour 2: a grade of 40  Colour 3: a grade of 70+  Colour 4: a grade of 40  Colour 5: a grade of 70+  Colour 6: a grade of 40 | Reasonable colors Colour 1: Shade 5  Colour 2: Shade 3  Colour 3: Shade 5  Colour 4: Shade 3  Colour 5: Shade 5  Colour 6: Shade 3 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Chart Colours | HEX code | Notes |
| Chart 1 |  |  |
| Chart 2 |  |  |
| Chart 3 |  |  |
| Chart 4 |  |  |
| Chart 5 |  |  |
| Chart 6 |  |  |

## Links

Link colour text should have contrast of 3:1 ratio with the paragraph text and 4.5:1 or better with the background. (WC3, 2024b)

The best practice is to use different shades of the same colour for visited and unvisited links; use a more vivid or bright colour for the unvisited link and a less saturated or dull colour for visited.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Link states | HEX code | Notes |
| Default link |  |  |
| Selected link  (on hover or focus) |  |  |
| Visited link |  |  |

## Colour systems

[Reasonable Color system](https://reasonable.work/colors/)

US Web Design System

* [Using color page](https://designsystem.digital.gov/design-tokens/color/overview/) explains the system
* [System token page](https://designsystem.digital.gov/design-tokens/color/system-tokens/) lists the colour and HEX codes.

## References

Nielsen, J. (May 9, 2004). *Guidelines for Visualizing Links*. Nielsen Norman Group. Retrieved from URL <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/guidelines-for-visualizing-links/>.

W3C. (January 4, 2024). *Using a contrast ratio of 3:1 with surrounding text and providing additional visual cues on hover for links or controls where color alone is used to identify them*. World Wide Web Consortium. Retrieved from URL <https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG22/Techniques/general/G183>.