Microsoft Word®

Follow these best practices to help ensure your documents are accessible. For more information on Word® document accessibility, visit
Microsoft Word Accessibility

- **Use document styles**

  Use heading and paragraph styles to structure the document.

- **Add alt-text to images and objects**

  This includes pictures, clip art, charts, shapes, SmartArt graphics and embedded objects. Use clear, concise terms. For example, "Person in wheelchair on ramp" may suffice rather than "Smiling woman in wheelchair posing on ramp."

- **Use short titles in headings**

  Keep headings short (fewer than 20 words or one line long). This makes it easy for readers to quickly navigate your document.

- **Name your hyperlinks appropriately**

  Your link should contain meaningful text that reflects the link destination or subject, rather than simply saying "click here."

- **Use simple table structure**

  Avoid using nested tables, merged or split cells, or blank cells for formatting.

- **Set column header rows in tables**

  Clear column headings provide context and assist navigation of the table contents. Bookmarks are also a useful tool.

- **Avoid using repeated blank characters**

  Extra spaces, tabs and empty paragraphs can cause people using screen readers to repeatedly hear the word "blank." Instead, use styles with formatting and indenting to create white space.

- **Avoid using floating objects**

  Place objects in-line with text for easy navigation.

- **Avoid watermarks**

  Watermarks and other background images may be hidden or confusing to people with vision or cognitive disabilities. Instead of using a watermark to identify a document as a "draft" or "confidential," include the text in the document title or heading.

- **Fill in document properties**

  In advanced document properties, enter title, subject, and author.

- **Use the Accessibility Checker**

  This built-in tool will tell you about possible accessibility issues in your document and give suggestions on how to correct them.

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Microsoft Excel®

Follow these best practices to help ensure your workbooks are accessible. For more information on Excel® accessibility, visit Excel Accessibility.

- **Give all sheet tabs unique names**

  Sheet names should provide information about what is found on the worksheet, making it easier to navigate through a workbook. Remove blank sheets.

- **Enter title in first row and column**

  You may merge cells to center the title.

- **Add alt-text to images and objects**

  This includes pictures, clip art, charts and embedded objects. Use clear, concise terms. For complex charts and diagrams, provide a data table or a link to the data table.

- **Specify row and column headings. Use cell styles when appropriate.**

  Clear headings provide context and assist navigation of the table contents.

- **Use color carefully**

  High contrast color schemes and texture variations in graphs improve readability. Test your designs by printing in black & white.

- **Hide Unused Rows and Columns**

  This prevents screen reader users and keyboard navigators from wandering off into blank cells.

- **Name your hyperlinks appropriately**

  Your link should contain meaningful text that reflects the link destination or subject, rather than simply saying "click here."

- **Use alignment tools for layout and to create white space**

  Don't use blank rows/columns for spacing. Manage your layout by resizing rows and columns, and using the alignment tools to move content (top, bottom, left, right) as needed.

- **Avoid blank data cells**

  Cells should not be left blank. If the cell really has no data, then you can add "This cell intentionally left blank" or "No data."

- **Mark end of worksheet**

  Type "end of worksheet" in the row immediately following the last row.

- **Structure content for better readability**

  Add structure by defining the title region, providing data range names, and hiding unused rows and columns.

- **Fill in document properties**

  In advanced document properties, enter title, subject, and author.

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Microsoft PowerPoint®

Follow these best practices to help ensure your presentations are accessible. For more information on PowerPoint® accessibility, visit PowerPoint Accessibility.

- **Add alt-text to images and objects**

  This includes pictures, clip art, tables, charts, shapes, SmartArt graphics and embedded objects. Use clear, concise terms. For example, "Person in wheelchair on ramp" may suffice rather than "Smiling woman in wheelchair posing on ramp."

- **Set column header rows in tables**

  Clear column headings provide context and assist navigation of the table contents.

- **Ensure each slide has a unique title**

  Slide titles are used for navigation and selection by people who are not able to view the slide.

- **Check slide reading order**

  People who cannot view the slide will hear slide text, shapes and content read back in a specific order. Items in the selection pane read from the bottom up.

- **Name your hyperlinks appropriately**

  Your link should contain meaningful text that reflects the link destination or subject, rather than simply saying "click here."

- **Use simple table structure**

  Avoid using nested tables, merged or split cells, or blank cells for formatting.

- **Include captions and audio descriptions**

  If you use audio or video components, ensure that all audio is captioned and any visuals are audio-described.

- **Use color carefully**

  High contrast color schemes and texture variations in graphs improve readability. Test your designs by printing in black & white.

- **Fill in document properties**

  In advanced document properties, enter title, subject, and author.
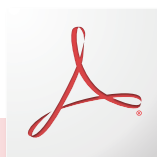
Adobe Acrobat Pro®

Accessibility Quick Card

It's always best to start with an accessible source document (e.g., Word). Then use the Acrobat Pro tab to create the PDF. For more information, visit

Adobe Acrobat Pro

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- **Use the Accessibility Checker**

    This built-in tool will tell you about possible issues in your document and give suggestions on how to correct them.

- **Convert scanned text**

    Make sure the document contains real text (scanned documents often render text as unreadable). If it does not, recreate the PDF file using the source document or convert it to include true text.

- **Set the document language**

    Setting the document language in a PDF enables some screen readers to switch to the appropriate language.

- **Check alt-text**

    Make sure informative and concise alt-text descriptions exist for all non-text elements.

- **Use color carefully**

    Make sure you have a high-contrast color scheme that will make it easy for individuals with color vision deficiency to use your document. Use texture in graphs to highlight points of interest.

- **Check for tags**

  Check the document properties to ensure the PDF has been tagged. If not, add them.

- **Check the reading order**

  Use the Pages pane and the Order pane to check reading order.

- **Check for *proper* tag use**

  Use the Tags pane to check whether tagged elements are properly sequenced and applied. For example, is a first-level heading tagged as an H1 and not an H3? Are lists, tables and images tagged appropriately? Do the tags match the text? Rearrange or rename tags as needed.

- **Artifacts**

  Artifacts are elements that are ignored by a screen reader, such as a background texture that does not contain important text. You can change an element to or from an artifact using the tag tree menu or the Touch Up Reading Order (TURO) tool.

- **Check form fields and buttons**

  If the PDF is intended to be an interactive document, add meaningful labels to the fillable form fields and buttons. Set the tab order for the form fields, provide instructions, ensure proper keyboard focus, and ensure any error handling is accessible.

Social Media

Follow these best practices to help ensure your social media content is as accessible as it can be. For more information on social media accessibility, visit Social Media Accessibility.

Profile Tips

Social media pages often use preset colors and format. Account for these when you design your campaigns. Also, you may only be able to test results after publishing.

- **Don't use text in banner art images**

  Outside of your organizational name, assistive technologies do not recognize text in your banner photo. Only use text in text fields.

- **Use high resolution images**

  Images should be easy to see no matter how big they are viewed.

- **Use text colors that can easily be seen**

  When possible, choose good contrast between text and background. Validate your colors with contrast checkers such as webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker

- **Point of contact**

  List a point of contact for business profiles to address questions.

Posting Tips

- **Add alt-text to images**

  When this is not possible, describe image in clear, concise terms as part of the post. This includes pictures, clip art, tables and charts.

- **Place hyperlinks toward the end of the post**

  Let people read your message before providing the link. Consider adding [PIC], [VIDEO], [AUDIO], or [PDF] before hyperlinks to help the reader know where they are going.

- **Put extra hashtags after hyperlinks**

  Hashtags can be complicated for those using assistive technology. One or two is ok in the main body; otherwise, post them at the end.

- **Use CamelCase for hashtags**

  Capitalizing the first letter in each word helps people decipher the hashtag.

- **Multimedia needs to be seen and heard**

  Any video you create or link to needs to have captioning. Podcasts must have transcripts. When writing a script, describe key visuals.

- **Use plain language**

  Clear content will engage more readers. Avoid acronyms.