

Make your documents or presentations more accessible

When you create a document or presentation, follow the tips below to make it more readable by everyone, including people with disabilities.

Include alt text

Include alternative text for images, drawings, and other graphics. Otherwise, screen reader users just hear "image." Some images automatically include alt text, so it's a good idea to verify that this automatic alt text is what you want.

Add or edit alt text

Select an image, drawing, or graphic.
Right click Alt text.
Enter a title and description.
Click Ok.

Use tables for data

Use tables for presenting data, not for changing the visual layout of the page. In the table, include a heading row (rather than starting with data in the first row) because screen readers automatically read the first row as a heading row.

Use comments and suggestions

Use the commenting and other suggestions , thesaurus type features instead of writing notes within the text of your document or presentation. Screen reader users can jump to comments using keyboard shortcuts rather than hunting through your file. The file owner can also receive email notifications or review comment threads.

Check for high color contrast

High color contrast makes text and images easier to read and comprehend. [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.0](#) recommend a minimum ratio of 4.5:1 for large text and 7:1 for other text and images. For example, avoid light gray text on a white background.

To check contrast, use the [WebAIM contrast checker](#).

Use informative link text

Screen readers can scan for links, so informative link text is helpful. It's best to use the title of the page as the linked text. For example, if you're linking to your profile page, the link text should say "my profile," not "click here" or the full URL. Remember to include text that lets the screen reader know that you are going to another page (i.e. Here is a link to my profile , etc.)

Check text size and alignment

To make your document or presentation easy to read, use large, left-aligned text when possible. Justified text is more difficult to read because of extra space between the words.

Use text to support formatting

It's best not to rely on visual formatting alone to communicate meaning. Screen readers might not announce formatting changes, such as boldface or highlighting.

For example, to mark an important section of text, add the word "Important."

Use numbered and bulleted lists

Most word processor applications automatically detect and format some lists for accessibility. For example, if you start a new line in your document by typing the number 1 followed by a period, the new line automatically becomes the first item in a numbered list. It is also possible to do this by your applications formatting options

Use headings to organize your document

Headings divide your document into sections, making it easier for people to jump to a section (especially if they're using keyboard shortcuts). You can use the default heading styles or create your own.

Include navigation landmarks in your document

Landmarks like headers, footers, page numbers and page count will help your readers find where they are in your document. To maximize accessibility, especially in long documents, include one or more of these landmarks (available in the Insert menu). Most of the page numbers and counts can be added in the footer and increment automatically.

PDF files

PDF files should be created by first creating accessible documents in your word processor of choice; meaning Microsoft Word, OpenOffice Writer, LibreOffice Writer, Google Docs, or Apple Pages, etc.

After creating a properly accessible document in one of these programs, once the option to print the file is selected, you should have the option to "Print to PDF" if you have a PDF program installed on your computer. In this way if the base document is accessible then you will have an accessible PDF.

(If you don't have an option to " Print as PDF " or "Save as PDF" then you can download an add-in for your word processor to add that functionality -or download a program like Adobe Acrobat, Foxit, PDF Forge, Okular, or Scribus).