

Simple Guide to Creating Accessible Documents for the Web

Document creating tools

- MS Word
- MS PowerPoint
- Google Docs
- MS Excel - best to use MS word for word processing and simply copy MS Excel tables over to MS Word.
- Canva - save as “*Standard PDF*” not “*Print PDF*” which is often the default option.

Headings

- Use the headings tool in MS Word | Google Docs | Canva.
- Start the main heading as a *Heading 1* and do not skip headings keeping them parallel and logical.

Alternative Text for Images

- Make sure all images have alternative text.
- MS Word - ***Right click >> Format Picture >> Layout & Properties >> Description***
- Google Docs - ***Right-click >>Alt text >> Description***
- Canva - ***Right-click >> Alternative Text***
- Add a short sentence or phrase describing the image.
- Do not use images with significant amounts of text. ALL text on an image should be included in the image alternative text.

Hyperlinks

Do not use link texts such as “*Click here*” or “*More information*”. Do not use the raw URL for a hyperlink. Use a text in your link which communicates the purpose or destination of the link.

- Incorrect: [Click here](https://www.greenville.k12.sc.us/Schools/profile.asp?schoolid=welcome) | <https://www.greenville.k12.sc.us/Schools/profile.asp?schoolid=welcome>
- Correct: [Elementary School Profile](#) | [Homework Plan](#)

Lists

Use the ***native*** list tool for lists of items (numbered lists or bulleted list)

- | | |
|-----------|----------|
| 1. Item 1 | • Item 1 |
| 2. Item 2 | • Item 2 |
| 3. Item 3 | • Item 3 |

Tables

- ***Do not*** use tables to control your document layout. Use the *columns* tool to control layout if necessary.
- ***Only*** use tables for tabular data and label the table header row as follows:
- Select Header Row then ***Table Tools >> Layout >> Repeat Header Rows***
- Avoid merging table cells if at all possible.

Color Contrast

There must be sufficient contrast between the foreground color and background color in a document.

[Colour Contrast Analyzer](#)

Microsoft Accessibility Checker

Complete an accessibility check by using the Microsoft accessibility checker.

Choose **File >> Info >> Inspect Document >> Check for Issues >> Check Accessibility**

Canva Accessibility Checker

File >> Accessibility >> Check Design Accessibility

MS Word - Save As options

It is best to Save as Adobe PDF if you have Adobe Acrobat plugin.

Otherwise, use the “Save As” option, change the file type to “PDF”, then choose the “Options” tab at the bottom before saving and make sure the “Document structure tags for accessibility” box is checked.

Best Practices

- **Do not use Word Art.**
- Do not use fancy, script-like fonts. Basic, common fonts are most readable.
- Make sure your text/background colors have high contrast.
- Do not use color to communicate information (e.g. The mushrooms in red below are poisonous.)

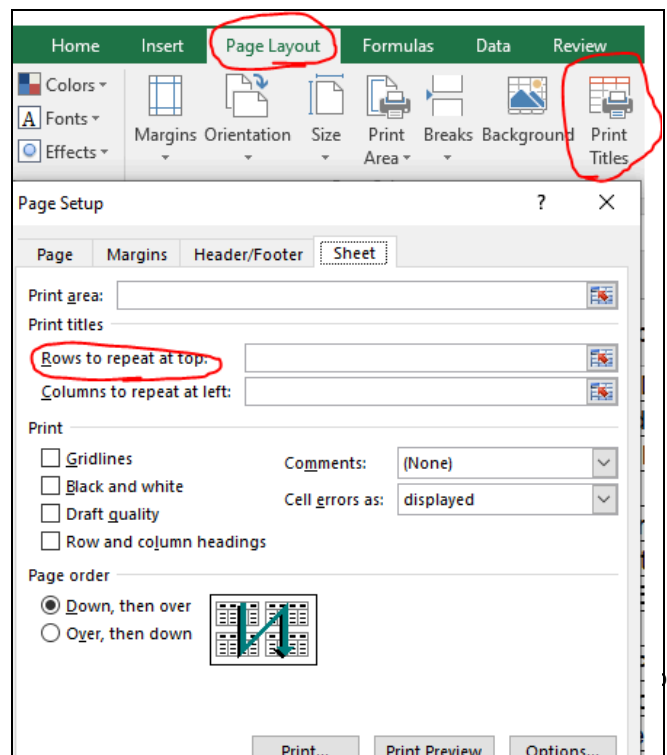
When Creating a PDF in Google Docs

Google Docs does not currently export tagged PDFs. Export document as MS Word and follow steps above using ~~Microsoft Accessibility Checker~~.

<***RECENT CHANGE April 24, 2025***> Google docs has much improved PDF download. Accessibility. Tag structure is added. Tables are still problematic in the PDF download.

When Creating a PDF from MS Excel

- Use the Excel accessibility checker File >> Info >> Check for Issues >> Check Accessibility
- Avoid merging cells.
- Keep all cell text within ONE cell and don't combine over several cells..
- Make sure the table data content is accurately separated into rows and columns in the simplest way possible.
- Make sure the heading rows have each cell named.
- Set “Print Tiles” to repeat header rows when tables extend to multiple pages.



[Repairing PDF Form Field Tagging issues](#)