

Microsoft PowerPoint Accessibility Checklist

Last reviewed and updated: November 26, 2024, by Monica Olsson

File Settings

- **Title:** Add a clear and descriptive title for your presentation. [View and change the standard properties of your file.](#)
- **Author:** Include the name of the presentation's author or organization.
- **Subject:** Add a brief, descriptive summary line to help with categorizing and searching documents.
- **Keywords:** List relevant keywords that describe the document's content to improve searchability.
- **File name:** Use a lowercase filename that does not contain spaces or special characters, and does not start or end with a space, period, hyphen, or underline (use a hyphen instead).
- **File name length:** Use a filename that is 31 characters or less in length.

Presentation Language and Tone

- **Presentation language:** [Specify the primary language of the presentation](#) to ensure correct pronunciation and interpretation by screen readers.
- **Language use:** [Use plain language](#) that is clear and easy to understand. For example, instead of "utilize," use "use."
- **Active voice:** Use active voice instead of passive voice to make sentences more direct and easier to understand. For example, "The team completed the project" instead of "The project was completed by the team."
- **Capital letters:** Avoid using all capital letters. For example, use "Important Notice" instead of "IMPORTANT NOTICE."
- **Consistent terminology:** Use consistent terminology, abbreviations, and capitalization rules throughout your document.
- **Abbreviations and acronyms:** Spell out abbreviations and acronyms on first use, followed by the abbreviation in parentheses. For example, "World Health Organization (WHO)."
- **Jargon:** Avoid using jargon or technical terms without explaining them. For example, instead of saying, "The campaign leverages omnichannel strategies," say, "The campaign reaches customers through multiple platforms, like email, social media, and ads."

- **Numbers:** Write out numbers one through nine and use numerals for 10 and above. For example, "three participants" and "15 students."

Presentation and Slide Structure

- **Slide title:** [Give each slide a unique title](#).
- **Slide design:** [Use the built-in slide designs](#) for accessible content reading order, color contrast, and more.
- **Slide reading order:** [Make slides easier to read by using the Reading Order Pane](#). Ensure the [reading order](#) of content on each slide is logical and correct. Note that the reading order pane lists elements from *bottom to top* when moving objects within the reading order pane.
- **Slide numbers:** Add slide numbers to make it easier for participants to navigate and reference specific slides.
- **Sections:** Organize long presentations into sections with specific, unique, and accurate section names.
- **Lists and columns:** Use [lists and columns](#) to create a clear hierarchical structure. To [make lists accessible in PowerPoint](#), use numbered lists for sequential items and bulleted lists for non-sequential items. [Arrange text inside a text box or shape into columns](#) on your slide.
- **Descriptive hyperlinks:** Use [descriptive text for links](#) to indicate the link's destination or purpose. For example, avoid using generic phrases like "click here" or "read more," and instead use meaningful text like "Explore course resources." [Create and edit link text in PowerPoint](#) using the Link option on the Insert tab.
- **Alt text:** Add meaningful and contextualized [alternative text](#) to all images, charts, and other graphics included in your presentation. Remember to mark all non-relevant images and graphics as decorative. Learn how to add [alt text in PowerPoint from Microsoft support](#).
- **Tables:** [Use tables in PowerPoint for data only, not for layout](#). Present data in paragraphs with headers whenever possible.
- **Table structure:** Use simple structures and avoid merged or split cells.
- **Table headers:** [Add table column and/or row headers](#) when using tables in PowerPoint.
- **Captions:** Provide [accurate captions](#) for all multimedia and pre-recorded video content. Audio description may also be needed depending on the content. Refer to the [YouTube Video Captioning Guide](#) and the [Create Accessible Videos Guide](#).

- **Transcripts:** Provide accurate transcripts for pre-recorded video with audio and audio-only content.

Fonts, Spacing, and Color

- **Font and typeface:** Use readable sans-serif [typefaces and fonts](#).
- **Font size:** [Adjust the font size in PowerPoint as needed](#) to ensure readability. Use 28–44 points for slide titles and 18–24 points for body text.
- **Paragraph spacing:** [Change text alignment, indentation, and spacing of text](#) in slides instead of using a blank return.
- **White space:** Allow for breathing room or empty space, when possible, to avoid visually crowded information.
- **Color:** Do not use color as the only way to convey information.
- **Color contrast:** Use [high-contrast color schemes](#). Check your contrast with [WebAim's Contrast Checker](#).
- **File type:** Stick to PowerPoint or Google slides and refrain from PDFs. Learn how to [make your presentation read only](#) or [Stop, limit, or change sharing for your Google slides if](#) security is a concern.

Time, Dates, Months, and Years

- **Time format:** Use the 12-hour clock format with AM and PM or the 24-hour clock format consistently.
- **Time AM/PM:** Capitalize AM and PM without punctuation. When all the times listed are the same, do not repeat the use of AM and PM. Only use AM or PM once after the last time listed. For example, "The party is from 2:00 until 5:00 PM."
- **Date format:** Use a clear and consistent date format, such as "month day, year" or "day month year." For example, "January 15, 2024" or "15 January 2024." Avoid formats like "01/15/2024" that can be confusing due to different regional formats.
- **Time and date symbols:** Use "to" or "through" or "and" or "until" instead of dashes, as screen readers do not read dashes. For example, "The party is from 2:00 until 5:00 PM". For example, "The party is from 2:00 until 5:00 PM."
- **Names of days and months:** Write out days of the week and the names of months fully, as screen readers are unpredictable as to whether they read abbreviations correctly. For example, "The party is Thursday, July 4, 2024, from 2:00 until 5:00 PM"

Presentation

- **Real-time captions:** Provide professional real-time captions from a third party if required or turn on the real-time automated captions/subtitles during your presentation in [PowerPoint](#), [Zoom](#), [Teams](#), or other web conferencing software.
- **Real-time translation:** Provide professional real-time American Sign Language (ASL) translation from a third party if requested.
- **Slide content:** Read each slide title and verbally describe relevant images, tables, graphs, charts, and other graphics instead of using phrases like “As you can see here.”
- **Slide numbers:** Announce slide numbers as you go to assist participants with following along and staying oriented.

Checking for Accessibility

- **Accessibility checker:** [Check accessibility while you work in PowerPoint.](#)
- **Text to speech:** [Test accessibility with Narrator in PowerPoint.](#)

Learn More and Practice

Sign up for the SBCTC [Accessibility Micro-Courses](#) to earn badges while getting the chance to practice creating accessible content including Word documents, PowerPoint presentations, Canvas content, and more. The [Library of Accessibility Resources](#) is publicly available.