Make a PDF Accessible

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The goal of accessible learning is that a person with a disability will obtain the information as fully, equally, and independently as a person without a disability. When a learning setting is accessible, a person with a disability is afforded the opportunity to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services as a person without a disability in an equally effective and equally integrated manner, with substantially equivalent ease of use.

The following instructions require using **Adobe Acrobat Pro**. Any LSC faculty or staff member may install **Adobe Acrobat Pro** at no cost on one work computer and one home computer under the LSC license for **Adobe Creative Suite** (see the [Adobe Creative Suite Installation Guide (https://lonestar.service-now.com/sp?id=kb_article_view&sys_kb_id=8d201cda13fa83009ee9b6076144b0a2)](https://lonestar.service-now.com/sp?id=kb_article_view&sys_kb_id=8d201cda13fa83009ee9b6076144b0a2)). The following instructions refer to the latest version, **Adobe Acrobat Pro**.

Does an Accessible PDF Need Optical Character Recognition (OCR)?

OCR is only necessary if the text on the PDF is an image instead of actual text. To determine whether your PDF is an image, try to select and copy a line of text. If you can't, your PDF is an image and needs optical character recognition (OCR).

**▶ Video Demo**

Use Guided Actions to Make Accessible

The **Make Accessible** guided action in **Adobe Acrobat Pro** walks you through a structured workflow to remediate common accessibility issues in PDF documents. The process is divided into three stages: preparing the document, setting language and tags, and running a final accessibility check.
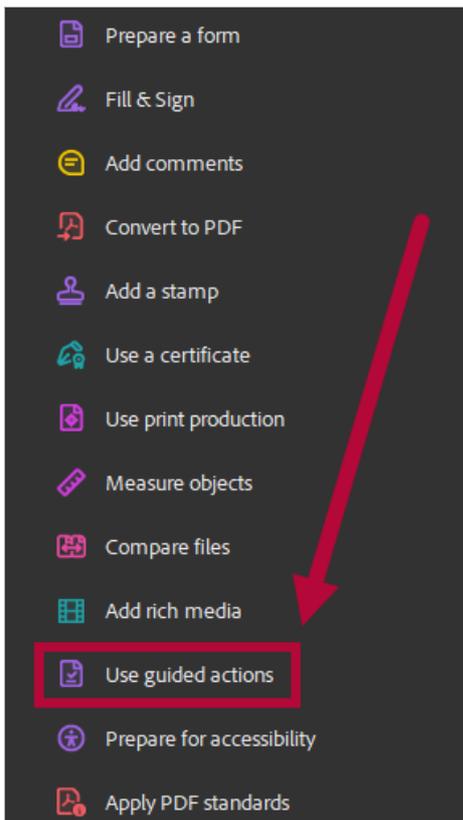
Preparing Your Document

1. Upload an existing PDF file to **Adobe Acrobat** by clicking **[Menu]** in the upper-left corner and selecting **[Open...]** to select the file.
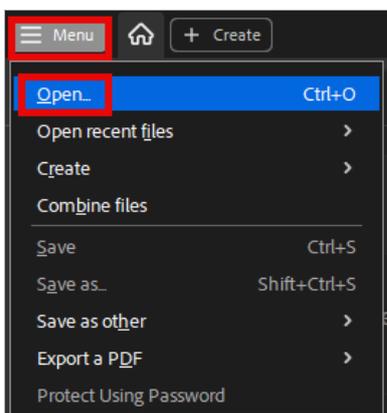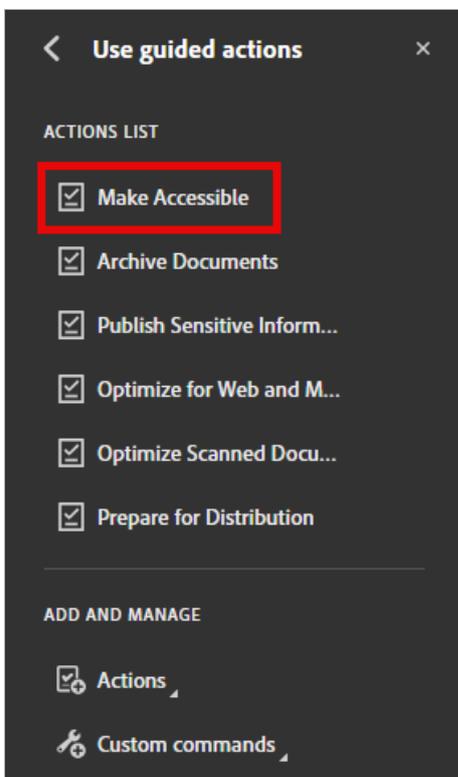
2. With your PDF file open, from the left toolbar, select **[All tools]** then **[View more]**.
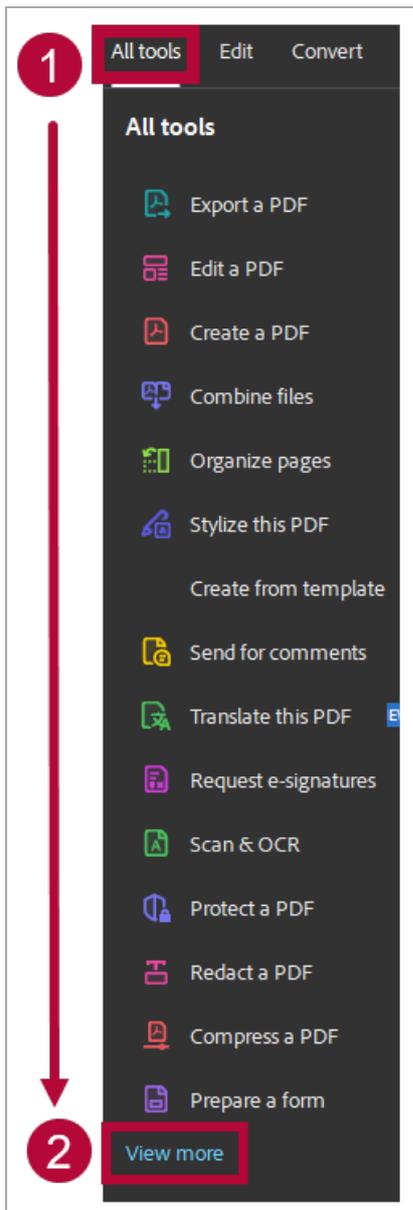
3. From the expanded list, select **[Use guided actions]**.

4. From the actions list, select **[Make Accessible]**. This will prompt users through a workflow that remediates many common accessibility issues in documents.


5. Under the **Prepare** heading, click **[Add Document Description]** to add title, subject, author, and keywords to the document description. If you would like to leave it blank or unchanged, check the **[Leave As is]** checkbox. Click **[OK]** when the desired fields are filled.
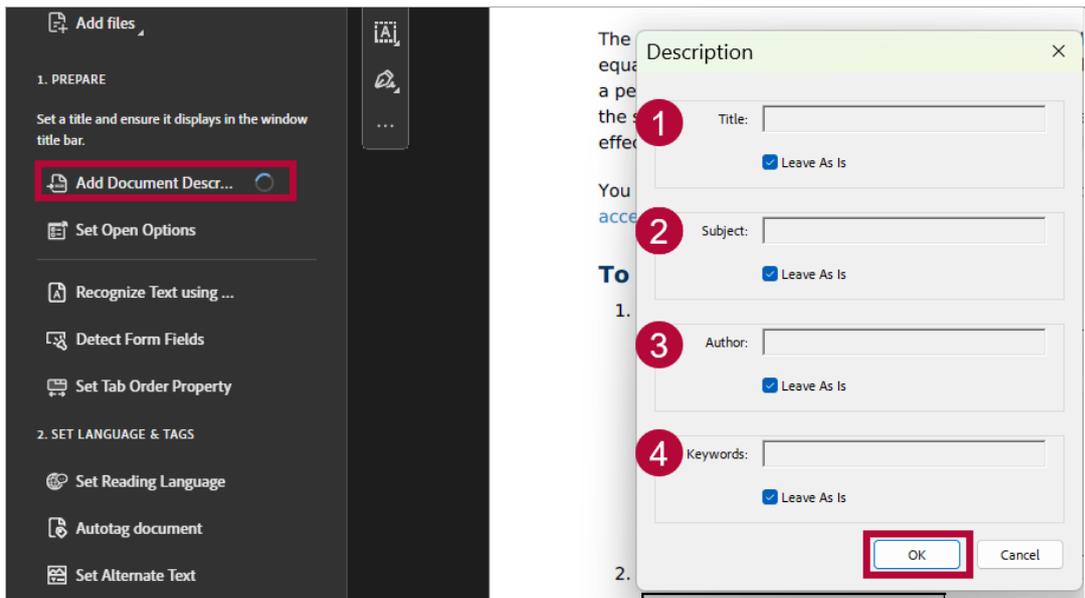
6. Click **[Recognize Text using OCR]** to open the **Recognize Text - General Settings** window. Ensure the option for **Output** is set to **[Editable Text and Images]** → Click **[OK]**.

   Once complete, the PDF file should now be editable text. For more information about working with scanned PDFs, please visit Adobe's page on the subject (https://helpx.adobe.com/acrobat/using/edit-scanned-pdfs.html).
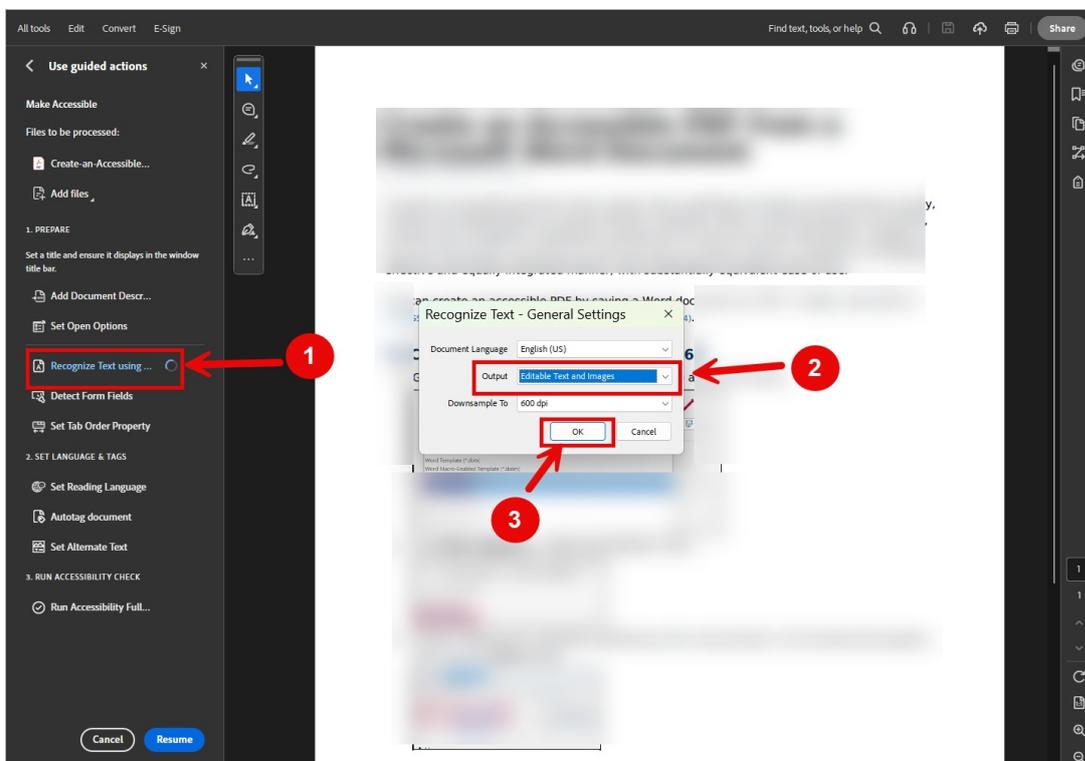

7. **Detect Form Fields** is only necessary for documents intended to be used as a fillable form. If the document does not contain these types of fields, this step can be skipped.
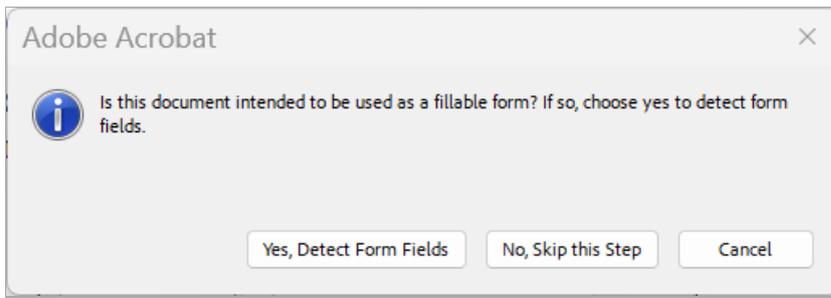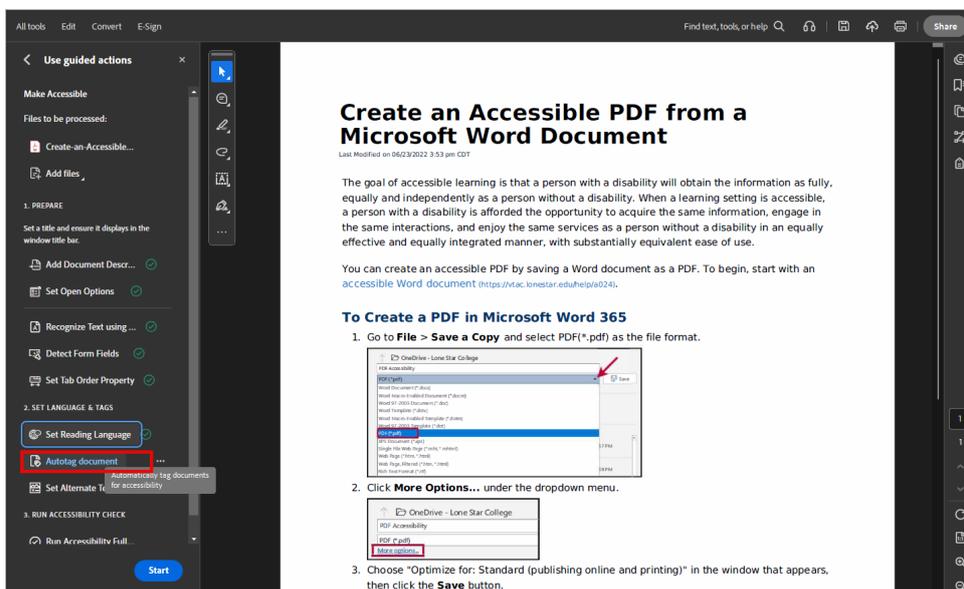
8. **Set Tab Order Property** is run automatically. Click on the step to move to the next part of the workflow.

Setting Language and Tags

1. Click on **[Set Reading Language]** to set the default language for assistive technologies.
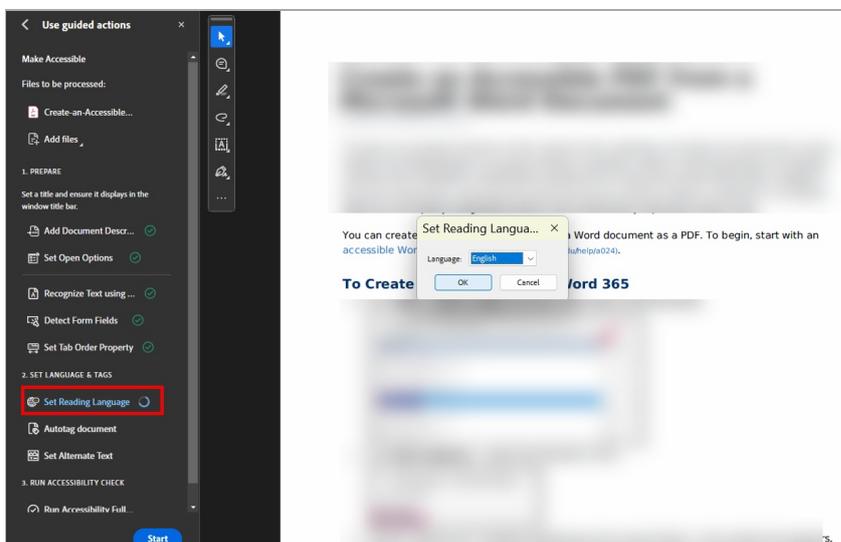
2. Click on **[Autotag document]** to begin the process of adding tags to the document tag structure.

3. Click on **[Set Alternate Text]** to move to the next step. **Adobe** will prompt you to provide descriptive text for images within the document, or the option to mark as a decorative figure.
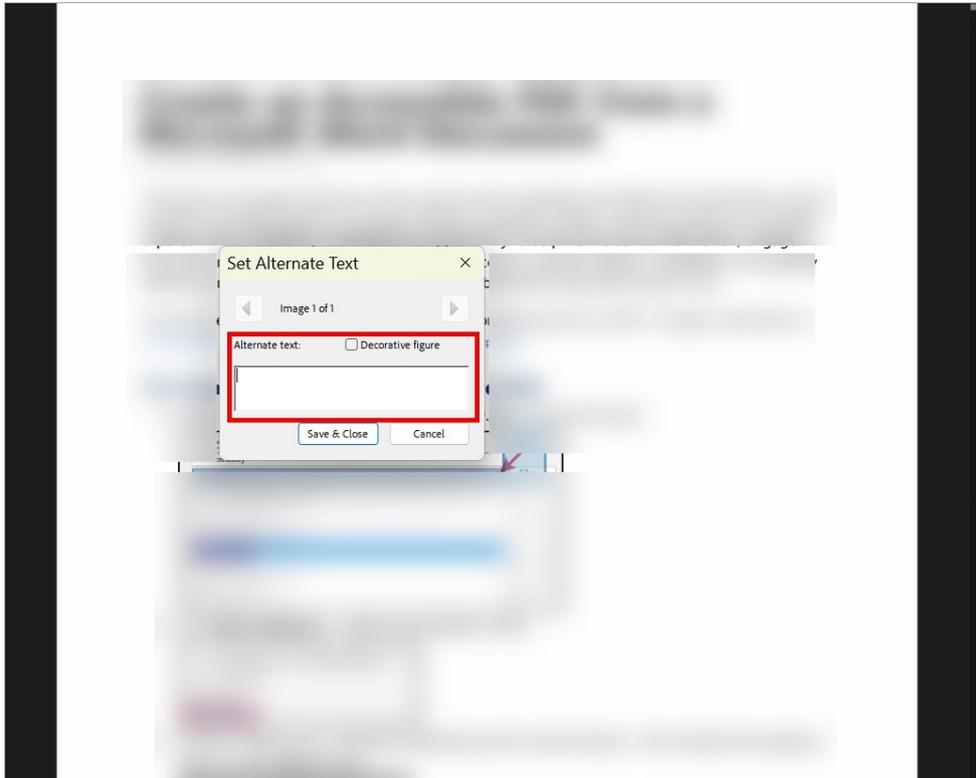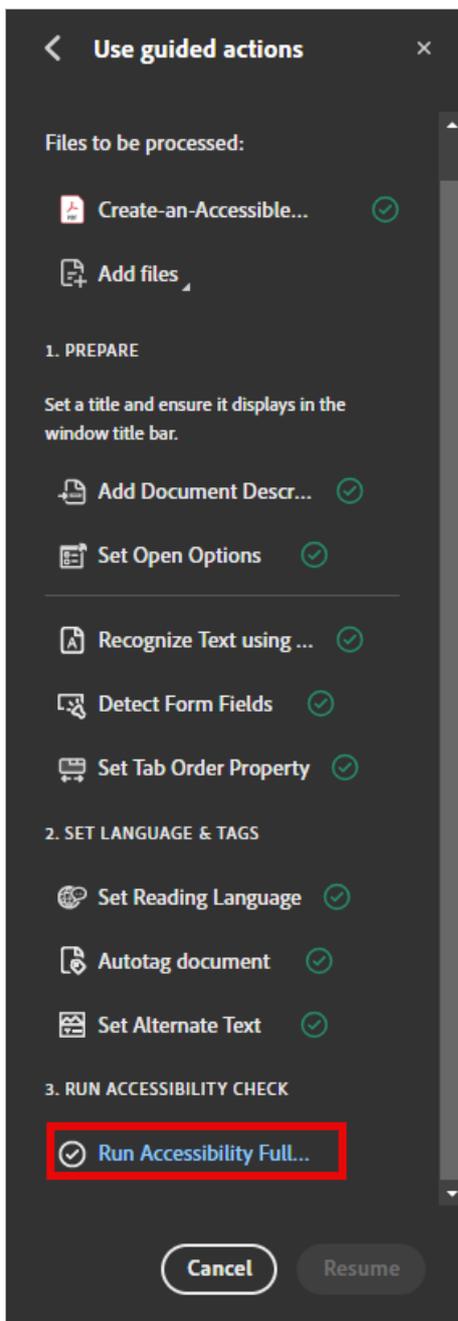

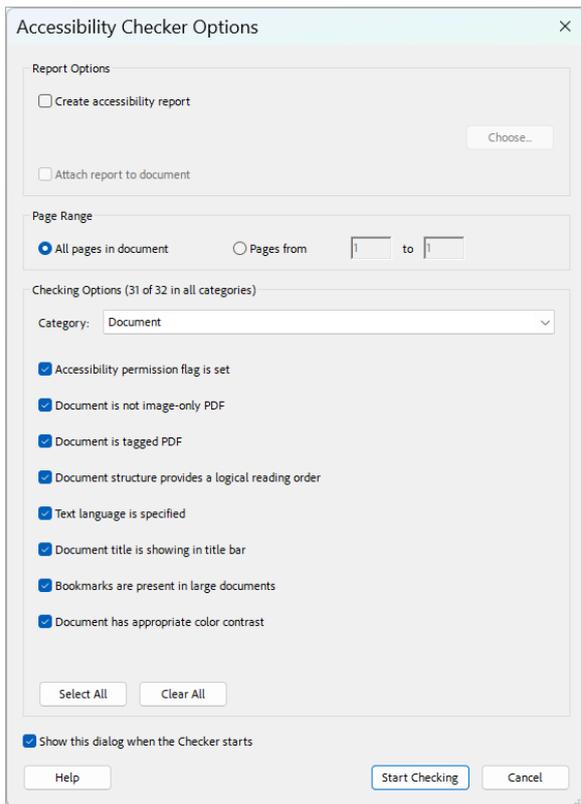## Running the Accessibility Check

Adobe Acrobat Pro has a built-in accessibility checker. To run the accessibility check:

▶ **Video Demo**

1. For the final step, click on **[Run Accessibility Full Check]**.

2. An **Accessibility Checker Options** window will open. By default, **Create accessibility report** is checked. This creates a file of the report that can be referenced, but is not necessary to complete this step. Click **[Start Checking]** to launch the tool.

3. An **Accessibility Checker** report will appear next to the document. The fields can be expanded to review lingering issues. Depending on the error, some fixes can be applied directly through the report by right-clicking and selecting **[Fix]**.
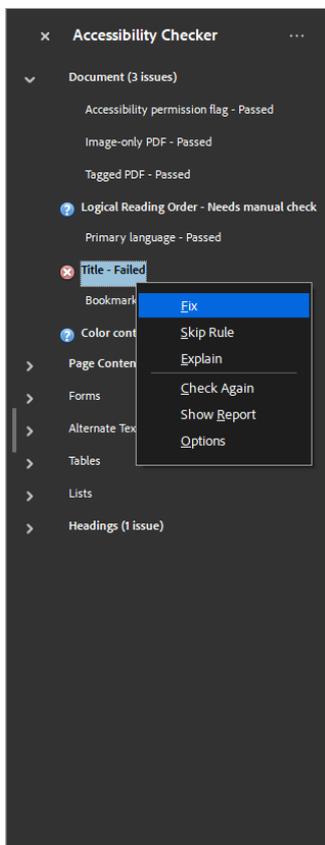
Additional Resources

- [Reading PDFs with reflow and accessibility features (https://helpx.adobe.com/acrobat/using/reading-pdfs-reflow-accessibility-features.html#reading_pdfs_with_reflow_and_accessibility_features)](https://helpx.adobe.com/acrobat/using/reading-pdfs-reflow-accessibility-features.html#reading_pdfs_with_reflow_and_accessibility_features)

Troubleshooting and Support

If you need additional assistance, contact the **IT Service Desk** at **281.318.HELP** (4357).