Make a PowerPoint Presentation 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.

For presentations created in Microsoft PowerPoint 365, check the following accessibility guidelines for each element to make sure that your presentation is accessible.

In this article:

- Make the Presentation Accessible
- Make Images and Graphics Accessible (Including Graphs, Maps and Shapes)
- Make Lists Accessible
- Make Links Accessible
- Make Tables Accessible
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- Use of Flashing or Blinking Content
- Make Interactive Elements Accessible
- Make Video and Audio Accessible
- Math and Science Equations
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Make the Presentation Accessible

The Outline View

Make sure all of the slide text content appears in the outline view. Students with visual disabilities may prefer not to use the more visual slide view. For example a table in a slide show view is not accessible, it is displayed like an image and the alt text is needed.

The Slide View

Use the built-in slide layouts provided on the Home and Insert tabs instead of a blank one. This will help to ensure your slide's reading order remains intact.
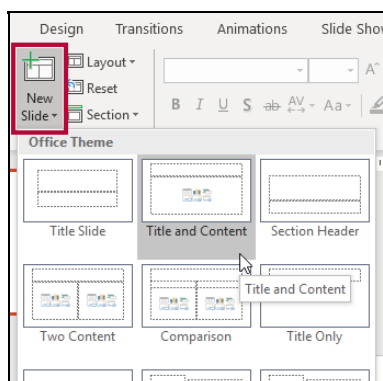
- You can check or change this reading order by selecting **Home** > **Arrange** > **Selection Pane**. The Selection Pane will appear in the right-hand sidebar. The reading order for the elements in this pane is *bottom to top*.
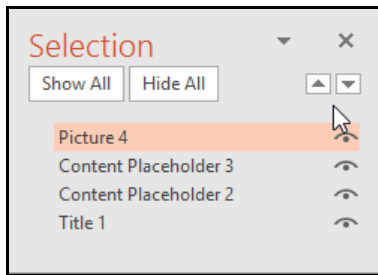

Make Images and Graphics Accessible (Including Graphs, Maps and Shapes)

Provide alternative text descriptions (alt text) for images and graphics

Alternative text descriptions of images (alt text) allows screen reader users to benefit from the information being conveyed by an image. To add alt text:

1. Right-click on the image and select **Edit Alt Text**.
2. The Alt Text Pane will open on the right side of the screen.
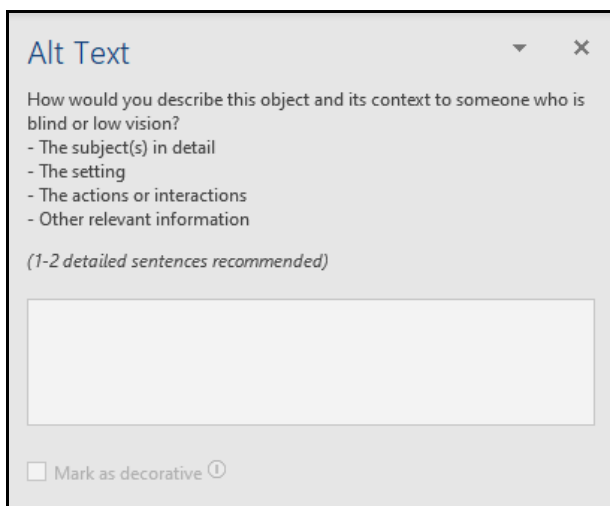
3. Enter your descriptive alternative text into the field provided.
   - If the image is decorative, leave the field blank and check **Mark as decorative**.(Avoid excessive use of decorative images.)
   - If the image requires more explanation than can be covered in alt text, refer to How to Make Complex Images Accessible (https://vtac.lonestar.edu/help/a027).

Make Lists Accessible

Format lists using formatting tools

Page formatting (such as titles, lists, and links) is read aloud by screen readers so that the content can be understood in context. Therefore, it is very important to properly format lists.
1. Click on the **Home** tab.
2. In the **Paragraph** group, select the **Numbering** or **Bullets** icon.
   - Use **Numbered lists** if a sequential order is important to the list
   - Use **Bulleted lists** if all items are equal value.

Make Links Accessible

Write meaningful link text that indicates the link's destination

Links are a major method of navigating for everyone, but especially screen reader users. If the links are embedded into meaningful text, they are much more useful.

1. Highlight text that describes the destination of the link.
2. Right click and select **Link**.
3. In the **Address** field, enter the link URL.
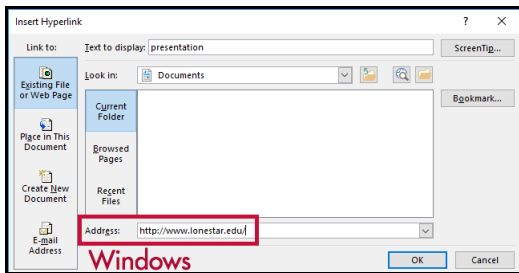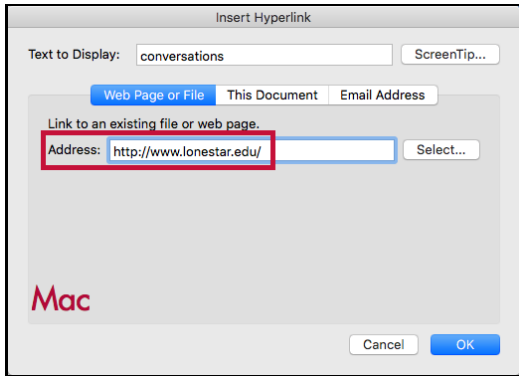

4. Click **OK**.

> **Hyperlink Tips:**
> - If you think students will be printing the document and you want them to have the URL, put it in parentheses after the link but don't hyperlink it.
>   - Example: Lone Star College (http://www.lonestar.edu) (www.lonestar.edu).
> - Screen reading software can pull up all of the links in a page to aid the user in navigating the page more quickly. If a link pulled up by the screen reader is an indecipherable URL or an ambiguous phrase like "click here," the user will not know where that link goes.

Make Tables Accessible

Create data tables with column headers

Designating column headers in a table is essential for screen readers to understand how the information is laid out. To designate header rows for your table:

1. Put your cursor anywhere in the table. The **Table Tools** tab will display.
2. Under the Table Tools tab, click the **Design** tab.
3. In the **Table Style Options** group, verify the **Header Row** box is checked.
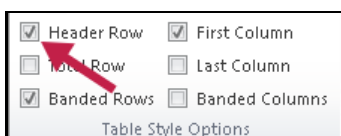
4. Now the cells in the top row of your table make up the headers for the columns below them.

Ensure a proper reading order in tables

Screen readers (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Screen_readers) read tables from right to left, top to bottom, one cell at a time (no repeats). **If cells are split or merged, the reading order can be thrown off**. Make sure you construct your table in a way that accommodates the proper reading order. To test the reading order after the table is complete:

1. Place your cursor in the first cell of the table.
2. Press the Tab key repeatedly to navigate through the table. This will be the reading order that assistive technologies will use.

> **NOTE:** A table in Slide Show view is not accessible. Use alt text.

Color Use in Documents

Don't use color alone to convey meaning

Don't use color alone to make a distinction, to make a comparison, or to set something apart from the rest of the document. If you categorize something by color alone, those who are color blind or have other visual disabilities will not be able to benefit from that information.

Use sufficient color contrast

Make sure there is enough contrast between the font color and the background color. If you print your document on a black and white printer, would it be understandable? Without sufficient color contrast, people who are color blind or have other visual disabilities will not be able to benefit from that information. You can use the Colour Contrast Analyzer tool to help you verify that the color contrast in your document is sufficient.

Install and Use the Colour Analyser tool

1. Download and install Colour Contrast Analyser Tool
    (http://www.paciellogroup.com/resources/contrastAnalyser)
2. Open the **Colour Contrast Analyser** application
3. Click the **Foreground eye dropper** tool, hover over and click the foreground color (usually text) to select it.
4. Click the **Background eye dropper** tool, hover over and click the background color.
5. If you have a 12pt font you are testing for color contrast, you must get a (AA) Pass for regular text.
    If you have font larger than that, you must get a (AA) Pass for large text.
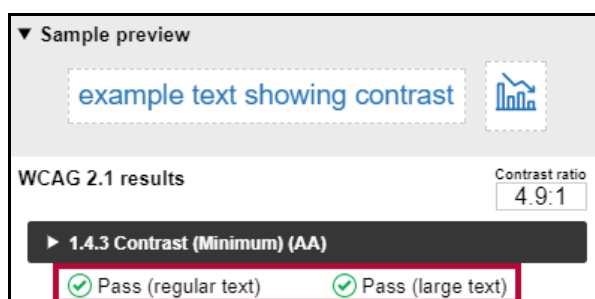
Colour Analyzer Tips:
- LSC's standards are to reach a pass in the AA standards.
- Don't worry if you fail the AAA standards, though you might want to consider something with m
  contrast.

Use of Flashing or Blinking Content

Eliminate flashing or blinking content

If you must use flashing or blinking content, limit that content to no more than 3 flashes per second. Any flashing or blinking content (especially content in red) can cause seizures in people with photosensitive epilepsy as well as other photosensitive seizure disorders, so this content should be used very rarely if at all. Pages that *do* contain flashing content should limit the flashing to no more than three flashes per second and should not use fully saturated reds in the content.

If you have a video containing a scene involving very bright lightning flashes (or other scenes with flashes), edit the video so the lightning doesn't flash more than three times in any one second period.

Make Interactive Elements Accessible

Ensure that any necessary action can be completed using either a mouse or a keyboard

People with carpal tunnel and other mobility issues often cannot use a mouse. While there are more and more input devices and software options, such as speech to text software and touchpads, keyboard accessibility remains an important input format for many assistive technologies.

Label buttons

All buttons that require interaction with the user should be clearly labeled with real text (not images) or alternative text.

Make Video and Audio Accessible

Caption video and transcribe audio

It is better to link out to media on the internet than to embed it in your PowerPoint presentation. Layers of technology make it difficult for assistive technologies to navigate. If you do embed video or audio, make sure the players are keyboard accessible and that you follow the accessibility guidelines for captioning video and transcribing audio.

PowerPoint supports the playback of video with multiple audio tracks. It also supports closed captions and subtitles that are embedded in video files. Currently, only PowerPoint for Windows supports insertion and playback of closed captions or subtitles that are stored in files separate from the video. For all other editions of PowerPoint, closed captions or subtitles must be encoded into the video before they are inserted into PowerPoint.

Math and Science Equations

Math and science equations

Math and science equations, formulas, and notations cause difficulties for screen readers. For more information, see How to Make Math-Science Resources Accessible (https://vtac.lonestar.edu/help/a026).
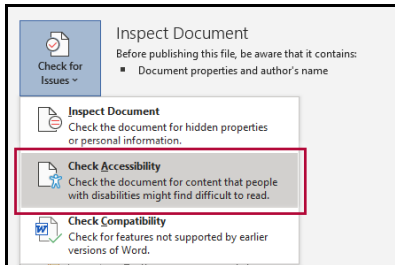
Run the Built-in Accessibility Checker

A great way to begin checking the accessibility of your PowerPoint presentation is to use the built-in accessibility checker.
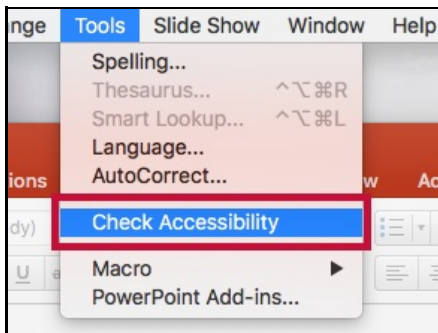
For Windows:

1. Go to the **File** tab.
2. Select **Info** from the sidebar menu.
3. Click on the **Check for Issues** button.
4. Select **Check Accessibility** from the drop-down list.

For Macs:

1. Click on **Tools**.
2. Click **Check Accessibility**.

The Accessibility Checker panel will open to the right of the document. It provides you with a list of errors, warnings, and tips. When you click on an error or warning, instructions on how to fix it appear below the list of errors, in "Additional Information."

Additional Resources

- Microsoft's guide on creating accessible PowerPoint files (https://support.office.com/en-us/article/make-your-powerpoint-presentations-accessible-to-people-with-disabilities-6f7772b2-2f33-4bd2-8ca7-dae3b2b3ef25)
- WebAIM: PowerPoint Accessibility (http://webaim.org/techniques/powerpoint/)