

# Make an Excel Spreadsheet 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 spreadsheets created in Microsoft Excel 365, check the following accessibility guidelines for each document element to make sure that your document is accessible.

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## Make Text Accessible

### Use a text font that is easy to read

- Ensure your text is readable by using a sans serif fonts, such as Arial, Helvetica, or Verdana, that is at least 10pt in size. These font settings will magnify well for those who have low vision.
- If there is an image that includes text, make sure to repeat that text in the alternative text field for the image so it will be accessible to assistive technology users.
- Refrain from using floating text boxes, track changes, or commenting - these features are not accessible.

## Make Images and Graphics (including Graphs, Maps, and Shapes) Accessible

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

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

1. Right-click on the image and select **Edit Alt Text**.
2. The Alt Text Pane will open on the right side of the spreadsheet.
3. In the field provided, type descriptive text about the image.

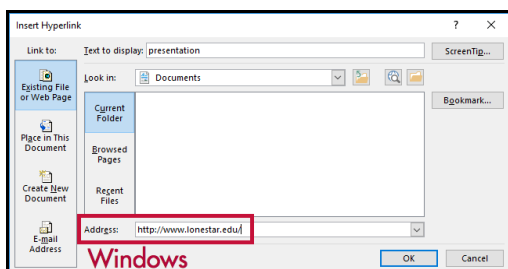
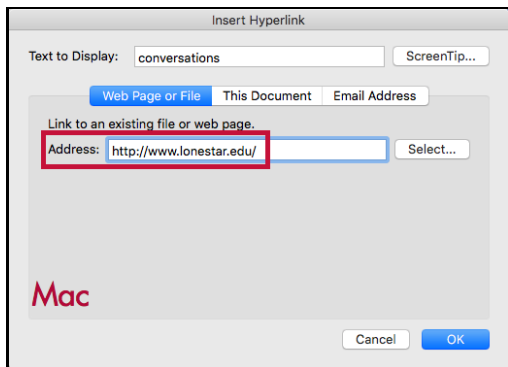
See [How to Make Complex Images Accessible \(https://vtac.lonestar.edu/help/a027\)](https://vtac.lonestar.edu/help/a027) for images that cannot be adequately described in the alternative text (which should be limited to one or two brief sentences.)

## 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. Select the cell that describes the destination of the link.
2. Right-click and select **Link**.
3. In the **Address** field, type 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) (<http://www.lonestar.edu>) ([www.lonestar.edu](http://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**

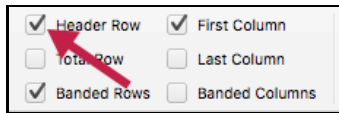
Designating column or row headers in a table is essential for screen reader users to understand how the information is laid out.

#### **Windows:**

1. Place the cursor anywhere in a table.
2. On the **Table Tools Design** tab, in the **Table Style Options** group, select the **Header Row** check box.
3. Type the column headings.

#### **Mac:**

1. Place the cursor anywhere in a table.
2. On the **Table** tab, select the **Header Row** check box.



3. Type the column headings.

### Ensure a proper reading order in tables

- **Screen readers** ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Screen\\_reader](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Screen_reader)) read tables from left to right, top to bottom, one cell at a time (no repeats). If cells are split or merged, the reading order can be thrown off.
- To test the reading order of your table, place your cursor in the first cell of the table. Press the Tab key repeatedly to navigate through the table. This demonstrates the reading order that assistive technologies will use.
- **Merged, nested, and split cells change the reading order of tables** . Make sure you construct your table in a way that accommodates proper reading order.

## Makes Sheets Accessible

### Give all sheet tabs unique names

Screen readers read sheet names, which provide information about what is found on the worksheet, making it easier to understand the contents of a workbook and to navigate through it.

1. Right-click a sheet tab, and select **Rename**.
2. Type a brief, unique name for the sheet.

## 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.

#### How To Install and Use the Colour Analyzer tool

1. Download **Colour Contrast Analyzer Tool** (<http://www.paciellogroup.com/resources/contrastAnalyser>)
2. Open the **Colour\_Contrast\_Analyzer** application
3. Make sure you are in the **Result -- Luminosity** mode, not the contrast result for color blindness.
4. Click the **Foreground eye dropper** tool, hover over and click the foreground color to select it.
5. Click the **Background eye dropper** tool, hover over and click the background color.
6. If you have a 12-pixel font color you are testing for color contrast, you must get a Pass (AA).  
If you have font larger than that, you must get a Pass (AA) in the Large Text field.

#### 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 a contrast.



**Video:** [How-to Install the Colour Contrast Analyzer](http://youtu.be/4H8MhUmekbo) (<http://youtu.be/4H8MhUmekbo>).



**Video:** [How to use the Colour Contrast Analyzer tool](http://youtu.be/JCO7Eijvdz0) (<http://youtu.be/JCO7Eijvdz0>).

## Make Math and Science Equations Accessible

### Math and Science Equations

Mathematical equations and scientific notations must be written with MathType (an Microsoft Office equation editor plugin) and saved in a source folder in your course files. This enables Disability Services to access those files and convert them to an accessible format for a visually impaired student.

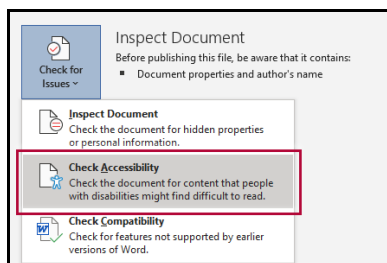
For more information, see [How to Make Math-Science Resources Accessible](https://vtac.lonestar.edu/help/a026) (<https://vtac.lonestar.edu/help/a026>).

### Run the Built-In Accessibility Checker

A great way to begin checking the accessibility of your spreadsheet is to use the built-in accessibility checker.

#### Windows:

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



#### Macs:

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

The Accessibility Checker panel will open to the right of the spreadsheet. The accessibility checker 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 Excel files](http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/excel-help/creating-accessible-excel-files-HA102013545.aspx) (<http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/excel-help/creating-accessible-excel-files-HA102013545.aspx>)