

# Best practices for making PowerPoint presentations accessible

The following table includes key best practices for creating PowerPoint presentations that are accessible to people with disabilities.

What to fix	How to find it	Why fix it	How to fix it
Include alternative text with all visuals.	To find missing alternative text, use the <a href="#">Accessibility Checker</a> .	Alternative text helps people who can't see the screen to understand what's important in images and other visuals.	<a href="#">Add alt text to visuals</a>
Make sure slide contents can be read in the order that you intend.	Use the <a href="#">Accessibility Checker</a> to find slides that have possible problems with reading order.	A screen reader reads the elements of a slide in the order they were added to the slide, which might be very different from the order in which things appear.	<a href="#">Set the reading order of slide contents</a>
	Try navigating your slides with a screen reader.		<a href="#">Use built-in slide designs for inclusive reading order, colors, and more</a>
Add meaningful and accurate hyperlink text and ScreenTips.	To determine whether hyperlink text makes sense as standalone information, visually scan the slides in your presentation.	People who use screen readers sometimes scan a list of links.  <b>Tip:</b> You can also add ScreenTips that appear when your cursor hovers over text or images that include a hyperlink.	<a href="#">Create accessible hyperlink text and add ScreenTips</a>
Ensure that color is not the only	Select <b>Start &gt; Settings &gt; Accessibility &gt; Color</b>	People who are blind, have low	<a href="#">Use an accessible</a>

What to fix	How to find it	Why fix it	How to fix it
means of conveying information.	<b>filters.</b> Turn on the <b>Color filter</b> switch, and then select <b>Grayscale</b> . Visually scan each slide in your presentation for instances of color-coding.	vision, or are colorblind might miss out on the meaning conveyed by particular colors.	<a href="#">presentation template</a>  <a href="#">Use built-in slide designs for inclusive reading order, colors, and more</a>
Use sufficient contrast for text and background colors.	To find insufficient color contrast, use the <a href="#">Accessibility Checker</a> .  You can also look for text in your presentation that's hard to read or to distinguish from the background.	Strong contrast between text and background makes it easier for people with low vision or colorblindness to see and use the content.	<a href="#">Use accessible font color</a>  <a href="#">Use built-in slide designs for inclusive reading order, colors, and more</a>
Give every slide a unique title.	To find slides that do not have titles, use the <a href="#">Accessibility Checker</a> .	People who are blind, have low vision, or have a reading disability rely on slide titles to navigate. For example, by skimming or using a screen reader, they can quickly scan through a list of slide titles and go right to the slide they want.	<a href="#">Give every slide a title</a>  <a href="#">Hide a slide title</a>

What to fix	How to find it	Why fix it	How to fix it
If you must use tables, create a simple table structure for data only, and specify column header information.	To ensure that tables don't contain split cells, merged cells, or nested tables, use the <a href="#">Accessibility Checker</a> .	Screen readers keep track of their location in a table by counting table cells.  Screen readers also use header information to identify rows and columns.	<a href="#">Avoid using tables</a>  <a href="#">Use table headers</a>
Use a larger font size (18pt or larger), sans serif fonts, and sufficient white space.	To find potential issues related to fonts or white space, review your slides for areas that look crowded or illegible.	People who have dyslexia describe seeing text merge or distort.	<a href="#">Use an accessible presentation template</a>  <a href="#">Use accessible font format and color</a>
Make videos accessible to people who have a vision or hearing disability.		<i>Subtitles</i> typically contain a transcription (or translation) of the dialogue.  <i>Closed captions</i> typically also describe audio cues such as music or sound effects that occur off-screen.  <i>Video description</i> means audio-narrated descriptions of a video's key	<a href="#">Use captions, subtitles, and alternative audio tracks in videos</a>

What to fix	How to find it	Why fix it	How to fix it
		visual elements. These descriptions are inserted into natural pauses in the program's dialogue. Video description makes videos more accessible to people who are blind or have low vision.	
Create accessible PDFs or other file formats of your presentation.		Include accessibility tags to PDF files you create from your presentation. The tags make it possible for screen readers and other assistive technologies to read and navigate a document. You can also save the presentation in a format that can be ported to a Braille reader.	<a href="#">Save your presentation in a different format</a>

[Top of Page](#)

Check accessibility while you work

The Accessibility Checker is a tool that reviews your content and flags accessibility issues it comes across. It explains why each issue might be a potential problem for someone with a disability. The Accessibility Checker also suggests how you can resolve the issues that appear.

In PowerPoint, the Accessibility Checker runs automatically in the background when you're creating a presentation. If the Accessibility Checker detects accessibility issues, you will get a reminder in the status bar.

To manually launch the Accessibility Checker, select **Review** > **Check Accessibility**. The **Accessibility** pane opens, and you can now review and fix accessibility issues. For more info, go to [Improve accessibility with the Accessibility Checker](#).

[Top of Page](#)

## Create accessible slides

The following procedures describe how to make the slides in your PowerPoint presentations accessible. For more info, go to [Video: Create slides with an accessible reading order](#) and [Video: Design slides for people with dyslexia](#).

## Use an accessible presentation template

Use one of the accessible PowerPoint templates to make sure that your slide design, colors, contrast, and fonts are accessible for all audiences. They are also designed so that screen readers can more easily read the slide content.

1. To find an accessible template, select **File** > **New**.
2. In the **Search for Online templates and themes** text field, type accessible templates and press Enter.
3. In the search results, select a suitable template.
4. In the template preview, select **Create**.

[Top of Page](#)

## Give every slide a title

One simple step towards inclusivity is having a unique, descriptive title on each slide, even if it isn't visible. A person with a visual disability that uses a screen reader relies on the slide titles to know which slide is which.

Use the **Accessibility** ribbon to make sure every slide has a title. For instructions, go to [Title a slide](#) and expand the "Use the Accessibility ribbon to title a slide" section.

[Top of Page](#)

## Hide a slide title

You can position a title off the slide. That way, the slide has a title for accessibility, but you save space on the slide for other content. For instructions, go to [Title a slide](#) and expand the "Put a title on a slide, but make the title invisible" section.

If you want all or many of your slide titles to be hidden, you can modify the slide master. For instructions, go to [Title a slide](#) and expand the "Systematically hide slide titles" section.

[Top of Page](#)

## Restore a slide design

If you've moved or edited a placeholder on a slide, you can reset the slide to its original design. All formatting (for example, fonts, colors, effects) go back to what has been assigned in the template. Restoring the design might also help you find title placeholders which need a unique title.

1. To restore all placeholders for the selected slide, on the **Home** tab, in the **Slides** group, select **Reset**.

[Top of Page](#)

## Set the reading order of slide contents

Some people with visual disabilities use a screen reader to read the information on the slide. When you create slides, putting the objects in a logical reading order is crucial for screen reader users to understand the slide.

Use the Accessibility Checker and the **Reading Order** pane to set the order in which the screen readers read the slide contents. When the screen reader reads the slide, it reads the objects in the order they are listed in the **Reading Order** pane.



For the step-by-step instructions how to set the reading order, go to [Make slides easier to read by using the Reading Order pane](#).

[Top of Page](#)

## Use built-in slide designs for inclusive reading order, colors, and more

PowerPoint has built-in, predesigned slide designs that contain placeholders for text, videos, pictures, and more. They also contain all the formatting, such as theme colors, fonts, and effects. To make sure that your slides are accessible, the built-in layouts are designed so that the reading order is the same for people who use assistive technologies such as screen readers and people who see. For more info, go to [Video: Use accessible colors and styles in slides](#).

1. On the **View** tab, select **Normal**.
2. On the **Design** tab, do one or both of the following:
  - Expand the **Themes** gallery and select the slide layout that you want. PowerPoint automatically applies this layout to the presentation.
  - Select **Design Ideas** and select one of the predesigned designs.

[Top of Page](#)

## Avoid using tables

In general, avoid tables if possible and present the data another way, like paragraphs with headings. Tables with fixed width might prove difficult to read for people who use Magnifier, because such tables force the content to a specific size. This makes the font very small, which forces Magnifier users to scroll horizontally, especially on mobile devices.

If you have to use tables, use the following guidelines to make sure your table is as accessible as possible:

- Avoid fixed width tables.
- Make sure the tables render properly on all devices, including phones and tablets.
- If you have hyperlinks in your table, edit the link texts, so they make sense and don't break mid-sentence.

- Make sure the slide content is easily read with Magnifier. View it on a mobile device to make sure people won't need to horizontally scroll the slide on a phone, for example.
- Use table headers.
- Test accessibility with Immersive Reader.

[Top of Page](#)

## Use table headers

Screen readers keep track of their location in a table by counting table cells. If a table is nested within another table or if a cell is merged or split, the screen reader loses count and can't provide helpful information about the table after that point. Blank cells in a table could also mislead someone using a screen reader into thinking that there is nothing more in the table. Use a simple table structure for data only and specify column header information. Screen readers also use header information to identify rows and columns.

To ensure that tables don't contain split cells, merged cells, or nested tables, use the [Accessibility Checker](#).

1. Place the cursor anywhere in a table.
2. On the **Table Design** tab, in the **Table Styles Options** group, select the **Header Row** checkbox.
3. Type your column headings.

[Top of Page](#)

## Add alt text to visuals

Alt text helps people who use screen readers to understand what's important in the visuals in your slides. Visual content includes pictures, SmartArt graphics, shapes, groups, charts, embedded objects, ink, and videos.

In alt text, briefly describe the image, its intent, and what is important about the image. Screen readers read the description to users who can't see the content.

**Tip:** To write a good alt text, make sure to convey the content and the purpose of the image in a concise and unambiguous manner. The alt text shouldn't be longer than a short sentence or two—most of the time a few thoughtfully selected words will do. Do not repeat the surrounding textual content as alt text or use phrases referring to images, such as, "a graphic of" or "an image of." For more info on how to write alt text, go to [Everything you need to know to write effective alt text](#).

Avoid using text in images as the sole method of conveying important information. If you use images with text in them, repeat the text in the



slide. In alt text of such images, mention the existence of the text and its intent.

PowerPoint for PC in Microsoft 365 automatically generates alt texts for photos, stock images, and the PowerPoint icons by using intelligent services in the cloud. Always check the autogenerated alt texts to make sure they convey the right message. If necessary, edit the text. For charts, SmartArt, screenshots, or shapes, you need to add the alt texts manually.

For the step-by-step instructions on how to add or edit alt text, go to [Add alternative text to a shape, picture, chart, SmartArt graphic, or other object](#) and [Video: Improve image accessibility in PowerPoint](#).

**Tips:**

- In the **Alt Text** pane, spelling errors are marked with a red squiggly line under the word. To correct the spelling, right-click the word and select from the suggested alternatives.
- In the **Alt Text** pane, you can also select **Generate a description for me** to have Microsoft cloud-powered intelligent services create a description for you. You see the result in the alt text field. Remember to delete any comments PowerPoint added there, for example, "Description automatically generated."

To find missing alternative text, use the Accessibility Checker.

**Note:** For audio and video content, in addition to alt text, include closed captioning for people who are deaf or have limited hearing.

[Top of Page](#)

## Create accessible hyperlink text and add ScreenTips

People who use screen readers sometimes scan a list of links. Links should convey clear and accurate information about the destination. For example, avoid using link texts such as "Click here," "See this page," "Go here," or "Learn more." Instead include the full title of the destination page. You can also add ScreenTips that appear when your cursor hovers over text or images that include a hyperlink.

**Tip:** If the title on the hyperlink's destination page gives an accurate summary of what's on the page, use it for the hyperlink text. For example, this hyperlink text matches the title on the destination page: [Create more with Microsoft templates](#).

For the step-by-step instructions on how to create hyperlinks and ScreenTips, go to [Add a hyperlink to a slide](#).

[Top of Page](#)

## Use accessible font format and color

An accessible font doesn't exclude or slow down the reading speed of anyone reading a slide, including people with low vision or reading disability or people who are blind. The right font improves the legibility and readability of the text in the presentation.

For the step-by-step instructions on how to change fonts in PowerPoint go to [Change the fonts in a presentation](#) or [Change the default font in PowerPoint](#).

[Top of Page](#)

## Use accessible font format

To reduce the reading load, select familiar sans serif fonts such as Arial or Calibri. Avoid using all capital letters and excessive italics or underlines.

A person with a vision disability might miss out on the meaning conveyed by particular colors. For example, add an underline to color-coded hyperlink text so that people who are colorblind know that the text is linked even if they can't see the color. For headings, consider adding bold or using a larger font.

[Top of Page](#)

## Use accessible font color

Here are some ideas to consider:

- The text in your presentation should be readable in a high contrast mode. For example, use bright colors or high-contrast color schemes on opposite ends of the color spectrum. White and black schemes make it easier for people who are colorblind to distinguish text and shapes.
- Use the predefined **Office Themes** to make sure that your slide design is accessible. For instructions, go to [Use an accessible presentation template](#) or [Use built-in slide designs for inclusive reading order, colors, and more](#).
- Use the [Accessibility Checker](#) to analyze the presentation and find insufficient color contrast. It finds insufficient color contrast in text with or without highlights or hyperlinks in shapes, tables, or SmartArt with solid opaque colors. It does not find insufficient color contrast in other cases such as text in a transparent text box or placeholder on top of the slide background, or color contrast issues in non-textual content.

# Use captions, subtitles, and alternative audio tracks in videos

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 (such as PowerPoint for macOS or the mobile editions), closed captions or subtitles must be encoded into the video before they are inserted into PowerPoint.

Supported video formats for captions and subtitles vary depending on the operating system that you're using. Each operating system has settings to adjust how the closed captions or subtitles are displayed. For more information, go to [Closed Caption file types supported by PowerPoint](#).

Closed captions, subtitles, and alternative audio tracks are not preserved when you use the [Compress Media](#) or [Optimize Media Compatibility](#) features. Also, when [turning your presentation into a video](#), closed captions, subtitles, or alternative audio tracks in the embedded videos are not included in the video that is saved.

When you use the [Save Media as](#) command on a selected video, closed captions, subtitles, and multiple audio tracks embedded in the video are preserved in the video file that is saved.

To make your PowerPoint presentations with videos accessible, ensure the following:

- Videos include an audio track with video descriptions, if needed, for users who are blind or have low vision.
- Videos that include dialogue also include closed captions, in-band closed captions, open captions, or subtitles in a supported format for users that are deaf or hard-of-hearing.

For more information, refer to [Add closed captions or subtitles to media in PowerPoint](#).

# Save your presentation in a different format

You can save your presentation in a format that can be easily read by a screen reader or be ported to a Braille reader. For instructions, go to [Video: Save a presentation in a different format](#) or [Create accessible PDFs](#). Before converting a presentation into another format, make sure you run the Accessibility Checker and fix all reported issues.

[Top of Page](#)

## Test accessibility with a screen reader

When your presentation is ready and you've run the Accessibility Checker to make sure it is inclusive, you can try navigating the slides using a screen reader, for example, Narrator. Narrator comes with Windows, so there's no need to install anything. This is one additional way to spot issues in the navigation order, for example.

1. Start the screen reader. For example, to start Narrator, press Ctrl+Windows logo key+Enter.
2. Press F6 until the focus, the blue rectangle, is on the slide content area.
3. Press the Tab key to navigate the elements within the slide and fix the navigation order if needed. To move the focus away from the slide content, press Esc or F6.
4. Exit the screen reader. For example, to exit Narrator, press Ctrl+Windows logo key+Enter.

[Top of Page](#)

## See also

[Rules for the Accessibility Checker](#)

[Everything you need to know to write effective alt text](#)

[Use a screen reader to attend a PowerPoint Live session in Microsoft Teams](#)

[Make your Word documents accessible to people with disabilities](#)

[Make your Excel documents accessible to people with disabilities](#)

[Make your Outlook email accessible to people with disabilities](#)

[Closed Caption file types supported by PowerPoint](#)

## Technical support for customers with disabilities

Microsoft wants to provide the best possible experience for all our customers. If you have a disability or questions related to accessibility, please contact the [Microsoft Disability Answer Desk](#) for technical assistance. The Disability Answer Desk support team is trained in using many popular assistive technologies and can offer assistance in English, Spanish, French, and American Sign Language. Please go to the Microsoft Disability Answer Desk site to find out the contact details for your region.

If you are a government, commercial, or enterprise user, please contact [the enterprise Disability Answer Desk](#).