Setting accessibility preferences

Acrobat provides several preferences that help make the reading of PDFs more accessible for visually impaired and motion-impaired users. These preferences control how PDFs appear on the screen and how they are read by a screen reader.

Most preferences related to accessibility are available through the **Accessibility Setup Assistant**, which provides onscreen instructions for setting these preferences. Some preferences that affect accessibility aren't available through the Accessibility **Setup Assistant** including preferences in the Reading, Forms, and Multimedia categories. You can set all preferences in the Preferences dialog box.

The names shown for some preferences in the **Accessibility Setup Assistant** are different from the names for the same preferences shown in the Preferences dialog box. Acrobat Help uses the names shown in the Preferences dialog box.

For more information about accessibility features, see www.adobe.com/accessibility.

Set accessibility preferences with the Accessibility Setup Assistant

1. Start the **Accessibility Setup Assistant** by selecting **All tools** > **Prepare for accessibility** > **Setup assistant.**

2. Choose the option that is appropriate for your assistive software and devices.

   The assistant presents only preferences that are appropriate for your assistive software and devices, according to the option that you choose.

3. Follow the onscreen instructions. If you select Cancel at any point, Acrobat uses default settings for the preferences that the assistant sets (not recommended).

Set accessibility preferences with the Preferences dialog box

Open the **Preferences** dialog box from the hamburger menu (windows) or select **Acrobat** in the upper left (macOS).

Set preferences as appropriate for your assistive software and devices in various panels of the Preferences dialog box.

Accessibility preferences

Accessibility preferences in Accessibility panel

Replace Document Colors

When this preference is selected, you can choose from a list of contrasting color combinations for text and background, or you can create your own. These settings correspond to the Use High Contrast Colors For **Document Text** option in the **Accessibility Setup Assistant**.

Always Use Page Layout Style

Corresponds to the **Override Page Layout Style** option in the**Accessibility Setup Assistant**.

Always Use Zoom Setting

Corresponds to the **Override Document Zoom** option in the Accessibility**Setup Assistant**.

Use Document Structure For Tab Order When No ExplicitTab Order Is Specified

Improves navigation of form fields and links in documents that don't specify a tab order.

Always Display The Keyboard Selection Cursor

Select this option if you use a screen magnifier. This preference corresponds to the **Always Display The Keyboard Selection Cursor** option in the **Accessibility Setup Assistant**.

Always Use The System Selection Color

When selected, the default selection color (blue) is overridden with a color that the system specifies.

Show Portfolios In Files Mode

When selected, shows **PDF Portfolio** component files and file details in a list. Files mode provides a better reading experience for people with disabilities, such as mobility impairments, blindness, and low vision.

Accessibility preferences in Documents panel

Automatically Save Document Changes To Temporary File Every

When deselected, this preference disables the auto-save action. Each time a PDF is saved, the screen reader or magnifier must reload the document. This preference corresponds to the Disable Document Auto-Save option in the **Accessibility Setup Assistant**.

Accessibility preferences in Forms panel

Fields Highlight Color and Required Fields Highlight Color

These preferences specify what colors are used to highlight fillable form fields. They correspond to the **Field Highlight Color** and Required **Field Highlight Color** options in the Accessibility **Setup Assistant**.

Auto-Complete

Enables Acrobat to automatically offer to complete some entries in form fields so that filling form fields requires fewer keystrokes. This preference doesn't correspond to an option in the **Accessibility Setup Assistant**.

Accessibility preferences in Multimedia panel

- **Show Subtitles When Available**

- Play **Dubbed Audio When Available**

- **Show Supplemental Text Captions When Available**

- Show **Audio Description** (Or **Video Description**, Or Descriptive Video) When Available

These preferences don't correspond to any options in the **Accessibility Setup Assistant**.

Accessibility preferences in Page Display panel

Zoom

Sets the onscreen magnification of documents and allows low-vision readers to read reflowed PDFs more easily. This preference corresponds to the **Override Document Zoom** option in the **Accessibility Setup Assistant**.

Smooth Text

Controls anti-aliasing of text. To disable smoothing of text and make text sharper and easier to read with a screen magnifier, choose None. This preference corresponds to the **Disable Text Smoothing** option in the **Accessibility Setup Assistant**.

Accessibility preferences in Reading panel

Reading Order

Specifies the reading order of documents. The reading order preferences also appear in the **Accessibility Setup Assistant**.

Infer Reading Order From Document (Recommended)

Interprets the reading order of untagged documents by using an advanced method of structure-inference layout analysis.

Left-To-Right, Top-To-Bottom Reading Order

Delivers the text according to its placement on the page, reading from left to right and then top to bottom. This method is faster than **Infer Reading Order From Document**. This method analyzes text only; form fields are ignored and tables aren't recognized as such.

Use Reading Order In Raw Print Stream

Delivers text in the order in which it was recorded in the print stream. This method is faster than **Infer Reading Order From Document**. This method analyzes text only; form fields are ignored and tables aren't recognized as such.

Override The Reading Order In Tagged Documents

Uses the reading order specified in the Reading preferences instead what the tag structure of the document specifies. Use this preference only when you encounter problems in poorly tagged PDFs. This preference corresponds to the Override The **Reading Order** In Tagged Documents option in the **Accessibility Setup Assistant**.

Page Vs Document

This preference determines how much of a document is delivered to a screen reader at a time. If a PDF isn't tagged, Acrobat may analyze the document and attempt to infer its structure and reading order. This process can take a long time for a long document. Consider setting Acrobat to deliver only the currently visible page so that it analyzes only a small piece of the document at a time. This consideration varies depending on the size and complexity of the document and on the features of the screen reader. When Acrobat delivers information to a screen reader, screen magnifier, or other assistive software, it loads information into a memory buffer that is directly available to the assistive software. The amount of information that is delivered to the memory buffer can affect how long Acrobat takes to perform tasks, such as opening the document, advancing to the next page, changing views, and carrying out commands.

Only Read The Currently Visible Pages

This option is usually best when you use a screen magnifier. It improves performance by eliminating the need for the software to process parts of the document that aren't visible. When Acrobat sends only the currently visible pages of a PDF to the memory buffer, the assistive technology has access to those pages only. It cannot go to another page until the next page is visible and Acrobat has sent the page information to the memory buffer. Therefore, if this option is selected, you must use the navigation features of Acrobat, not the features of the assistive technology, to navigate from page to page in the document. Also set the**Default Page Layout** option in preferences to **Single Page** if you choose to have Acrobat send only the currently visible pages to the assistive technology. Because Acrobat sends page information about all visible pages, the assistive technology receives information about pages that may be only partially visible (such as the bottom of one page or the top of the next), as well as those pages that are completely visible. If you use a page display setting other than **Single Page**, such as Continuous, and then you display the next page, the technology may not correctly track which portion of a previous page it has already read aloud. For instructions on setting the default page layout to **Single Page**, see Preferences for viewing PDFs.

This option corresponds to the Only Read The Currently Visible Pages option in the Accessibility Setup Assistant.

Read The Entire Document

This option can be best if you use a screen reader that has its own navigation and search tools and that is more familiar to you than the tools in Acrobat. This option corresponds to the **Read The Entire Document At Once** option in the **Accessibility Setup Assistant**.

For Large Documents, Only Read The Currently Visible Pages

This option is selected by default and is usually best if you use a screen reader with long or complex PDFs. It allows Acrobat to deliver an entire small document but revert to page-by-page delivery for large documents. This preference corresponds to the **For Large Documents**, Only Read The Currently Visible Pages option in the **Accessibility Setup Assistant**.

Confirm Before Tagging Documents

When selected, lets the user confirm the options that are used before Acrobat prepares an untagged document for reading. Tagging can be a time-consuming procedure, especially for larger documents. This preference corresponds to the Confirm Before Tagging Documents option in the **Accessibility Setup Assistant**.

Read Out Loud Options

Set preferences in to control volume, speed, and pitch of the voice used for Read **Out Loud**. You can choose to use the default voice or any of the voices that your operating system provides. You can also use the up and down arrows to read blocks of text. These preferences do not have corresponding options in the **Accessibility Setup Assistant**.

Navigate and control the application with the keyboard

You can navigate by using the keyboard instead of the mouse. Several keyboard access features are available in **Mac OS**; see the documentation for your operating system for details. **In Windows**, some of the keyboard shortcuts used to navigate in Acrobat differ from the keyboard shortcuts used in other Windows applications.

When you open Acrobat within a web browser, keyboard commands are mapped to the web browser first. Consequently, some keyboard shortcuts are not available in Acrobat or are available only after you shift the focus to the PDF.

For information about accessibility features, see www.adobe.com/accessibility.

Enable single-key accelerators

You can select some tools and perform some actions with single-key accelerators. Most keyboard shortcuts in Acrobat don't require that you enable single-key accelerators.

Open the **Preferences** dialog box from the hamburger menu (windows) or select **Acrobat** in the upper left (macOS). Under **Categories**, select **General**, and then select **Use single-key accelerators to access tools**.

Note:

Some screen readers do not work with Acrobat single-key accelerators.

Scroll automatically

The automatic scrolling feature makes it easier to scan through long PDFs, especially reflowed documents. You can scroll through pages without using keystrokes or mouse actions.

1. Select **View** from the hamburger menu (Windows) or the upper-left (macOS). Select **Page display** > **Automatically scroll**.

2. Do any of the following:

   - To change the scrolling speed to a specific speed, press a number key (9 for fastest, 0 for slowest).

   - To increase or decrease the scrolling speed, press the Up Arrow or Down Arrow key, depending on the scrolling direction.

   - To reverse the scrolling direction, press the minus sign (-) key.

   - To jump to the next or previous page, press the Left Arrow or Right Arrow key.

   Note:

   To stop automatic scrolling, press Esc or select **View**> **Page display** >**Automatically scroll** again.

Save as accessible text for a braille printer

Note:

This document uses the term "braille printer" to refer to any device that is used to convert accessible text to a form that a person with blindness or low vision can use.

You can save a PDF as accessible text to print on a braille printer. Accessible text can be imported and printed out as formatted grade 1 or 2 braille documents by using a braille translation application. See the documentation included with the braille translator for more information.

A text version of a PDF contains no images or multimedia objects. However, the text version of an accessible PDF contains alternate text descriptions for such objects if they have been provided.

1. Select the hamburger **Menu** (Windows), or the **File** menu (macOS) > **Export a PDF** > **Text (Accessible)**.

Reflow a PDF

You can reflow a PDF to temporarily present it as a single column that is the width of the document pane. This reflow view can make the document easier to read on a mobile device or magnified on a standard monitor, without scrolling horizontally to read the text.

You cannot save, edit, or print a document while it is in Reflow view.

In most cases, only readable text appears in the reflow view. Text that doesn't reflow includes forms, comments, digital signature fields, and page artifacts, such as page numbers, headers, and footers. Pages that contain both readable text and form or digital signature fields don't reflow. Vertical text reflows horizontally.

Acrobat temporarily tags an untagged document before reflowing it. As an author, you can optimize your PDFs for reflow by tagging them yourself. Tagging ensures that text blocks reflow and that content follows the appropriate sequences, so readers can follow a story that spans different pages and columns without other stories interrupting the flow.

To quickly check the reading order of a document, view it in Reflow view.

(Acrobat Pro) If the tagged PDF doesn't reflow the way you want, see if the content order or reading order of the PDF file contains inconsistencies. Also check the tagging process. You can use the Content pane or the **Reading Order** tool to resolve reflow problems.

Headings and columns (left) reflow in a logical reading order (right).

Reflow a tagged PDF

Select the hamburger **Menu** (Windows) and go to **View** or select **View** from the upper left (macOS). Then select **Zoom** > **Reflow**.

If the **Page Display** setting is Two Page View before you choose Reflow view, the **Page Display** setting automatically becomes Single Page View when the document is reflowed. If the **Page Display** setting is Two Page Scrolling before you choose Reflow view, the **Page Display** setting automatically becomes Enable Scrolling when the document is reflowed.

Return to unreflowed view

When in **Reflow** view, select the hamburger **Menu** (Windows) and go to **View** or select **View** from the upper left (macOS). Then select **Zoom** > **Reflow**.

Reading a PDF with a screen reader

Acrobat supports assistive software and devices, such as screen readers and screen magnifiers, that enable visually impaired users to interact with computer applications. Acrobat adds temporary tags to open PDFs to improve their readability when assistive software and devices are in use. Use the **Accessibility Setup Assistant** to improve how Acrobat interacts with the types of assistive software and devices you use. When using a screen reader, you can change your reading settings for the current document by selecting **All tools** > **Prepare for accessibility** > **Reading Options**.

View the documentation for your assistive software or device. Or, contact the vendor for more information about system requirements, compatibility requirements, and instructions for using this software or device with Acrobat.

For more information about using screen readers, view www.adobe.com/accessibility/pdfs/accessing-pdf-sr.pdf.

Read a PDF with Read Out Loud

The Read **Out Loud** feature reads aloud the text in a PDF, including the text in comments and alternate text descriptions for images and fillable fields. In tagged PDFs, content is read in the order in which it appears in the document's logical structure tree. In untagged documents, the reading order is inferred, unless a reading order has been specified in the Reading preferences.

Read **Out Loud** uses the available voices installed on your system. If you have SAPI 4 or SAPI 5 voices installed from text-to-speech or language applications, you can choose them to read your PDFs.

Note:

Read **Out Loud** isn't a screen reader, and some operating systems don't support it.

Activate or deactivate Read Out Loud

You must activate **Read out loud** before you can use it. You can deactivate **Read out loud** to free system resources and improve the performance of other operations.

1. Select the hamburger **Menu** (Windows) and go to **View** or select **View** from the upper left (macOS). Then do one of the following:

   - **Read out loud** > **Activate Read Out Loud**.
   - **Read out loud** > **Deactivate Read Out Loud**.

   Note:

   You can also use the **Select Object** tool to locate text. Use the up, down, left, and right arrow keys to navigate the document. You can hear where the Select Object tool has been placed, such as a heading or paragraph.

Read a PDF with Read Out Loud

1. Navigate to the page that you want to read.
2. Select the hamburger **Menu** (Windows) and go to **View** or select **View** from the upper left (macOS). Then do one of the following:

- **Read out loud** > **Read this page only**.
- **Read out loud** > **Read to end of document**.

Read PDF form fields out loud

1. In the **Reading** panel of the **Preferences** dialog box, select **Read Form Fields** in the **Read Out Loud Options** section.
2. In the PDF form, press `Tab` to select the first form field.
3. Make entries and selections as needed, and then press `Tab` to move to the next field, repeating this step until the form is completed. Acrobat reads the state of selected checkboxes and radio buttons.

   Note:

   Read out loud does not echo your keystrokes. To hear what you have typed, use a screen reader.

Interrupt reading out loud

1. Select the hamburger **Menu** (Windows) and go to **View** or select **View** from the upper left (macOS). Then do one of the following:

- **Read out loud** > **Pause.**
- **Read out loud** > **Stop.**

About operating system accessibility tools

Accessibility tools in Windows

Windows operating system have built-in tools that provide increased or alternate access to information on the computer screen. The Narrator is a light version of a screen reader. Magnifier is a screen magnification tool.

For more information on the accessibility tools in Windows, see the Microsoft accessibility website.

Accessibility tools in macOS

macOS has built-in tools that provide increased or alternate access to information on the computer screen.

For more information on the accessibility tools in **macOS**, see the Apple® Inc. accessibility website.