Checklist: Accessibility in PowerPoint

Creating accessible PowerPoint presentations ensures that your content is usable by all, including individuals with disabilities. This checklist helps you address accessibility issues by starting with items easily identified by the built-in Accessibility Checker and moving to those requiring manual checks. Items specific to PowerPoint are marked with \*PPT.

# Open the Accessibility Checker

* Use the **desktop PowerPoint application**, as the web version has limited accessibility functionality.
* Open the Accessibility Checker by clicking the **Accessibility icon** at the bottom of the screen or selecting **Review > Check Accessibility** from the menu bar.

# Accessibility Issues Caught by the Accessibility Checker

* Does each slide have a **unique title**?
* Is the file **editable** (not “read-only”)?
* Do all tables have:
  + Titles, headers, and captions (alt text)?
  + Unique column headings?
* Do tables avoid using **merged cells**?

# Accessibility Issues Requiring Additional Review

* Is the **reading order** of each slide logical?
  + **Note:** The checker will flag slides to review, but you must manually confirm the correct reading order.
* Do all images have:
  + Accurate, concise **alt text**, or a **decorative designation** for non-informative images?
  + **Note:** Manually review alt text, as the checker doesn’t flag non-descriptive alt text.
* Are complex visuals (e.g., graphs or infographics) accompanied by:
  + A short description in alt text?
  + A longer description provided as captions, in the notes area, or as a link to additional content?
* Is there sufficient **color contrast**?
  + Use tools like **WebAIM Contrast Checker** to confirm contrast levels, as the checker may not catch all issues.

# Accessibility Issues Not Detected by the Checker

* Are **blinking images or content** avoided?
* Was the file shared as a **PPT file**, not converted to a PDF?
  + PDFs are harder to make accessible and are not easily editable.
* Are all **lists** created with the numbered or bulleted list feature?
* Are all URLs formatted as:
  + **Hyperlinks** embedded in meaningful text (e.g., “Learn more about accessibility” instead of “Click here”)?
* Is underlining used **only for hyperlinks** and not for emphasis?
* Are **all caps** used only for acronyms, not emphasis?
* Does the presentation avoid relying solely on **visual formatting** (e.g., colors or shapes) to convey information?
  + Use bold or italics for emphasis instead.
* Is text presented as **text**, not as an image of text?
  + Replace images of text with real text whenever possible.
* Does all **embedded content** have a text descriptor?
* Are **sans serif fonts** like Arial, Verdana, or Calibri used?
* Are **indent and alignment buttons** used instead of tabs or spaces for alignment?
* Are tables used only to **organize data** with logical relationships, not for layout purposes?
* Do tables avoid having any **empty data cells?**