

# Creating accessible PowerPoint presentations

This article offers guidance on ways to create Microsoft PowerPoint presentations to make them more accessible to users with disabilities. Because many files are often viewed electronically, governments and industries around the world are implementing policies requiring electronic and information technology to be accessible to people with disabilities. For example, the amended Section 508 of the United States Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires Federal agencies to make all of their electronic and information technology accessible.

**TIP** Starting with Microsoft Office 2010 a new tool for PowerPoint, Word, and Excel called the Accessibility Checker is available that you can use to check your PowerPoint presentations for any issues that might make it challenging for a user with a disability. To learn more, see [Accessibility Checker](#).

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## Add alternative text to images and objects

Alternative text (alt text or Alt Text) appears when you move your pointer over a picture or object, and helps people using screen readers understand the content of images in your presentation. Alt text should be included for any of the following objects in your presentation:

- Pictures
- Clip Art
- Charts
- Tables
- Shapes (that don't contain text and are not in groups)
- SmartArt graphics
- Groups (all objects in this list, with the exception of shapes, should also have alt text when in groups)
- Embedded objects
- Video and audio files

Add alt text by doing the following:

1. Right click the image or object, and then click Format.

**NOTE** For tables, click Table Properties.

2. Click Alt Text.
3. Enter a description of the image or object into the Title and Description text boxes.

**TIP** Use clear, but concise descriptions. For example, "a red Ferrari" tells the reader more about the image than "a car."

4. Click Close.

To learn more, see [Add alternative text to a shape, picture, chart, table, SmartArt graphic, or other object](#).

## Specify column header information in tables

In addition to adding alt text that describes the table, having clear column headings can help provide context and assist navigation of the table's contents.

To specify a header row in your table, do the following:

1. Click anywhere in the table.
2. On the Table Tools Design tab, in the Table Style Options group, select the Header Row check box.
3. Add your header information.

## Ensure that all slides have unique titles

Slide titles are used for navigation and selection by people who are not able to view the slide.

To add visible titles to your slides, do the following:

1. On the Home tab, in the Slides group, click Reset to restore slide placeholders for the selected slide.
2. Type a unique name in the Title text box.

If you do not want the title to be visible on your slide, do the following:

1. On the Home tab, in the Drawing group, click the Arrange menu.
2. Click Selection Pane.
3. Click the eye icon next to the text box to toggle its visibility.

## Use hyperlink text that is meaningful

Hyperlink text should provide a clear description of the link destination, rather than only providing the URL.

To add a hyperlink to your document, do the following:

1. Place your cursor where you want the hyperlink.
2. On the Insert tab, in the Links group, click Hyperlink to open the Hyperlink dialog box.
3. In the Text to display box, type in the name or phrase that will briefly describe the link destination.
4. In the Address box, type the link URL.
5. Click OK.

To change the text of a hyperlink, do the following:

1. Select the link and then, on the Insert tab in the Links group, click Hyperlink to open the hyperlink dialog box.
2. In the Text to display box, make any necessary changes to the text.
3. Click OK.

Additionally, you can include ScreenTip text that appears when your cursor hovers over a hyperlink, and can be used in a similar way to alt text. To add ScreenTip text, do the following:

1. Place your cursor in the hyperlink you want to add ScreenTip text to.
2. On the Insert tab, in the Links group, click Hyperlink to open the hyperlink dialog box.
3. Click ScreenTip...
4. Type in your text in the ScreenTip text box.
5. Click OK.

## Use simple table structure

By not using nested tables, or merged or split cells inside of data tables, the data is predictable and easy to navigate.

To test and simplify the table structure, do the following:

1. Select the first cell of the table.
2. Press the Tab key repeatedly to make sure that the focus moves across the row and then down to the first cell of the next row.
3. If you need to merge or split cells to simplify the table, on the Table Tools Layout tab, in the Merge group, click Merge Cells or Split Cells as appropriate.

## Avoid using blank cells for formatting

Using blank cells to format your table could mislead someone using a screen reader to believe that there is nothing more in the table. You can fix this by deleting unnecessary blank cells or, if your table is used specifically to layout content within your presentation, you can clear all table styles by doing the following:

1. Select the entire table.
2. On the Table Tools Design tab, in the Table Styles group, click the arrow next to the style gallery to expand the gallery of table styles.
3. On the menu below the gallery, click Clear.

## Include closed captions for any audio or video

Whenever you use additional audio or video components in a presentation, ensure that the content is available in alternative formats for users with disabilities, such as closed captions, transcripts or alt text.

If you're using PowerPoint 2010, you can download and install the [Sub-titling text add-in for Microsoft PowerPoint \(STAMP\)](#), which lets you easily create closed captions for video and audio in your presentations.

## Ensure that the reading order of each slide is logical

People who cannot view the slide will hear slide text, shapes and content read back in a specific order. If you are using objects that are not part of the slide template, it is important to be sure that they will be read by a screen reader in the order that you intend them to be.

To check the order in which your slide content will be read back, do the following:

1. On the Home tab, in the Drawing group, click Arrange and then choose Selection Pane.
2. The Selection Pane lists the objects on the slide. Objects will be read back beginning with the bottom list item and ending with the top list item. Correct any out of order items using the Re-order arrows on the bottom of

the pane.

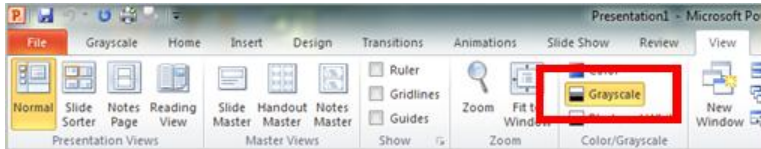
## Increase visibility for colorblind viewers

Colorblindness affects a significant number of people, most often as an inability to distinguish between red and green, or seeing red and green differently. When creating presentations, it's important to choose elements that increase visual contrast so viewers who cannot rely on color distinction can still understand what they're seeing. Some things you can do when building a slide deck include:

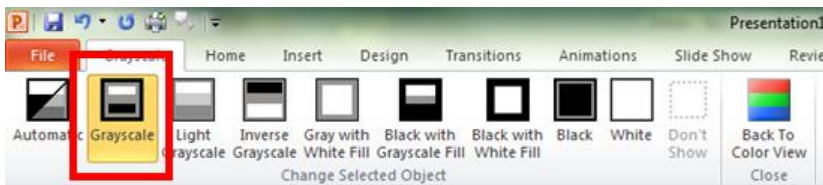
- Avoid using orange, red, and green in your template and text.
- Use texture in graphs, instead of color, to highlight points of interest.
- Circle or use animation to highlight information, rather than relying on laser pointers or color.
- Keep the overall contrast in your presentation high.

To get an idea of how a person who is colorblind will see your presentation, you can check the contrast by doing the following:

1. On the View tab, in the Color/Grayscale group, click Grayscale.



2. On the Grayscale tab, click Grayscale to see what slides look like when flattened to just their level of contrast.



Are you colorblind and creating a presentation? See [Corrective lenses for the colorblind](#) to learn how you can select colors in PowerPoint, even if you have trouble distinguishing them from each other.

## Learn more

- [Accessibility Checker](#)
- [Accessibility Checker Rules](#)
- [Accessibility checker Group Policy settings](#)
- [Video: Check accessibility of a PowerPoint 2010 presentation](#)
- [Add alternative text to a shape, picture, chart, table, SmartArt graphic, or other object](#)

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