

Below is a very brief guide to creating accessible PowerPoint presentations. This guide is currently under development, and is a non-exhaustive list to help make sure PowerPoint presentations are simple, informative, and inclusive to everyone. Designing for everyone means taking the time to make sure that all of your interactions are inclusive, including how you present information.

1. Check Accessibility

As you create your PowerPoint, it is best to continuously check the level of accessibility of your content. You can double-check all of the accessibility elements mentioned in this quick tips guide, by navigating to: "File", then "Info", then "Check Accessibility." This feature will identify, explain, and instruct how to fix common accessibility barriers with your presentation.

2. General PowerPoint Size and Style

When adding content to your PowerPoint, consider the experiences of your audience. Here are a few tips to make sure your PowerPoint is accessible to all viewers:

- Keep text short by adding concise bullets of information that summarize the presenter's speech. Avoid lengthy quotes and paragraphs of information.
- Include images sparingly. If you need to use images or graphs, make sure the text is easily visible and readable. Always use alt text and make sure to compress photos. PowerPoints with too many images may be too difficult to deliver over email.
- Always use an accessible font like Arial 20. Verdana, Tahoma and Calibri are also good fonts that help people with vision loss or other disabilities like dyslexia.
- Do not fit too much text or images on one slide. Information should be easily visible and readable.

3. Reading Order – for every slide

Reading Order is the order in which text-to-speech software reads content on each slide (Title, image, text, page numbers, etc.).

Once you have completed a slide, check the reading order:

1. For the slide in question, go to the "Home" tab, then "Arrange", then open the "selection pane".
2. Reorder slide elements (typically slide number first followed by title, text, and then images).
3. Note that you must order things starting at the bottom of the list.

4. Image, SmartArt & Table descriptions

When text to speech software encounters a shape, image or graphic of some kind, unless it is described, it will just read "image". To fix this, you must add alternative text to the shape, image, graphic.

Note that it is also good practice to write an image description for a table, to give a quick, at-a-glance summary of what the content is.

To write an image description:

1. Right click on any image.
2. Click "Format Picture".
3. Click the third icon, called "Size and Properties", then "Alt text".
4. Add a title for the image, and include a short description.

Adding lengthy descriptions to the "Notes" section of a PowerPoint is not accessible. Alternative text must be embedded with the image, as instructed above, and must be short, concise, and written in plain language.

To write a SmartArt & Table description:

1. Right click on any SmartArt or table. Ensure that the entire perimeter of the SmartArt or table is selected.
2. Select "Format Object" (SmartArt) or "Format Shape" (tables).
3. Click "Shape Options".
4. Click the third icon, called "Size and Properties", then "Alt text".
5. Add a title for the Table or SmartArt, and include a short description.

Note, for SmartArt, other graphics, a full description is always required because they are not accessible via assistive technology

What do I write?

Imagine that you are describing something over the phone to someone who needs to understand what you are looking at.

This should help you decide what information or function the images have. Note that if there is a lot of information on a slide, the less detail for decorative images, the better. Below is an example of an image description.



Description: A man standing in the middle of a train station with a suitcase in hand.

Note that for graphs, it is useful to put a title that just summarizes the graph, and then a more detailed description that outlines the findings/information.



Title: Graph showing directorate participation in the Employee Consultation Group.

Description: From most participation to least: SPPS, SICDO, ODI, SIPA, ACD, CPPD, HPD, and unknown. Note to ECG Members: please complete membership questionnaire (exclamation mark).

For tables, individuals with assistive technology can go into a table look at the details if desired, so for the alt text it is best to just give a summary, like what you would expect to see if you were just glancing at it. This allows participants to choose whether they want to look at it more in depth. For everything else (graphs, SmartArt, other graphics) a full description is always required because they are not accessible via assistive technology.

Note, adding alternative text to the “Notes” section of a PowerPoint slide is not accessible because this section is not visible to text-to-speech. Alternative text must be embedded to the image, table or SmartArt.

Visit the [Digital Accessibility Toolkit](#) for further information and more examples of how to create meaningful alternative text.

5. Colour contrast

Quality colour contrast is incredibly important for all individuals in order to understand and be able to read information on each slide. To ensure participants have the best opportunity to read materials, a dark background and light text or the reverse is always best. Most Microsoft programs come with this feature. There are also many free colour contrast tools available online.

To get the colour codes for colours:

1. Click on the drop-down menu in the font colours button.
2. Click “More colours.”
3. Use the RGB code to assess the colour.

Try to ensure your contrast meets the minimum Level AA requirements under Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).

Visit the [Digital Accessibility Toolkit](#) for further information.

6. Compress pictures in your presentation

1. Select a picture in your document. The Picture Format tab appears.
2. On the Picture Format tab, in the Adjust group, select Compress Pictures.
3. Under Compression options, do any of the following:
 - a. Make sure that Apply only to this picture is not selected so that the changes you make here will apply to all pictures in the document.
 - b. Select Delete cropped areas of pictures. This option removes the cropped picture data but note that if you delete the cropped picture data, you will not be able to restore it.
 - c. Under Resolution, select Use default resolution.

7. Other presentation accessibility tips:

- Speak slowly and turn on your camera while speaking, so people who need to read your lips can do so with ease.
- Say your name before you speak so that people know it is you, even if they cannot look at the screen.
- Share your PowerPoint file, not your screen:
 - Share screen > Browse from my computer > Select the open PowerPoint

This allows people using text to speech software to actually interact with the document. Otherwise, the screen sharing is just an image.

- Try doing a personal introduction when you start to make sure everyone feels comfortable in the space, and to include participants who cannot see the screen – e.g. “My pronouns are he/him; I have brown hair, glasses and am wearing a green shirt.”