

How to Create an Accessible PowerPoint Presentation: A How-To Guide

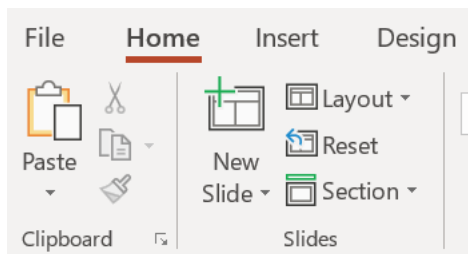
To create an accessible PowerPoint, consider the following:

1. Overall Layout Design
2. Include Alternate (alt) Text
3. Insert Photos and Multimedia
4. Use Meaningful Hyperlink Text
5. Outline View
6. Check the Reading Order
7. Test for Accessibility
8. Save the document as a PDF

1. Overall Layout Design

Use PowerPoint's built-in layout and design styles or create your own slide master.

To choose a layout, select the **Home** tab and select **Layout**. A variety of layout options will be made available via dropdown menu. Select desired layout.



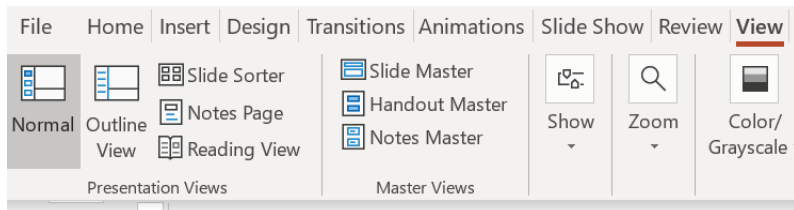
To choose a design, select the **Design** tab and select the desired design style.

Note: that not all design options have high color contrast.



Master slides

To view and create master slides, click the **View** tab and select **Slide Master** from the **Master Views** section.



Use a slide master to unify font, colors, contrast, effects, backgrounds, pictures or logos, placeholders, footers, titles, page numbers, and more.

Adding custom layouts through the slide master is critical for screen reader accessibility because **only text fields added in a slide master are read out in a screen reader**. Manually inserting additional text boxes may be skipped by a screen reader. Slide masters also allow for consistent formatting between slides.

Click the place in the thumbnail pane where you want to add your slide. Right click and select “Insert Layout.” Customize the layout by deleting fields and inserting placeholders. Create a new layout for each unique slide layout you wish to use in your presentation. Note: for most content, use the “content” placeholder. Screen readers will read and understand all items placed in this holder.

Other Layout Considerations

Avoid text boxes

Screen readers will not read text in text boxes. Always use a built-in placeholder, such as “content placeholder.”

Unique slide titles

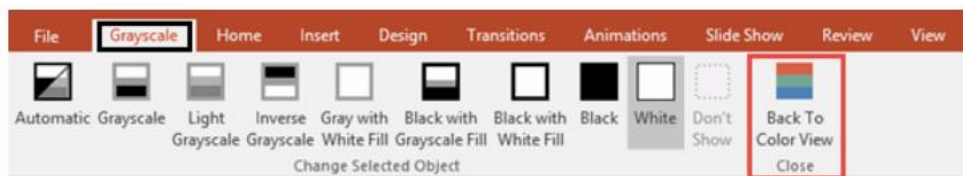
Try to use a unique title for each slide. For content that requires more than one slide, consider adding a number or the word “continued” to the title (i.e., “Professional Development (1 of 3),” or “Professional Development, continued”). You can get around this by making the title match the slide background (a sighted person won’t see it, but a screen reader will).

Test for Color Contrast

1. Select the **View** tab on the Ribbon.
2. In the **Color/Grayscale** group, select **Grayscale** or select **Black and White** to view your presentation in black and white.



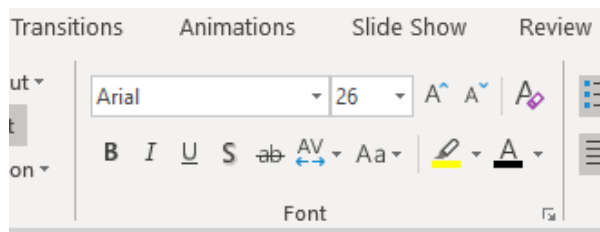
To change the view back to Color, select **Back to Color View** from the **Grayscale** or **Black and White** tab.



Use appropriate text size, font, and colors

Use standard serif or sans serif fonts (avoid decorative fonts). Recommended fonts include Verdana, Tahoma, Calibri, Arial, and/or Helvetica.

1. Select the **Home** tab.
2. In the **Font** group, select desired options to include font type, size, style, and color.



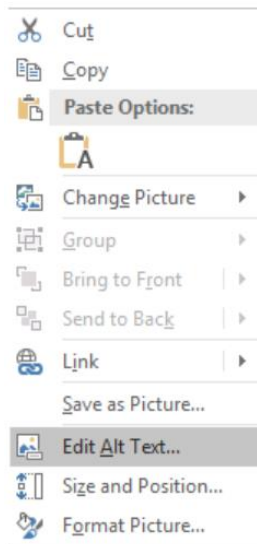
Avoid flashing, flickering, and animated text and images.

Use a high contrast between text and background or images. When emphasizing a word, use the **bold** or underline text feature.

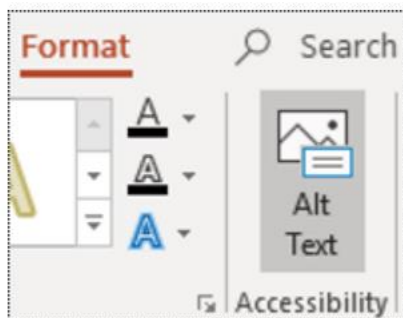
2. Include alternate (alt) text

Make sure there is alternate text on all images in the presentation. To add alt text, do one of the following:

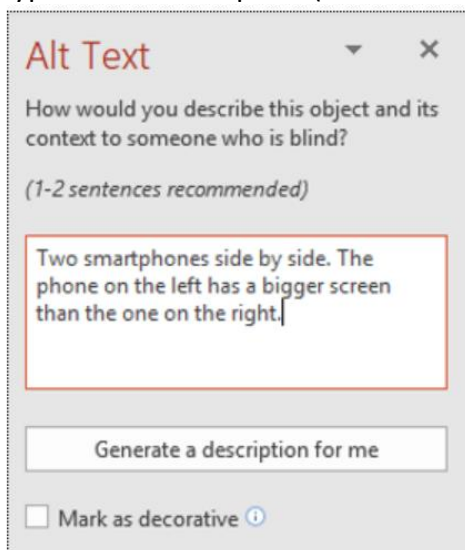
1. Right-click an image and select **Edit Alt Text**



2. Select an image. Select **Picture Format > Alt Text**.

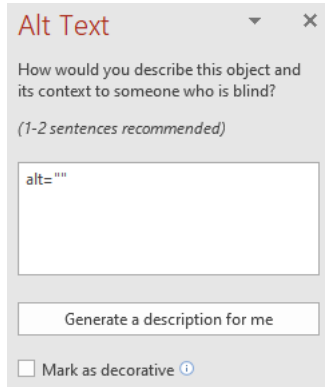


3. Type a brief description (no more than 140 characters) of the image and its context.



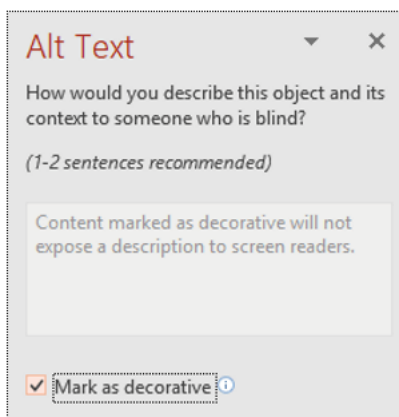
Alt text should also be included on all images including pictures, data tables, and charts. If a visual is purely decorative, you can either:

1. Include the null text alternative in the alt text description box



The screenshot shows the 'Alt Text' dialog box. The title is 'Alt Text'. Below the title is the question: 'How would you describe this object and its context to someone who is blind?' followed by '(1-2 sentences recommended)'. There is a text input field containing 'alt=""'. Below the input field is a button labeled 'Generate a description for me'. At the bottom, there is a checkbox labeled 'Mark as decorative' which is currently unchecked.

2. Select the **Mark as Decorative** check box. The text entry field becomes greyed out.



The screenshot shows the 'Alt Text' dialog box with the 'Mark as decorative' checkbox checked. The text input field is now greyed out and contains the text: 'Content marked as decorative will not expose a description to screen readers.' The 'Mark as decorative' checkbox is now checked and highlighted with a dashed border.

3. **Insert Visuals and Multimedia**

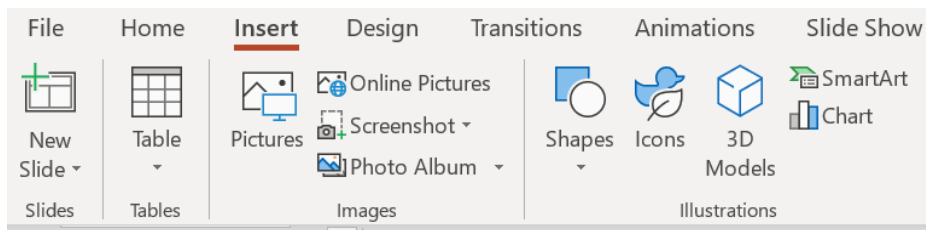
To insert photos and other multimedia, you can either:

1. Select from the icons listed upon creating a **New Slide**



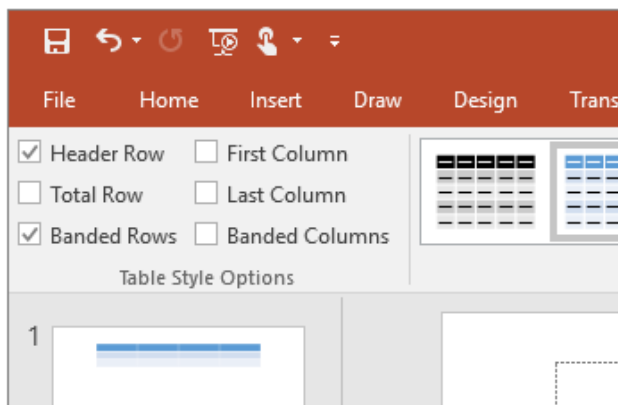
The screenshot shows a 'New Slide' creation screen. At the top, there is a text input field labeled 'TITLE OF SLIDE'. Below the title field is a bullet point with the text 'Click to add text'. At the bottom of the slide area, there are six icons: a calendar, a bar chart, a document with an arrow, a photo, a globe, and a video camera.

2. Select the **Insert tab** and select the type of visual or multimedia desired



Insert Data Tables and Charts

Select the desired table format. In the **Design tab**, within the **Table Style Options**, select **Header Row**. Always indicate header rows on tables by giving a unique title. Avoid creating complex tables and merging cells.



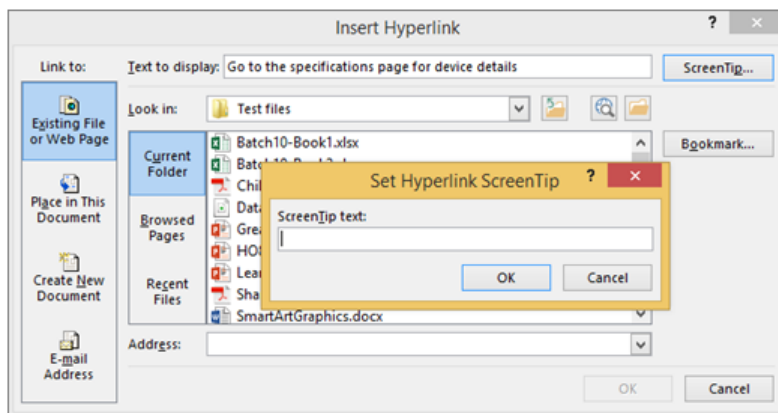
Header Row 1	Header Row 2	Header Row 3

4. Use meaningful hyperlink text

Hyperlinks should be displayed in full (i.e., <http://www.arl.org>) or link from text that matches the title on the destination page or provides an adequate description, such as the [Association of Research Libraries Homepage](#) or Association of Research Libraries' [Accessibility](#) page.

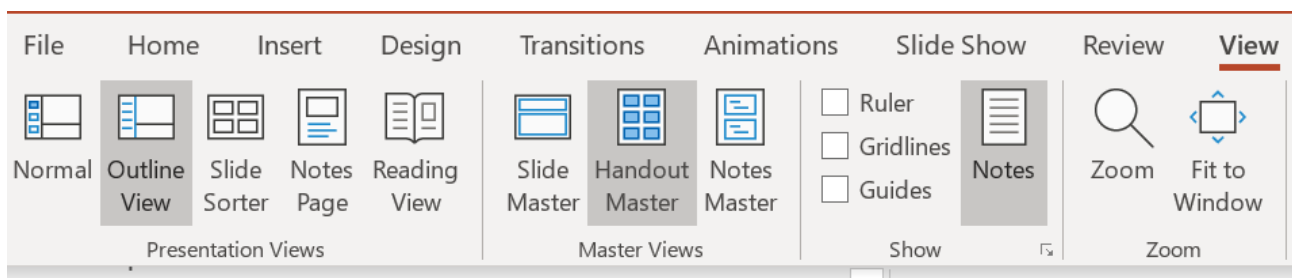
To add a hyperlink:

1. Select/Highlight the text to which you want to add the hyperlink, and the right-click.
2. Select Link. The text you selected displays in the **Text to Display** field.
3. In the **Address** field, enter the description address or weblink for the hyperlink
4. Select **ScreenTip** button and, in the **ScreenTip text** box, type a ScreenTip/descriptive text. A ScreenTip will display a short description when you hover the mouse over the link.
5. To apply the changes, select **OK > OK**.



5. Outline View

Click on the “Outline” tab in the left thumbnail menu to verify that all text appears on the outline. If text is missing, make sure the correct placeholder is selected in the slide’s layout.

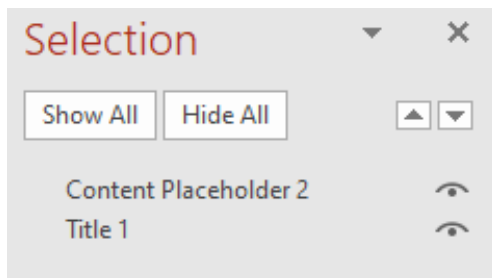


6. Check the Reading Order

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

1. From the **Home** tab’s **Drawing** pane, select **Arrange**. A dropdown menu will open from which you will select **Selection Pane** (or Home > Arrange > Reorder Objects in certain versions).

2. Placeholders and content will appear in the order they were added to the slide. To change the order, use the **Re-order arrows** within the Selection Pane (or drag them into the correct order in certain versions).

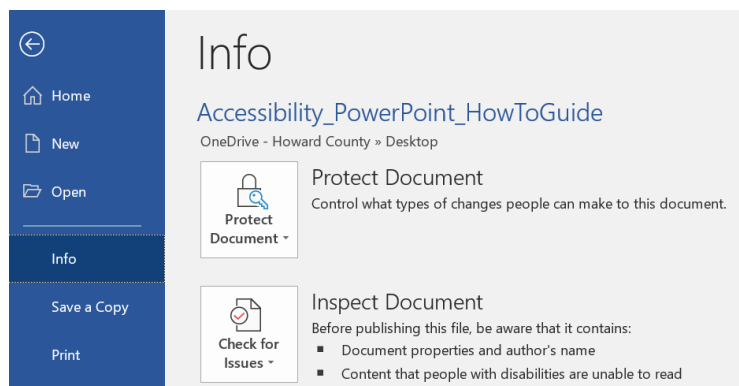


Note: The selection pane lists the objects on the slide in reverse order. When the screen reader reads this slide, it reads the objects in the reverse order listed in the selection pane. **Make sure the reading order makes sense (from the bottom, up).**

7. Test for Accessibility

Before saving as a PDF, check for accessibility issues in PowerPoint.

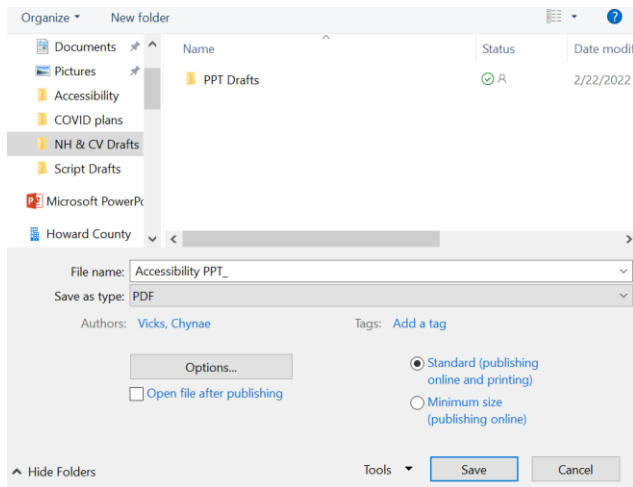
1. Navigate to **File**, then select Info.
2. Select **Check for Issues**, and a dropdown menu will appear from which you will select **Check for Accessibility**. An accessibility pane will open offering suggestions for repair.



8. Save the file as a PDF

To convert a PowerPoint presentation to an accessible PDF:

1. Select **File > Save as >** and select **PDF** from the dropdown menu



2. Select **Options** and ensure the following options are selected:
 - Document properties
 - Document structure tags for accessibility

