MS Office Accessibility Checker

Adapted from Microsoft's [Rules for the Accessibility Checker](#)

Errors

If content in the file makes it very difficult or impossible for someone with a disability to use, the Accessibility Checker classifies it as an error.

Rule	Accessibility Checker verifies	Why fix this?	Applications
All non-text content has alternative text (alt text).	All objects have alt text and the alt text doesn't contain image names or file extensions.	Screen readers speak the alternative text to describe images and other non-text content that users can't see. With alt text, users can understand the purpose and meaning of the content.	Excel, PowerPoint, Word, Outlook, OneNote, Visio
Tables specify column header information.	Tables and/or blocks of cells have the header box selected or a header row indicated.	Users rely on the table headings to understand the content that is subsequently read by the screen reader. Also, assistive technology often uses the table header row to help convey to the user the current cursor location in the table and to provide information that enables the user to navigate the table.	Excel, PowerPoint, Word, Outlook, OneNote
All sections have meaningful names.	All sections have names that aren't default or placeholder names such as "Default Section," "Untitled Section," or "Section 3."	Section names enable users to navigate more easily within a large presentation in the **Thumbnail Pane**, **Slide Sorter View**, and **Grid View**.	PowerPoint
All slides have titles.	Slides have titles.	Slide titles enable users to navigate within a presentation, including finding and selecting a single slide to immediately go to.	PowerPoint
Cells in an Excel worksheet don't use red-only formatting for negative numbers.	Cells that are set to **Number** format and use only the red color for negative numbers (e.g. show 1000 in red instead of -1000).	Users who have difficulty distinguishing color won't be able to tell the difference between positive and negative values.	Excel
Image or object is inline with the text.	Images or objects are positioned inline with the surrounding text.	If the image or object is not inline, it may be difficult for screen reader users to interact with the object. It may also be difficult to know where the object is relative to the text.	Word

Warnings

If the content in most (but not necessarily all) cases is difficult for people with disabilities to understand, the Accessibility Checker gives a warning.

Rule	Accessibility Checker verifies	Why fix this?	Applies to these applications
Table has a simple structure.	Tables are simple rectangles with no split cells, merged cells, or nesting.	Users navigate tables via keyboard shortcuts and assistive technology, which rely on simple table structures.	Excel, PowerPoint, Word, Outlook, OneNote
Sheet tabs have meaningful names.	Sheets in the workbook include descriptive information and there are no blank sheets.	Descriptive sheet names, such as "October sales totals," make it easier to navigate through workbooks than do default sheet names, such as "Sheet1."	Excel
Sufficient contrast between text and background.	Colors of the text and background are different enough to make the text easy to see.	People with low vision often find it hard to read text that does not contrast with the background. If your document has a high level of contrast between the text and background, more people can see and use the content.	Excel, PowerPoint, Word, Outlook
Closed captions are included for inserted audio and video.	All audio and video objects have closed captioning.	Without captioning, the information in a video or audio segment may be entirely lost to people with disabilities.	PowerPoint, OneNote
The reading order of the objects on a slide presentation is logical.	Objects on a slide are in a logical order.	Assistive technology reads slides and the elements on them in the specified order. If the reading order isn't logical, the content doesn't make sense.	PowerPoint

Tips

When there is content that people with disabilities can understand but that could be better organized or could be presented in a way that can improve their experience, you see a tip.

Rule	Accessibility Checker verifies	Why fix this?	Applies to these applications
The section names in a deck are unique.	The sections have unique names.	Section names enable users to navigate more easily within a large presentation in the **Thumbnail Pane**, **Slide Sorter View**, and **Grid View**.	PowerPoint
Slide titles in a deck are unique.	Non-blank slides have unique titles.	Users rely on titles to know where they are in the deck and to navigate the deck.	PowerPoint

Layout tables are structured for easy navigation.	The layout order is logical for the language, and the tab order is not circular.	Users rely on the table layout to navigate through the content. It must be ordered logically for users to understand and navigate the content.	Word
Documents use heading styles.	Content is organized with headings and/or a Table of Contents (TOC).	Headings and TOCs provide structural context to users and enable navigation and easier searching in the document.	Word, Outlook, OneNote

Intelligent Services

The Accessibility Checker lists all pictures with an alt text generated by the Intelligent Services.

Rule	Accessibility Checker verifies	Why fix this?	Applies to these applications
Suggested alternative text.	All pictures whose alt text was generated by Office's image recognition service.	The Intelligent Services automatically generates alt text in your document (when the feature is switched on). Review each suggestion carefully to make sure it accurately describes your picture. If you want to edit the suggestion, type over the suggested text in the **Description** box. To learn how to switch on this feature, go to Turn automatic alt text on.	PowerPoint, Word, Outlook

Accessibility Checker limitations

There are some accessibility issues the Accessibility Checker isn't able to detect. Also, some issues listed in the Accessibility Checker findings aren't necessarily accessibility issues that need to be fixed.

- Color: Information is conveyed using color alone.

- Closed captions: The Accessibility Checker reports missing closed captions in a video, but if your video already has in-band closed captions, open captions, or has no dialog, then there might be no accessibility issue with the video.