

Presentation Slide Accessibility

Here are some guidelines around creating accessible presentations in PowerPoint and Google Docs.

Use Slide Layouts

- Insert slides available in slide layouts and use the content placeholders.
- Do not use textboxes.

Why? Slide layouts use placeholders for different content types (headings, images, and text). This supports people using screen readers and ensures slide content is read in the correct order. Textboxes are generally not accessible to people using screen readers unless alt text is added.

Customize Slide Layouts

If the default slide layouts aren't working for you or are not accessible, you can customize them and create your own accessible slide layouts:

1. Under the "View" tab, select "Slide Master" (PowerPoint) or "Layout Builder" (Google Slides).
2. From here you can either:
 - a. Edit an existing slide layout. To do so, select a slide layout from the left to begin customizing it.
 - b. Create a variation of an existing layout. To do this, right click a slide layout and select "Duplicate Layout" to create a copy of an existing layout to customize.
 - c. Create a new slide layout. To do this, click "Insert Layout."
3. Adjust the slide layout by inserting "Placeholders" and positioning them where you want them, adjusting the text font and size, and inserting slide backgrounds.

To go back to your slides, click "Close Master View" (PowerPoint) or the X in the top right (Google Slides). You will now see your new slide layout listed under

“Layouts.” Any changes you made to the theme will be applied to all existing slides.

Use Unique Slide Titles

- Ensure each slide title is unique. If there are slides with the same title, either provide a new title or add “1 of 2,” “2 of 2” or “Part 1” “Part 2” to differentiate them.

Why? Slide titles can act like a table of contents, so unique titles will make the slide deck easier to navigate and find information.

Text

- Minimum text size: 24 pt
- Use simple, sans serif fonts (e.g., Arial, Verdana, Helvetica)
- Avoid using ALL CAPS or *italics* unless necessary for meaning.

Note: See “Customize Slide Layouts” for how to apply these changes to all slides at once.

Why? This will help ensure your slides are easy to read for your whole audience.

Colour

- There needs to be high contrast between text and the background. Use a colour [contrast checker](#) to verify the accessibility of your colour choices. The minimum contrast ratio is 4.5:1.
- Do not use colour alone to convey information.

Why? There is considerable diversity in people’s ability to see colour. Some people do not see any colour, and other people have challenges distinguishing between colours. In addition, people with low vision often need high contrast to be able to read text easily.

Tip for in-person events: If you present in a dim room, use a dark background with light text. If you present in a bright room, use a light background with dark text.

Links

- If you want people to be able to write links down or type them into their browser, put the web address on the slide and read it aloud. Use short links that are easy to remember. If it's a virtual meeting, put the link in the chat.
- If you expect people to have a copy of your slides, use descriptive link text.

Images

- Add alt text to images that convey information.
- Add long descriptions to complex images.
- If an image does not convey information or is already described in the surrounding text, leave the alt text field blank.

Why? People who are Blind or have low vision often use tools called screen readers to access digital content. Screen readers can read out the alt text for an image so the reader knows the significance of the image even if they can't see it. Alt text will also display if images do not load due to a weak internet connection. If alt text is not provided, a screen reader will not announce the presence of the image.

Resources:

- [Accessibility Toolkit: Images](#)
- [How to Describe Images: Examples and Guidelines](#)
- [Complex Images for all Learners \[PDF\]](#)

Animations

- Avoid unnecessary animations and flashy slide transitions.
- Animations or effects should be slow enough that you can describe what is happening to participants.

Why? Rapid on-screen movement can make people feel nauseous or dizzy. It can also be distracting.

Check Slide Order

- To check order, tab through the content on the slide. The content should be highlighted in the order it should be read on screen.
- If content is out of order, reorder content by right clicking each placeholder and using the “Order” setting. Content is read from back to front, so move items forward/backward until everything tabs through in the correct order.

Why? This will ensure that people using a screen reader will hear content on the slide read out to them in an order that makes sense.

Accessibility Checker

Accessibility checkers are useful tools to check the accessibility of your slides.

Note: Accessibility checkers do not guarantee your slide deck is accessible, but they can help you catch common mistakes.

PowerPoint

PowerPoint has a built-in accessibility checker. It can be accessed under the “Review” tab by selecting “Check Accessibility.”

Google Docs: GrackleSlides

GrackleSlides is a GoogleSlides accessibility checker.

To use GrackleDocs, you will have to add it as an extension:

1. Go to the “Extensions” tab in Google Docs.
2. Click “Add-ons” -> “Get add-ons”
3. Search for GrackleSlides and add it.
4. Go back to your Google slides. Under “Extensions,” you should now see GrackleSlides listed.
5. Click “Launch” to run GrackleSlides on your slide deck.