Creating content for everyone

Easy tips to help ensure your work can be understood by the widest possible audience

With remote work and global colleagues, it's difficult to know everyone's situation. People are managing many different work and personal scenarios, and a few simple actions can help recipients get the most out of your content. You'll not only expand your reach by including people with disabilities, you'll also make your content more readable and compelling for everyone.

> It takes all of us to create a more accessible and equitable world. How would you know if a colleague is color blind? Are they deaf or hard of hearing? Do they have a spotty internet connection or noisy work environment?
>
> If you don't know the answer to these questions, it's best to work in the most accessible and inclusive way possible.

This document contains tips on how to create emails, run Teams meetings, and develop PowerPoint presentations that can be easily understood by everyone. We hope you will try them today!

Microsoft

Email

1 **Ensure readability when using color**
Did you know that approximately 1 in 12 men and 1 in 200 women are color blind? There are multiple ways to make sure your content is noticed and readable by all.

Ensure that color is not the only means of conveying information

Our first tip is to consider your use of color when crafting emails. Many of us often highlight important information in our emails to call attention to it. But colleagues who are color blind might not notice certain colors. A simple way to fix this is to include more than color. For example, add bold font.

Instead of just using color:

Please respond by <mark>this Friday</mark> if you'll attend.

Use color and a different font:

Please respond by <mark>**this Friday**</mark> if you'll attend.

Check color contrast

Text can be difficult to read when its color is too similar to the color behind it. This can be challenging for people who are color blind, as well as for people with dyslexia. Increasing the contrast will make it much easier for everyone to read. Simply select 'Accessibility Checker' in your 'Review' tab. The tool will provide a warning if it detects a problem with the color contrast.

Insufficient

Monthly Budget
$100,000

Sufficient

Monthly Budget
$100,000

Warnings

∨ **Hard-to-read text contrast**

Recommended Actions

A Font Color >

Table Cell Shading >

Table Styles >

Other Suggestions

(i) Learn more

■ Automatic

Theme Colors

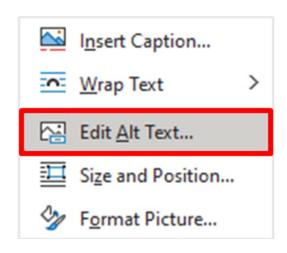**Standard Colors**

② Add descriptive text to images
Descriptive text helps when an image won't load or if a recipient can't see the visual.

Have you ever had a slow Internet connection and the images don't load? Or what if a colleague is blind or low vision? You might not know this if you haven't met in person. Using descriptive text (also known as 'alt text') helps when your recipient can't see the images you've included in your email.
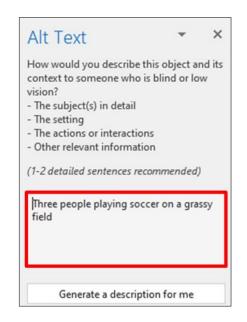
1. Right select your image

2. Select 'Edit Alt Text'

3. Input copy describing your visual

Alt Text

How would you describe this object and its context to someone who is blind or low vision?
- The subject(s) in detail
- The setting
- The actions or interactions
- Other relevant information

(1-2 detailed sentences recommended)

Three people playing soccer on a grassy field

Generate a description for me

3 Use descriptive hyperlink text

Descriptive hyperlink text helps recipients understand where the link will take them. Helpful for colleagues who use a screen reader.
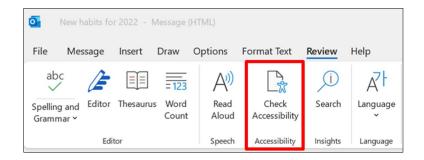
Many of us have probably created a hyperlink that says, 'Click here' or 'Learn more.' However, that's not very helpful for someone who might be using a screen reader, or for anyone who would like to know exactly where the link will take them. Instead, try using specific language that tells the reader where the link will take them.

Instead of this	Write this
Click here	Read our FY22 plan
Learn more	Watch the video from our meeting

Pro tip: Run Accessibility Checker before hitting send on any mail.

Finally, it's always a best practice to run Accessibility Checker before hitting send on any email. We never know when our email might be forwarded more broadly. You'll find it under the 'Review' tab in Outlook.

Just as you check spelling and grammar before sending, also check to ensure accessibility is addressed so that all recipients can understand it.
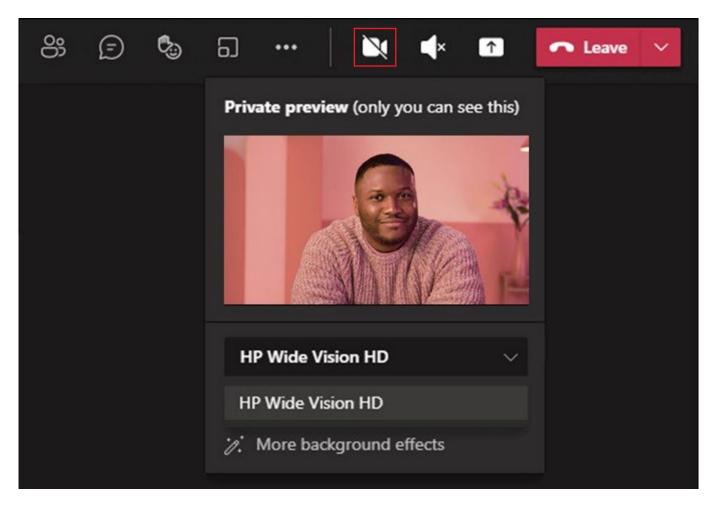
Microsoft Teams

Turn on your video

Helps colleagues see your facial expressions, providing important context for your message.

①

Whenever possible, turning on your video enables people to see your facial expressions. This is especially helpful for colleagues that are deaf or hard of hearing, or for those who need more context for the discussion—for example, if they speak a different language. Remember sometimes things like humor or sarcasm don't easily translate, and people can benefit from additional context.

There are, of course, times when you may not be able to turn on your video or make a personal choice to have it off.

1. Select the video icon
2. Hover over video icon to preview

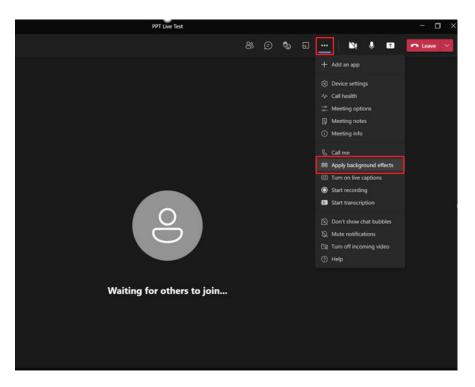## Blur your background or use a background image

2

Improves focus on the participants and reduces distractions if there is movement on screen.
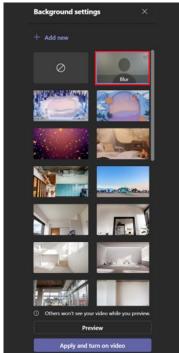
This helps keep the focus on the participants who will appear clear while everything behind them is subtly concealed. It also helps reduce distractions if there is activity happening behind some of the participants.

You can do this as soon as you sign into your meeting:

1. **Go to your meeting controls and select More actions… Select the three dots. You'll see them in the upper right part of your screen.**

2. **Then, select Apply background effects**

3. **Then select Blur to blur your background or choose from the available images to replace it.**

Also, you can select **Preview** to see how your chosen background looks before you apply it, and then select **Apply**.

Note: Do not blur background if communicating in sign language.

③ Use PowerPoint Live when presenting

Participants can move at their own pace, turn on live subtitles, use screen readers, and high contrast mode.

Using PowerPoint Live when giving a presentation is helpful for many reasons. First, this allows everyone in the audience to connect from their device (laptop, tablet, or phone) where they can follow along at their own pace. If desired, for example, they can move back through the slides to review something, or spend more time on a specific slide, without impacting the presenter.

The second benefit is that, with the power of AI, everyone in the audience can enable live subtitles in their preferred language on their own device. This will not only support participants with hearing disabilities, but also assist with language differences and ensure that everyone in the audience is fully understanding the discussion.
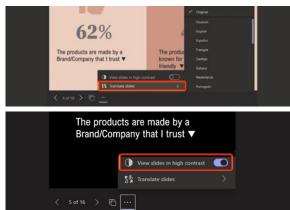
If you are not using PowerPoint Live, another best practice is to share your slides ahead of time.

Introducing PowerPoint Live in Microsoft Teams – https://aka.ms/PowerPointLive-Teams

Share your screen and select file from PPT Live section

Participants select preferences without impacting presenter

PowerPoint

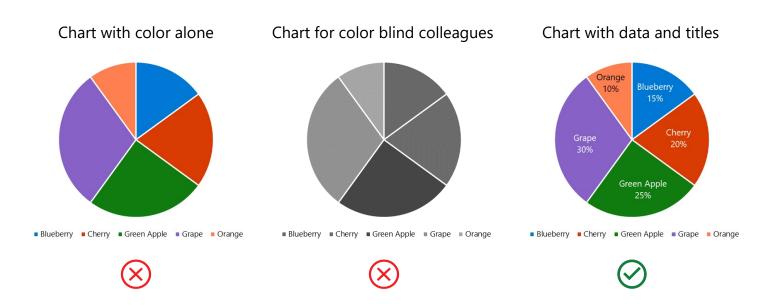**1** **Use more than color to illustrate your concept**
Insufficient labeling and color contrast can impact those who are color blind or have dyslexia.

Similar to email, consider your use of color when crafting PowerPoint slides. You may recall that approximately 1 in 12 men and 1 in 200 women are color blind. Did you know that about 1 in 10 people have dyslexia? Both of these groups might find it hard to read your content if color isn't used appropriately. This is especially important when labeling your information.

In this example, the chart on the left, without the data and titles clearly marked, would be challenging for a person who is color blind to read. And, it's just easier for everyone to have the data called out more clearly, as shown on the right. It reduces the cognitive load for all of us when we don't have to think so hard. You could also make things easier using patterns. For example, instead of just color, some pieces of the chart might have stripes or dots.

It's helpful to be specific when presenting data on a slide. Instead of saying, 'as you can see,' use language that describes what's on the slide. For example, 'the pie chart on the right shows that grape is the most popular flavor.' This is helpful to anyone who can't see the slide.

Also, don't forget to ensure you have sufficient color contrast. Text can be difficult to read when its color is too similar to the color behind it. Increasing the contrast will make it easier to read for everyone, not just those who are color blind or who have dyslexia. As with email, use the Accessibility Checker to check your color contrast.

Chart with color alone

Chart for color blind colleagues

Chart with data and titles

■ Blueberry ■ Cherry ■ Green Apple ■ Grape ■ Orange

■ Blueberry ■ Cherry ■ Green Apple ■ Grape ■ Orange

Orange 10%
Blueberry 15%
Cherry 20%
Grape 30%
Green Apple 25%

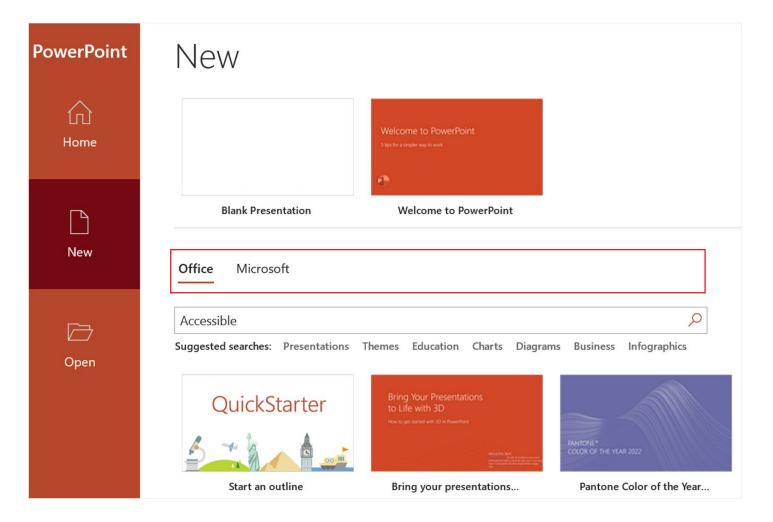■ Blueberry ■ Cherry ■ Green Apple ■ Grape ■ Orange

② Create slides with proper reading order
Important for colleagues using a screen reader for a vision or reading disability.

One of the easiest ways to address the reading order on a slide is by using accessible templates. In these, proper reading order is built into the slides.

To do this, open a blank PowerPoint and type 'accessible' into the search bar and you'll be given options to choose from.
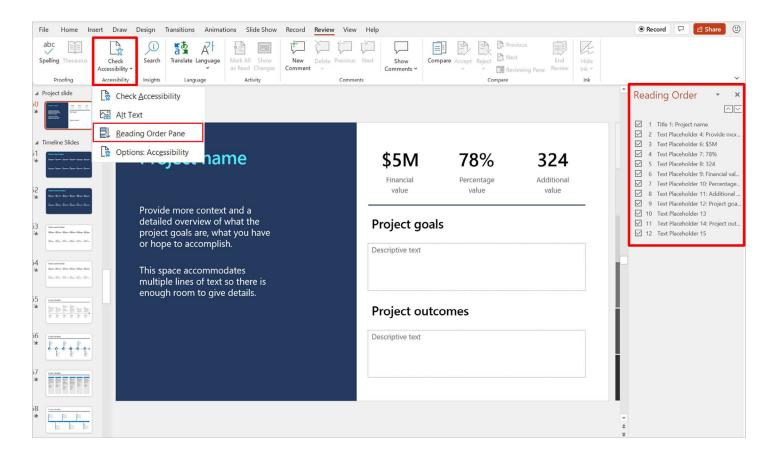
Ensure proper reading order with Accessibility Checker

Sometimes a template may not work for your needs, and you'll want to create a slide from scratch. Here's how to use Accessibility Checker to ensure proper reading order.

On your slide, click 'Accessibility Checker' in the Review tab and then select 'Reading Order.' In the 'Reading Order' chart on the right, you can simply drag and drop the content shown or use the arrow tabs to get the content in the correct position. If something is decorative and doesn't need to be read, simply uncheck the box. For example, you might have an image or graphic that isn't pertinent to telling the story.

In order to check your reading order, hit the 'Tab' key repeatedly until you've gone through all objects in the slide. Each time you press the Tab key, the focus moves to the next object that the screen reader will read.
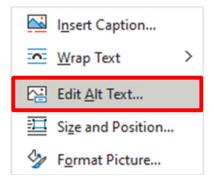
3 Add descriptive text to images

Descriptive text helps when an image won't load or if a recipient can't see the visual.

Adding descriptive text to images in your PowerPoint presentations helps the reader know what's important about the visual you've selected. If the content isn't pertinent to the meaning of your slide, you can also mark it as decorative, and a screen reader will skip over that. For example, if there are shapes or icons on the page that are simply visually appealing, you can mark those as decorative.
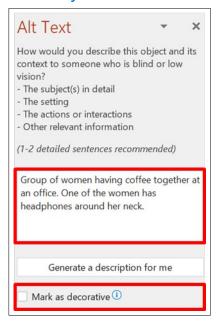
Right select your image

Select 'Edit Alt Text'

- Insert Caption...
- Wrap Text >
- Edit Alt Text...
- Size and Position...
- Format Picture...

Input copy describing your visual

Alt Text

How would you describe this object and its context to someone who is blind or low vision?
- The subject(s) in detail
- The setting
- The actions or interactions
- Other relevant information

(1-2 detailed sentences recommended)

Group of women having coffee together at an office. One of the women has headphones around her neck.

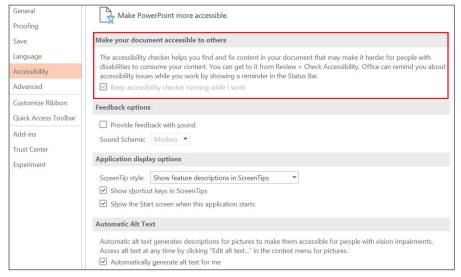Generate a description for me

☐ Mark as decorative ⓘ

④ Keep Accessibility Checker running in background

Here's one last tip to help you find accessibility problems before your PowerPoint presentation is final. It can be done in three easy steps.
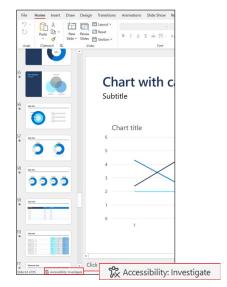
1. Click 'File' in your menu bar

2. Scroll down and click 'Options'

3. Select 'Accessibility' and you will see this chart giving you the option to keep Accessibility Checker running while you work.

As you work, if an accessibility issues comes up, you'll see the 'Accessibility: Investigate' prompt and can fix the problem then and there instead of having to do everything at the end.

File > Options > Accessibility

The 'Accessibility: Investigate' prompt will help you find problems before your deck is final.

Thank you!

There are many ways to support your colleagues, classmates, friends, and family members with disabilities. Here are some additional resources to deepen your knowledge.

Browse accessibility videos from Microsoft - https://www.youtube.com/user/MSFTEnable

Earn your accessibility fundamentals badge
Explore accessibility fundamental training - https://aka.ms/accessibilityfundamentals

Microsoft