

Accessibility Checklist

Use this checklist to make sure your documents or emails are easily accessible to someone who is blind or has low vision. This document covers accessibility for visual users and screen reader users.

File names

- The file name should describe the contents of the document in as few words as possible, ideally less than five. Spaces are fine.
- File names should include a date at the end. The date should be in Year-Month-Day format with dashes. For example, 13th April 2023 should be written as 2023-04-13.

Font size and styles

- Use sans serif fonts for readability. For example, Arial.
- Consider larger font sizes where appropriate. Large print is usually 16 to 18 point.
- Use high contrast colour combinations. For example, black on white.
- Limit the use of bold, italicised, UPPER CASE and underlined text.
 - For critical items, use words. For example, "Important:".

Formatting

- Use a high level of contrast between text and background colours. Black and white is ideal.
- Avoid using shades of green, orange and red together.
- Use bullets and numbering for lists.

Images

- Add alt text to images that communicate information or add context. Use one to two short sentences to describe relevant details of the image.
 - You do not need to state that it's an image.
 - Include any visible text from the image.
 - If an image or object is purely decorative and isn't informative, mark as decorative.
 - For complex images, provide an additional detailed description in the document.
- Check that all images are wrapped 'in line' with text.

Hyperlinks

- Don't use complex website addresses (URLs) as link text.
- Give destination information. For example, don't use a hyperlink such as click here.
 - You should know where the link is taking you without reading surrounding text.
- Keep link text concise – try to link just key words rather than a full sentence.

Tables

- Only use tables to display data. Don't use tables for layout.
- Don't insert tables inside tables, merge or split table cells or use heading styles inside tables.
- Avoid unnecessary blank rows, columns and cells.
- Avoid cell colours or shading.
- Add relevant row and column headers.
- Ensure rows can't break across pages and header rows repeat at the top of each page.
- Add a descriptive heading or paragraph before the table.

Charts

- Select an appropriate chart type, layout and style.
- Add a chart title and axis titles.
- Ensure appropriate font size and colour for chart labels.
- Use accessible colours.
- Paste the chart as an image if copying to Word, Outlook or PowerPoint.
- Add alt text to the chart.

Word/Outlook document structure

- Use the built-in heading styles to structure the document (Heading 1, Heading 2, Heading 3 etc).
 - Modify built-in heading styles to suit accessibility requirements if necessary.
 - Be careful not to apply headings to blank lines.
- Consider 1.2 or 1.5 line spacing.
- Left align content and avoid column layouts.
- Avoid using multiple blank lines and spaces for layout. Use paragraph and tab spacing instead. One blank line after paragraphs is okay.
- Avoid placing important information in headers and footers. Include in the body of the document.
- If creating a contents page in Word, use the Table of Contents function (References tab).
- Avoid protecting a Word document because this may prevent screen reader users from accessing the content.
- Avoid text boxes and form fields.

Microsoft Accessibility Checker

- Use the Microsoft Accessibility Checker in Word, PowerPoint, Excel and Outlook for errors, warnings and tips for making documents more accessible.
 - Be aware that the Accessibility Checker doesn't report all accessibility issues.

Learn More

- Highly practical and effective accessibility courses are available at learn.guidedogs.com.au.