



Creating Accessible Microsoft 365 PowerPoint Presentations

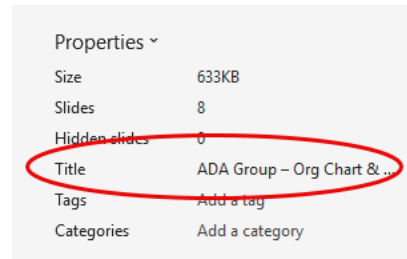
This quick guide introduces best practices for creating accessible Microsoft 365 PowerPoint presentations. Following these steps helps ensure presentations are usable by people who rely on keyboard navigation and assistive technologies such as screen readers and text-to-speech tools.

1. Add a Presentation Title

Every accessible PPT document should include a clear presentation title. Screen readers use the title to identify the document.

To add a presentation title in Microsoft 365:

- Select **File** > **Info** (On Mac, Select **File** > **Properties**).
- Add a meaningful title in the **Title** field under **Properties** (On Mac, the **Title** field can be found under the **Summary** tab).
- Save the presentation.

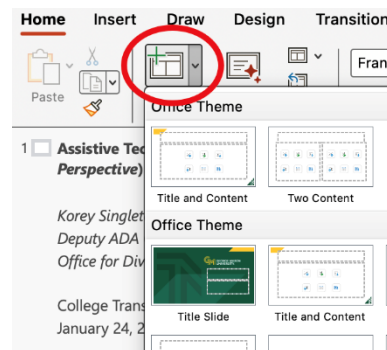


2. Use Built-in Slide Layouts

Using slide layouts provided within PowerPoint will ensure that files have correctly structured headings, lists, and the proper reading order.

Adding New Slides

- Select **Home** > **New Slide**.
- Choose the desired layout from the **slide options** menu.



Alternative text descriptions (*also known as alt text*) provide descriptions of images for users who are unable to view them. This is particularly critical for blind and low-vision users.

To add *alt text* in Microsoft 365:

- Right-click the image and select **View Alt Text...**
- Enter a concise, meaningful description.
- **PC Users:** Use **Generate Description** for assistance with writing *alt text* descriptions using CoPilot (AI).
- **Mac Users:** Do not use this feature. AI support has not been enabled yet. Use the standalone CoPilot integration to generate *alt text*.
- Select the **Mark as decorative** checkbox to identify images that provide no meaningful or instructional value.

NOTE: When adding multiple images to a slide, consider grouping them into one larger image. Then, provide *alt text* for the larger image.

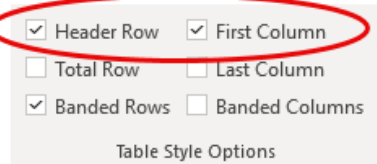
3. Add Alternative Text to Images

4. Create Accessible Tables

Tables should be created using the *Insert Table* feature.

Best practices:

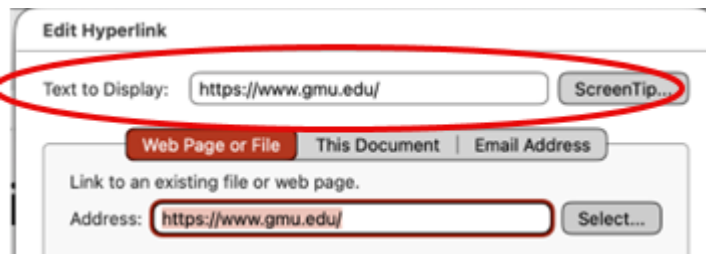
- Keep tables simple. One row for column headers and one column for row headers.
- Select the **Header Row** checkbox to identify column headers. If applicable, use the **First Column** checkbox to identify row headers.



NOTE: Avoid blank or merged cells and nested headers. This information cannot be properly associated with table headers in PPT presentations.

6. Use Meaningful Hyperlinks

Avoid using raw URLs as link text. Screen reader users benefit from descriptive links.



To edit a hyperlink:

- Right-click the link and select **Hyperlink > Edit Hyperlink...** (or press **CMD + K**).
- Update the *Text to Display* field with meaningful text.

7. Use Proper Lists

Use Word's built-in numbered and bulleted lists rather than typing numbers or symbols manually.

To create a list:

- Choose either the *Bullets* or *Numbering* tool from the *Home* tab.
- Enter text.



8. Check the Slide Reading Order

When creating slides, placing objects in a logical reading order is crucial for screen-reader users to understand the content (e.g., Title, main slide content, then images).



To access the **Reading Order** Pane:

- Select *Review > Check Accessibility > Reading Order Pane*.
- Review the order in which the content items would be read aloud on the slide.
- Click and drag items, as needed, to change the reading order.
- Close the pane once the slide order has been updated.

NOTE: The accessibility checker may identify a reading order issue if it does not follow the original slide layout. Ignore this issue if you have verified that the reading order is correct.

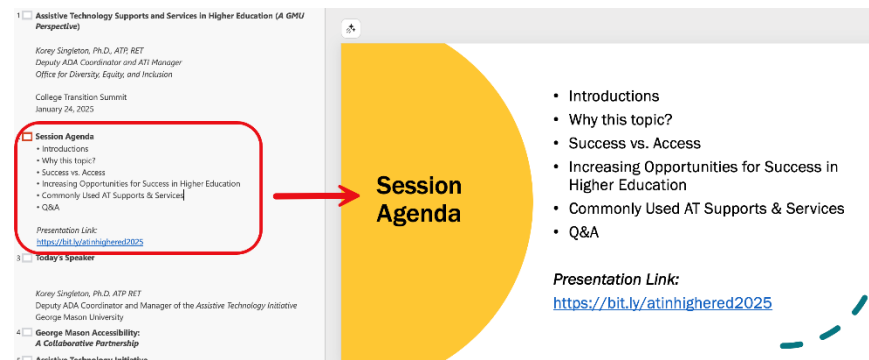
9. Outline and Notes Panels

PowerPoint contains two panels that can be used to enhance accessibility: the *outline panel* and the *notes panel*.

Outline Panel

The outline panel contains a text outline of the content that appears in your slide.

- **How does it help?** Reviewing this panel can help ensure that the content on the slides is logically sequenced, that slide titles are unique and meaningful, and that the reading order is appropriate for all users.



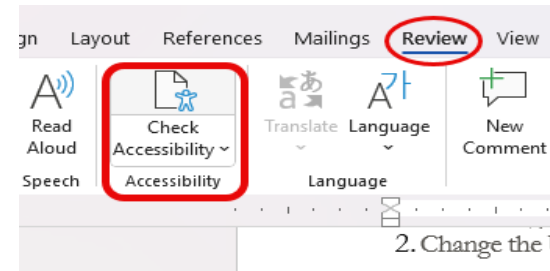
Notes Panel

The notes panel enables the speaker to add notes and information that will not be displayed on the slides.

- **How does it help?** Place long *alt text* descriptions in this area when embedding detailed charts and graphs on your slide.

10. Run the Accessibility Checker

Microsoft 365 includes an Accessibility Checker that helps identify issues.



To run the checker:

- Select **Review** > **Check Accessibility**.
- Review errors, warnings, and tips.
- Follow the suggested fixes.

11. Additional Accessibility Tips

- Use plain language.
- Use a minimum font size of 12 points.
- Ensure sufficient color contrast.
- If you have embedded video, ensure that the video is captioned and that the player controls are accessible.
- If you have embedded audio, include a transcript.
- Avoid using slide animations.
- Use **Insert** > **Equation** for entering mathematical expressions. Do not enter them manually.