**Document Accessibility November 2023. Version 1 Confidential**

# Common Accessibility Issues in Documents

## Common Issues

### Alt Text

**Make sure Alt Text is descriptive enough and double check that all images have the correct Alt Text**.

Right click image, select Format Picture. Then select the Layout and Properties (box) and Alt Text Description.

Providing alt text helps screen readers such as NVDA and JAWS describe images to Blind and Visually Impaired users.



### Hyperlink Text

**Hyperlinks should be descriptive. Avoid using “click here” and “read more” in the Text to Display field.**

Right click the “read more” hyperlink, select Edit Hyperlink from the menu. In the Text to Display field the text is Read more. Replace Read more with the text: Section508.gov Website. Select the OK button.

Microsoft Word Guidance provided by the Accessible Electronic Documents Community of Practice (AED COP): [Read more](https://www.section508.gov/create/documents/).

Another way to set a hyperlink is to highlight the link text, right click and select hyperlink from the menu. https://www.section508.gov/

Descriptive link text should give information about the link's destination.

### Header and Footer / Watermarks

### Any content in the headers, footers and in watermarks should be duplicated in the document body.

Left click in the header area several times and the header area will appear in Header and Footer Tools in the Design Tab. Include header and footer text not already appearing in the document.

Because the headers and watermark information is hidden to assistive technology, an alternative text equivalent is required. The text in the headers and watermark should occur once in the document.

### Color Contrast

**Ensure the color contrast between text and background is sufficient. All text should pass this check using the Color Contrast Analyzer tool.**

Provide a color contrast ratio of **4.5:1 for Regular Text** and 3:1 for **Large Text**.

Low-contrast colors are difficult to read when text contrasts poorly with background colors (very light), while high-contrast colors are easier to read when paired together (darker, more easily defined).

### Use of Color

**Colors and other visual characteristics that convey information should also be described in text.**

A legend associates colors with text and percentages in the pie charts. The chart’s sections contain text labels and percentages.

If color is the only cue used to indicate meaning, a screen reader will miss it because screen readers do not announce colors.

### Document Properties

**Double check that the Document Properties are filled.**

* In Word and PPT: Info/Properties/Advanced Properties fill in Title/Subject/Author
* In PDF: File/Properties, fill out Title/Author/Subject/Keywords

### Document Properties allow users to get the subject of the document, who created it and the keywords associated with the document.

### Dashes in the File Name

### Remember to use dashes in the file name in place of blank spaces or underscores.

Place dashes in the file name in place of blank spaces (%20) or underscores. Lowercase is better in filenames because it’s easier to type and to remember. Hyphens are commonly understood by search engines to indicate word breaks.

## Use a hyphen (-) for clarity. A hyphen can separate parts of words to avoid misinterpretation of words, and it can combine terms when they should be read as a unit.

## Common Accessibility Issues for Word Documents

### Headings

### Headings are not properly set – Only use one Heading 1

### Use proper hierarchy, ie. Heading 2 goes after Heading 1

### Always use Heading 1 instead of the Title style

Headings are used for navigation and to group sections of the document.

### Lists Not Formatted

### When lists are not properly set, use the built-in list features to ensure lists are available to assistive technology.

Bulleted and numbered lists can be used in your documents to outline, arrange and emphasize text.

Arlington

Alexandria

Fairfax

Prince William

### Table Header Row / Table Tools Design

Ensure that assistive technology recognizes the table headings and data cells – Select the Table Style Options to set the Header Row, Columns and/or Banded Rows/Columns.

| **Soda** | **Diet** | **Caffeine** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Cola** | Yes | Yes |
| **Root Beer** | No | No |
| **Orange** | Yes | No |
| **Lemon-Lime** | Yes | No |

### Converting the Document to a PDF

### When converting the document to a PDF, make sure that you use the Create PDF button from the Acrobat tab. Do NOT use create a PDF from File > Save as PDF.

### Common Accessibility Issues for PDF Documents

**Note:** The user must have Adobe Acrobat Pro in order to follow along with these issues. Reader is for viewing a PDF document.

1. Make sure that the reading order displayed in the Tags panel coincides with the logical reading order of the document. Reading order ensures that text, images, graphs and all elements in a document are presented in the correct sequence.
2. It is necessary that all headings in a PDF have a heading style (H1, H2, H3). Headings are used for navigation and to group sections of the document.
3. Table structures should have Table Headers and Table Data tags.
4. Use the Reading Order Pane to tag untagged items and change tags.

### Common Accessibility Issues for PowerPoint Documents

1. Add Missing Titles, from the Layout option, for slides – The missing titles were either deleted or the master slide template was not used.
2. Use the Selection Pane to set the Reading Order – Every slide should match the visual layout in the Selection Pane. A screen reader reads the Selection Pane from the bottom up.

#### PPT Selection Pane Order

Use the selection pane to reorder the elements on the page in correct reading order. The reading order in the PPT selection pane starts with the first item (Title) on the bottom in the visual order.

The selection pane sets the reading order of the slide. The reading order starts at the first element at the bottom of the selection pane order to the last element on the page which is on the top of the selection pane order.

### Common Accessibility Issues for a Screen Reader User

1. Links not being descriptive
2. Proper description within Alt Text
3. Headings within the document structure

4. Table titles should be added to the alt text in the Table Properties

#### Applicable Success Criterion WCAG 2.1 for Common Document Accessibility Issues

1. **1.1.1 Success Criterion (SC)**

All non-text content that is presented to the user has a text alternative that serves the equivalent purpose.

1. **2.4.4 Success Criterion (SC)**

The purpose of each link can be determined from the link text alone or from the link text together with its programmatically determined link context.

1. Any content in the headers, footers, and in watermarks should be duplicated in the document body because this information is hidden to assistive technology. **508**
2. **1.4.3 Contrast (Minimum):** The visual presentation of [text](https://www.w3.org/TR/2008/REC-WCAG20-20081211/#textdef) and [images of text](https://www.w3.org/TR/2008/REC-WCAG20-20081211/#images-of-textdef) has a [contrast ratio](https://www.w3.org/TR/2008/REC-WCAG20-20081211/#contrast-ratiodef) of at least 4.5:1, except for the following: (Level AA)

* **Large Text:**[Large-scale](https://www.w3.org/TR/2008/REC-WCAG20-20081211/#larger-scaledef) text and images of large-scale text have a contrast ratio of at least 3:1;
* **Incidental:**Text or images of text that are part of an inactive [user interface component](https://www.w3.org/TR/2008/REC-WCAG20-20081211/#user-interface-componentdef), that are [pure decoration](https://www.w3.org/TR/2008/REC-WCAG20-20081211/#puredecdef), that are not visible to anyone, or that are part of a picture that contains significant other visual content, have no contrast requirement.
* **Logotypes:**Text that is part of a logo or brand name has no minimum contrast requirement.

1. **1.4.1 Use of Color:** Color is not used as the only visual means of conveying information, indicating an action, prompting a response, or distinguishing a visual element. (Level A)
2. **2.4.2 Page Titled:** Web pages have titles that describe topic or purpose. (Level A)
3. **GSA 18 f Content Guide: Creating Filenames:** Avoid the use of special characters beyond the hyphen and period, unless absolutely necessary. Do not include spaces (use hyphens in their place).