# Document Accessibility Checklist for Faculty

For an overview of ADA Best Practices in the Classroom, visit the OEA’s [ADA Training for Faculty](https://www.wcupa.edu/universityCollege/OEA/ada/default.aspx), or for more information about accessibility best practices, visit the TLC’s [Proactive Accessibility Resource Site](https://d2l.wcupa.edu/d2l/le/discovery/view/course/3793975).

## Documents

* Use [built-in accessibility checkers](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/improve-accessibility-with-the-accessibility-checker-a16f6de0-2f39-4a2b-8bd8-5ad801426c7f?ui=en-us&rs=en-us&ad=us) to catch basic issues, but remember that they won’t catch everything. For example, they will not catch issues with hyperlinks.
* Make sure all text is at least 12 points in size.
* Be sure to use a single, consistent font throughout the document.
* Label all major sections of your document with a heading. For tips on writing and styling headings, visit [Microsoft's Headings style guide](https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/style-guide/scannable-content/headings).
* Make sure that all headings are [created using the Styles tab](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/add-a-heading-3eb8b917-56dc-4a17-891a-a026b2c790f2), not just by increasing the size of the text, and be careful not to skip heading levels.
* Use the [built in tools to create bulleted and numbered lists](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/create-a-bulleted-or-numbered-list-9ff81241-58a8-4d88-8d8c-acab3006a23e) rather than typing an asterisk or number at the beginning of a line.
* Don’t rely on color alone to convey information (e.g., “Items in red are required”). Using color for style or emphasis is fine (e.g., “Required items have the word ‘required’ next to them.”), but it can’t be the only way information is provided.
* Make sure that there is a strong contrast between the color of text (or meaningful parts of graphics) and the background. You can use [WebAIM’s Contract Checker](https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/) to check color contrast.
* Do not use pictures of text or tables. All text should be typed or pasted into the document, and all tables should be created within the document.
  + **Note:** Scanned documents are almost always images of text, even if they are saved in PDF format. The first step of checking any PDF document for accessibility is making sure that the text is selectable and searchable: can you click and highlight a chunk of text? Can you use the search function to find a phrase in the document? If not, you may need to contact the Library for assistance finding an accessible version of the document.
* Use tables only for the presentation of data, not for formatting or layout. To create the look of columns and rows without using a table, use [layout guides](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/set-up-text-columns-by-using-layout-guides-dc0d8f13-9a9b-4928-959f-e36f1661ccec) instead of using Tab or Space to manually adjust each line.
* When providing links, avoid leaving plain URLs in the document. Instead, [edit your links](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/create-or-edit-a-hyperlink-5d8c0804-f998-4143-86b1-1199735e07bf) to display a short, meaningful phrase. Avoid using generic link text like “click here”.
* Be sure to [set alt text for all images](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/add-alternative-text-to-a-shape-picture-chart-smartart-graphic-or-other-object-44989b2a-903c-4d9a-b742-6a75b451c669) in your document that aren’t purely decorative. Alt text should describe **the meaning conveyed by the image**, in the context of the course material, in less than 150 characters.
  + If your image can’t be described in 150 characters or less, refer to the following guides for structure, and don’t hesitate to reach out to the Teaching & Learning Center ([tlc@wcupa.edu](mailto:tlc@wcupa.edu)) for support in creating your image description.
    - [Writing Alt Text for Data Visualization](https://medium.com/nightingale/writing-alt-text-for-data-visualization-2a218ef43f81)
    - [Alternative Text for Complex Images](https://accessibility.web-resources.upenn.edu/resources/content-creators/alternative-text-complex-images)
* For PowerPoint presentations, use standard slide templates without adding text boxes. If you are using a custom template or modifying a slide’s layout, be sure to [set the reading order](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/video-create-slides-with-an-accessible-reading-order-794fc5da-f686-464d-8c29-1c6ab8515465) for each custom slide.

### Additional Document Resources

* [How to Create Accessible Word Documents](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/topic/make-your-word-documents-accessible-to-people-with-disabilities-d9bf3683-87ac-47ea-b91a-78dcacb3c66d)
  + [Creating Accessible Tables in Word](https://www.perkins.org/resource/creating-accessible-table-word/)
* [Make Your PowerPoint Presentations Accessible](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/make-your-powerpoint-presentations-accessible-to-people-with-disabilities-6f7772b2-2f33-4bd2-8ca7-dae3b2b3ef25)
* [Create accessible documents, spreadsheets, or presentations with Pages, Numbers, or Keynote](https://support.apple.com/en-us/102031)
* [Make your document, presentation, sheets & videos more accessible (Google Docs/Sheets/Slides)](https://support.google.com/docs/answer/6199477?hl=en)

## PDF

PDFs are notoriously difficult to make accessible: it’s recommended to use a more accessible file format, such as Word (.docx) or HTML, whenever possible. If you must use a PDF document, ensure the following:

* Make sure your original document meets all of the accessibility standards covered in the previous section.
  + **Note:** PowerPoint cannot export accessibility features to PDF on Mac, and accessibility features will only be included on Windows if the [“Save As” option](https://www.washington.edu/accesstech/documents/powerpoint-pdfs/) is used.
  + **Note:** Scanned documents are almost always images of text, even if they are saved in PDF format. The first step of checking any PDF document for accessibility is making sure that the text is selectable and searchable: can you click and highlight a chunk of text? Can you use the search function to find a phrase in the document? If not, you may need to contact the Library for assistance finding an accessible version of the document.
* Use the built-in [accessibility checker](https://helpx.adobe.com/acrobat/using/create-verify-pdf-accessibility.html) to find errors.
* Set the [document language](https://helpx.adobe.com/creative-cloud/help/change-install-language.html).
* Use [proper tagging](https://helpx.adobe.com/acrobat/using/editing-document-structure-content-tags.html), including tags for headings, paragraphs, lists, and tables.
* Verify that the [reading order](https://helpx.adobe.com/acrobat/using/touch-reading-order-tool-pdfs.html) is logical.
* Label form fields if applicable (ex. Name, Date, Signature, etc.).

For additional information, please contact the [Office of Educational Accessibility](https://www.wcupa.edu/universityCollege/OEA/) at [OEA@wcupa.edu](mailto:OEA@wcupa.edu) or the [Teaching & Learning Center](https://www.wcupa.edu/tlc/) at [TLC@wcupa.edu](mailto:TLC@wcupa.edu).