Tips and Tricks to making a word document Accessible.

What to fix	How to find it	Why fix it	How to fix it
Include alternative text with all visuals. Visual content includes pictures, SmartArt graphics, shapes, groups, charts, embedded objects, ink, and videos.	To find missing alternative text, use the Accessibility Checker.	Alt text helps people who can't see the screen to understand what's important in images and other visuals. Avoid using text in images as the sole method of conveying important information. If you must use an image with text in it, repeat that text in the document. In alt text, briefly describe the image and mention the existence of the text and its intent.	Add alt text to visuals in Microsoft 365 Add alt text to visuals in Office 2019 Add alt text to visuals in Office 2016
Add meaningful hyperlink text and ScreenTips.	To determine whether hyperlink text makes sense as standalone information and whether it gives readers accurate information about the destination target, visually scan your document.	People who use screen readers sometimes scan a list of links. Links should convey clear and accurate information about the destination. For example, instead of linking to the text **Click here**, include the full title of the destination page. **Tip:** You can also add ScreenTips that appear when your cursor hovers over text or images that include a hyperlink.	Add hyperlink text and ScreenTips
Ensure that color is not the only means of conveying information.	To find instances of color-coding, visually scan your document.	People who are blind, have low vision, or are colorblind might miss out on the meaning conveyed by particular colors.	Use accessible text format
Use sufficient contrast for text and background colors.	To find insufficient color contrast, use the Accessibility Checker. You can also look for text in your document that's hard to read or to distinguish from the background.	If your document has a high level of contrast between text and background, more people can see and use the content.	Use accessible text color
Use built-in headings and styles.	To check that the order of headings is logical, visually scan your document's table of contents. You can also click on each heading and apply a built-in heading style to it.	To preserve tab order and to make it easier for screen readers to read your documents, use a logical heading order and the built-in formatting tools in Word. For example, organize headings in the prescribed logical order. Use Heading 1, Heading 2, and then Heading 3, rather than Heading 3, Heading 1, and then Heading 2. And, organize the information in your documents into small chunks. Ideally, each heading would include only a few paragraphs.	Apply built-in heading styles Use bulleted lists Use ordered lists

Use a simple table structure and specify column header information.	To ensure that tables don't contain split cells, merged cells, or nested tables, use the Accessibility Checker. You can also visually scan your tables to check that they don't have any completely blank rows or columns.	Screen readers keep track of their location in a table by counting table cells. If a table is nested within another table or if a cell is merged or split, the screen reader loses count and can't provide helpful information about the table after that point. Blank cells in a table could also mislead someone using a screen reader into thinking that there is nothing more in the table. Screen readers also use header information to identify rows and columns.	Use table headers

Add alt text to visuals in Microsoft 365:

The following procedures describe how to add alt text to visuals in your Word documents in Microsoft 365:

- Add alt text to images

- Add alt text to shapes or SmartArt graphics

- Add alt text to charts
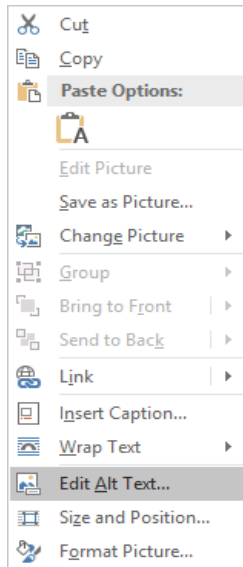
- Make visuals decorative

Note: For audio and video content, in addition to alt text, include closed captioning for people who are deaf or have limited hearing.

Tip: To write a good alt text, make sure to convey the content and the purpose of the image in a concise and unambiguous manner. The alt text shouldn't be longer than a short sentence or two—most of the time a few thoughtfully selected words will do. Do not repeat the surrounding textual content as alt text or use phrases referring to images, such as, "a graphic of" or "an image of.
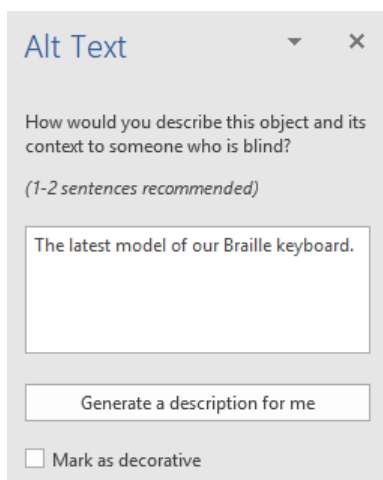
Add alt text to images:

Add alt text to images, such as pictures, screenshots, icons, videos, and 3D models, so that screen readers can read the text to describe the image to users who can't see the image.

1. Right-click an image and select **Edit Alt Text**.

The **Alt Text** pane opens on the right side of the document body.

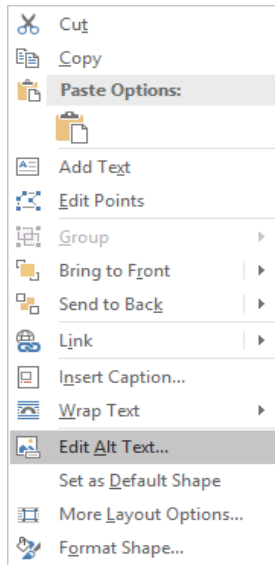2. Type 1-2 sentences to describe the image and its context to someone who cannot see it.

Tip: To spell check and correct a word you typed, just right-click the word and select from the suggested alternatives.

Tip: You can also select **Generate a description for me** to have Microsoft's cloud-powered intelligent services create a description for you. This takes a moment, after which you see the result in the text entry field. Remember to delete any comments Word added there, for example, "Description generated with high confidence."
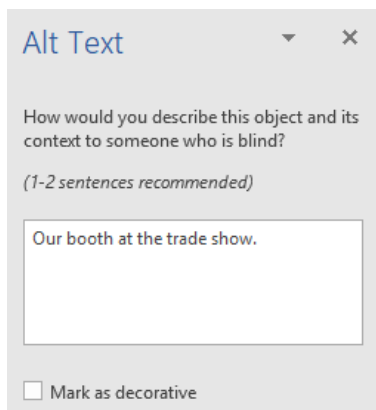
Add alt text to shapes or SmartArt graphics:

1. Right-click a shape or SmartArt graphic and select **Edit Alt Text**.

The **Alt Text** pane opens on the right side of the document body.

Tip: You have to right-click somewhere inside the frame that surrounds the entire shape or SmartArt graphic, not inside one of its parts.
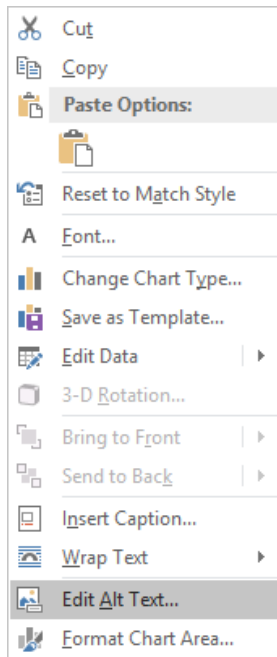
2. Type 1-2 sentences to describe the shape or SmartArt graphic and its context to someone who cannot see it.

Tip: To spell check and correct a word you typed, just right-click the word and select from the suggested alternatives.
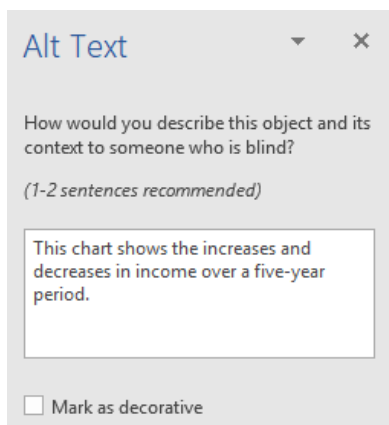
Add alt text to charts:

1. Right-click a chart and select **Edit Alt Text**.

The **Alt Text** pane opens on the right side of the document body.

Tip: You have to right-click somewhere inside the frame that surrounds the entire chart, not inside one of its parts.

2. Type 1-2 sentences to describe the chart and its context to someone who cannot see it.


Tip: To spell check and correct a word you typed, just right-click the word and select from the suggested alternatives.

Make visuals decorative

Decorative objects add visual interest but aren't informative (for example, stylistic borders). People using screen readers will hear these are decorative so they know they aren't missing any important information.

1. Right-click a visual and select **Edit Alt Text**. The **Alt Text** pane opens on the right side of the document body.

2. Select the **Mark as decorative** check box. The text entry field becomes grayed out.
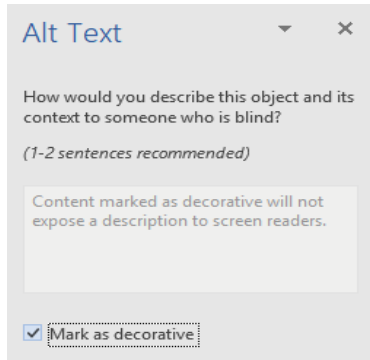
Tip: If you export your document as a PDF, any visuals you have marked as decorative are preserved by tagging them as artifacts.

Add alt text to visuals in Office 2019:

The following procedures describe how to add alt text to visuals in your Word documents in Office 2019:

- [Add alt text to images](#)

- [Add alt text to shapes or SmartArt graphics](#)

- [Add alt text to charts](#)

- [Make visuals decorative](#)

Note: For audio and video content, in addition to alt text, include closed captioning for people who are deaf or have limited hearing.
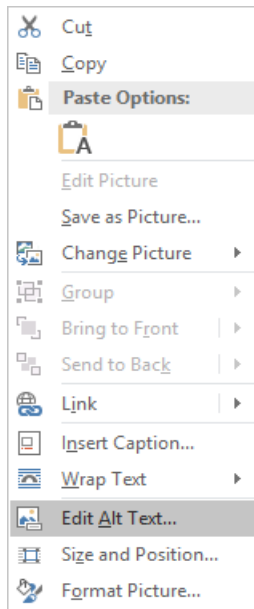
Tip: To write a good alt text, make sure to convey the content and the purpose of the image in a concise and unambiguous manner. The alt text shouldn't be longer than a short sentence or two—most of the time a few thoughtfully selected words will do. Do not repeat the surrounding textual content as alt text or use phrases referring to images, such as, "a graphic of" or "an image of."

Add alt text to images:

Add alt text to images, such as pictures, screenshots, icons, videos, and 3D models, so that screen readers can read the text to describe the image to users who can't see the image.
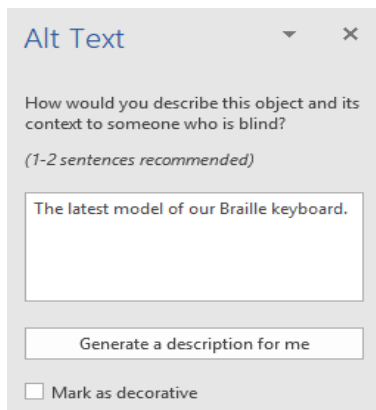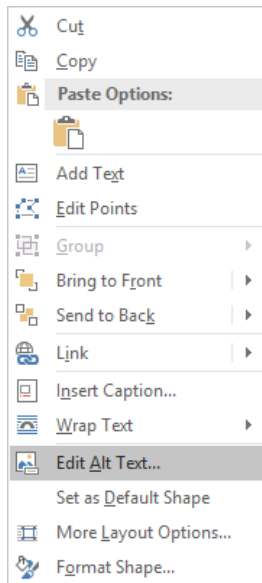
1. Do one of the following:

   ▪ Select an image and press the **Alt Text** button in the **Format** ribbon tab.

   ▪ Right-click an image and select **Edit Alt Text**.

✂	Cu_t
🗐	_Copy
📋	Paste Options:
	A
	_Edit Picture
	_Save as Picture…
🖼	Chan_ge Picture ▸
▦	_Group ▸
▫	Bring to F_ront ❘ ▸
▫	Send to Bac_k ❘ ▸
🌐	Li_nk ❘ ▸
▣	I_nsert Caption…
▨	_Wrap Text ▸
▦	Edit A_lt Text…
⤢	Si_ze and Position…
✏	F_ormat Picture…

The **Alt Text** pane opens on the right side of the document body.

2. Type 1-2 sentences to describe the image and its context to someone who cannot see it.

Alt Text   ▼   ✕

How would you describe this object and its context to someone who is blind?

(1-2 sentences recommended)

The latest model of our Braille keyboard.

Generate a description for me

☐ Mark as decorative

Tip: To spell check and correct a word you typed, just right-click the word and select from the suggested alternatives.

Tip: You can also select **Generate a description for me** to have Microsoft's cloud-powered intelligent services create a description for you. This takes a moment, after which you see the result in the text entry field. Remember to delete any comments Word added there, for example, "Description generated with high confidence."

Add alt text to shapes or SmartArt graphics:
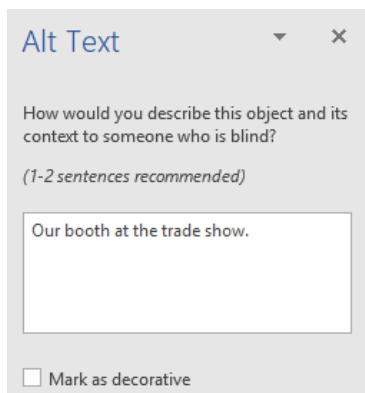
1. Do one of the following:

    - Select a shape or SmartArt graphic and press the **Alt Text** button in the **Format** ribbon

    - Right-click a shape or SmartArt graphic and select **Edit Alt Text**.

✂	Cu**t**
🗐	**C**opy
📋	**Paste Options:**
	📋
🅰	Add Te**x**t
	Edit Points
	Group ▸
	Bring to F**r**ont ▸
	Send to Bac**k** ▸
	Link ▸
	Insert Caption...
	Wrap Text ▸
	Edit A**l**t Text...
	Set as **D**efault Shape
	More **L**ayout Options...
	F**o**rmat Shape...

The **Alt Text** pane opens on the right side of the document body.

Tip: You have to right-click somewhere inside the frame that surrounds the entire shape or SmartArt graphic, not inside one of its parts.

2. Type 1-2 sentences to describe the shape or SmartArt graphic and its context to someone who cannot see it.

Alt Text   ▾   ✕

How would you describe this object and its context to someone who is blind?

(1-2 sentences recommended)

Our booth at the trade show.

☐ Mark as decorative

Tip: To spell check and correct a word you typed, just right-click the word and select from the suggested alternatives.

Add alt text to charts:

1. Do one of the following:

   - Select a chart and press the **Alt Text** button in the **Format** ribbon tab.

   - Right-click a chart and select **Edit Alt Text**.
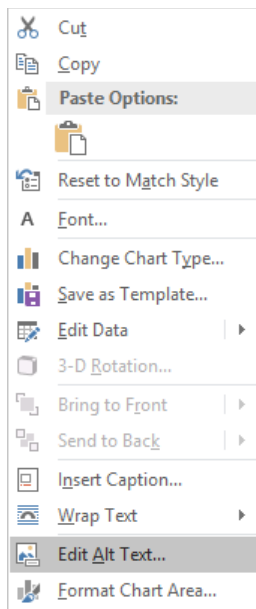
The **Alt Text** pane opens on the right side of the document body.

Tip: You have to right-click somewhere inside the frame that surrounds the entire chart, not inside one of its parts.

2. Type 1-2 sentences to describe the chart and its context to someone who cannot see it.
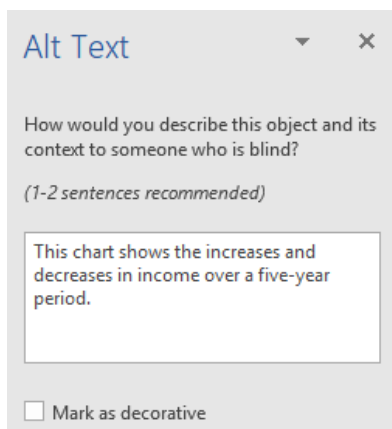
Tip: To spell check and correct a word you typed, just right-click the word and select from the suggested alternatives.

Make visuals decorative

Decorative objects add visual interest but aren't informative (for example, stylistic borders). People using screen readers will hear these are decorative so they know they aren't missing any important information.

1. Right-click a visual.

2. Select **Edit Alt Text**. The **Alt Text** pane opens on the right side of the document body.

3. Select the **Mark as decorative** check box. The text entry field becomes grayed out.
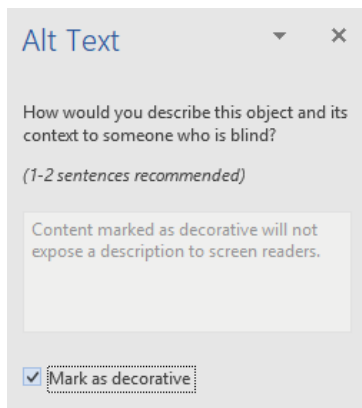
Tip: If you export your document as a PDF, any visuals you have marked as decorative are preserved by tagging them as artifacts.

Add alt text to visuals in Office 2016:

The following procedures describe how to add alt text to visuals in your Word documents in Office 2016:

- [Add alt text to images](#)

- [Add alt text to SmartArt graphics](#)

- [Add alt text to shapes](#)

- [Add alt text to charts](#)

Note: We recommend only putting text in the description field and leaving the title blank. This will provide the best experience with most major screen readers including Narrator. For audio

and video content, in addition to alt text, include closed captioning for people who are deaf or have limited hearing.

Add alt text to images:

Add alt text to images, such as pictures and screenshots, so that screen readers can read the text to describe the image to users who can't see the image.

1. Right-click an image.

2. Select **Format Picture** > **Layout & Properties**.
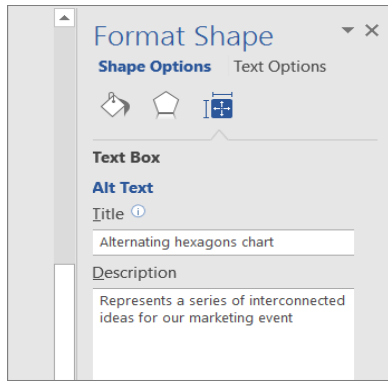
3. Select **Alt Text**.

4. Type a description and a title.

Tip: Include the most important information in the first line, and be as concise as possible.
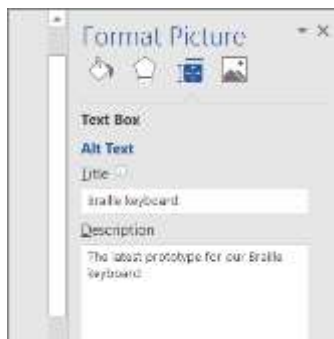

Add alt text to SmartArt graphics:

1. Right-click a SmartArt graphic.

2. Select **Format Object** > **Shape Options** > **Layout & Properties**.

3. Select **Alt Text**.

4. Type a description and a title.

Tip: Include the most important information in the first line, and be as concise as possible.

Add alt text to shapes:

Add alt text to shapes, including shapes within a SmartArt graphic.

1. Right-click a shape, and then select **Format Shape**.

2. In the right pane, select **Layout & Properties**, and then select **Alt Text**.

3. Type a description and a title.

Tip: Include the most important information in the first line, and be as concise as possible.
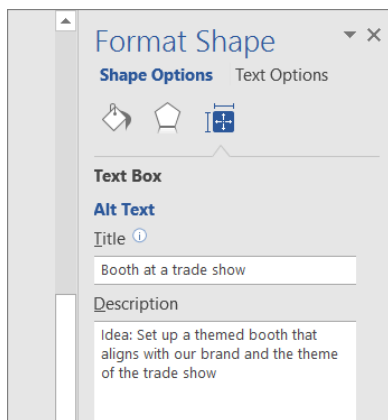
Add alt text to charts:

1. Right-click a chart.

2. Select **Format Chart Area** > **Chart Options** > **Layout & Properties**.

3. Select **Alt Text**.

4. Type a description and a title.

Tip: Include the most important information in the first line, and be as concise as possible.
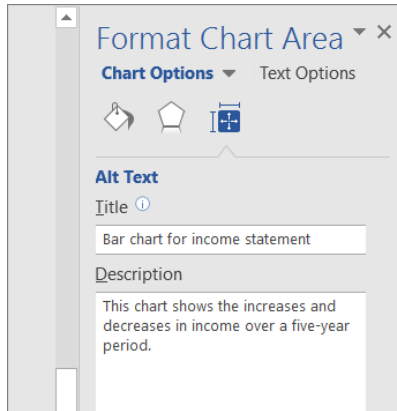
Make hyperlinks, text, and tables accessible:

The following procedures describe how to make the hyperlinks, text, and tables in your Word documents accessible.

Add hyperlink text and ScreenTips:

1. Select the text to which you want to add the hyperlink, and then right-click.

2. Select **Link**. The text you selected displays in the **Text to display** box. This is the hyperlink text.

3. If necessary, change the hyperlink text.

4. In the **Address** box, enter the destination address for the hyperlink.

5. Select the **ScreenTip** button and, in the **ScreenTip text** box, type a ScreenTip.

Tip: If the title on the hyperlink's destination page gives an accurate summary of what's on the page, use it for the hyperlink text. For example, this hyperlink text matches the title on the destination page: Templates and Themes for Office Online.
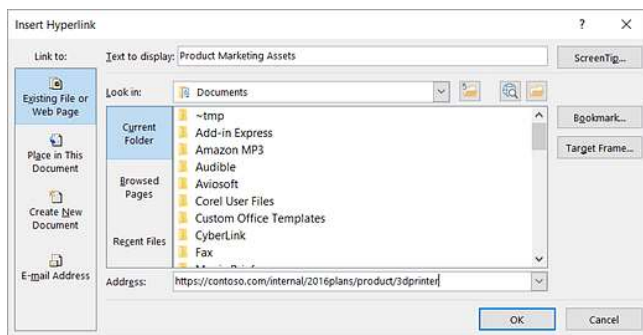
Apply built-in heading styles:

1. Select the text you want to turn into a heading.

2. On the **Home** tab, in the **Styles** group, select a heading style, for example, **Heading 1** or **Heading 2**.
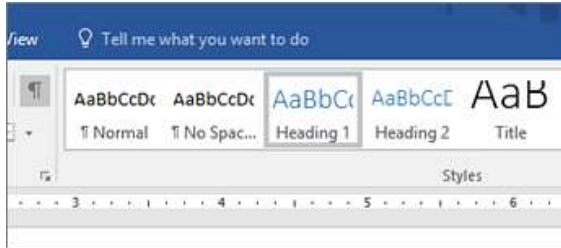
Use bulleted lists:

1. Position the cursor anywhere in your document.

2. Select the **Home** tab.

3. In the **Paragraph** group, select the (Bullets) button.

4. Type each bullet item in the bulleted list.

Use ordered lists:

1. Position the cursor anywhere in your document.

2. Select the **Home** tab.

3. In the **Paragraph** group, select the (Numbering) button.

4. Type the sequential steps.

Use accessible text color:

- Ensure that text displays well by using the **Automatic** setting for font colors. Select your text, and then, on the **Home** tab, select the (Font Color) menu and select **Automatic**.

- Use the Accessibility Checker, to analyze the document and find insufficient color contrast. The tool now checks the documents for text color against page color, table cell backgrounds, highlight, textbox fill color, paragraph shading, shape and SmartArt fills, headers and footers, and links.

- Use the Colour Contrast Analyzer, a free app that analyzes colors and contrast, and displays results almost immediately.

Use accessible text format:

- Add an underline to color-coded hyperlink text. That can help colorblind people know the text is linked even if they can't see the color.

- Add shapes if color is used to indicate status. For example, add a checkmark symbol if green is used to indicate "pass" and an uppercase X if red indicates "fail".

Note: These resources provide other suggestions: usability.gov and Web Accessibility for Users with Color Blindness.

Use text spacing:

Increase or decrease white space between sentences and paragraphs.

1. On the **Home** tab, select your text.

2. In the **Paragraph** group, in the lower-right corner of the group, select the Paragraph Settings button.
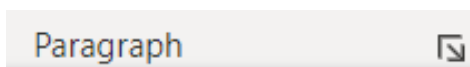
3. The **Paragraph** dialog box opens, showing the **Indents and Spacing** tab.

4. Under **Spacing**, select the spacing options you want.

Use table headers:

1. Position the cursor anywhere in a table.

2. On the **Table Design** tab, in the **Table Style Options** group, select the **Header Row** check box.


3. Type the column headings.

Use the Accessibility Checker:

1. On the ribbon, select the **Review** tab. If you're using Outlook, note that you'll only see the **Review** tab when writing or replying to messages.

   Tip: In Outlook, you can also access the Accessibility Checker from a MailTip at the top of the message window. The accessibility MailTip appears if one of your message recipients has set up a preference for receiving accessible email.
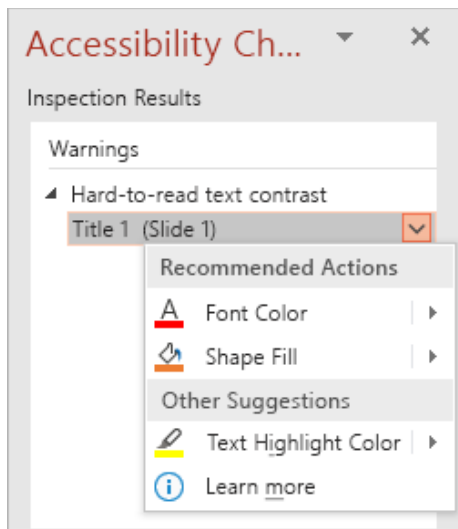
2. Select **Check Accessibility**.
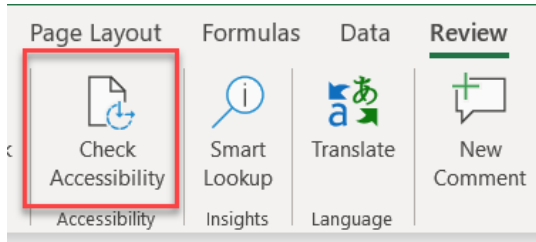
3. Review your results. You'll see a list of errors, warnings, and tips with how-to-fix recommendations for each. See [Rules for the Accessibility Checker](#) for more information.

Fix recommendations with ease:

To easily address accessibility errors and warnings, select an issue to open the **Recommended Actions** list. You can apply a one-click fix by selecting an action, or select the arrow button next to an action for more options.


Check accessibility while you work:

To be notified of accessibility issues in your document as you continue working on it, tick the **Keep accessibility checker running while I work** check box.
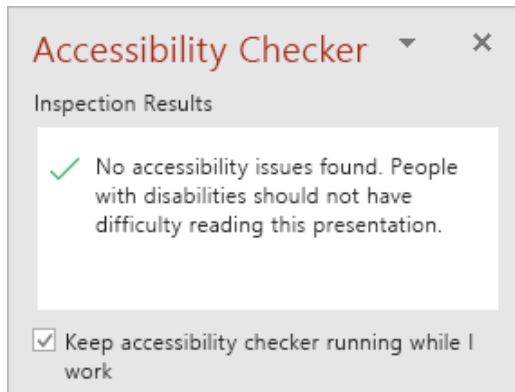
This adds the **Accessibility** button to your status bar, and keeps track of accessibility issues in real time. You can open the Accessibility Checker whenever you want by selecting the status bar button.
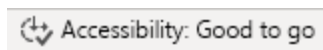

Note: The **Keep accessibility checker running while I work** check box does not exist in Outlook, Instead, the accessibility checker runs automatically in the background if one of your recipients has selected a preference for receiving accessible mail. Instead of an **Accessibility** button on your status bar, an accessibility MailTip will be shown in the message window, letting you review any accessibility issues before sending a message.

Don't see Accessibility Checker?

If you don't see the **Check Accessibility** button on the **Review** tab, you might have an older version of the app. Follow these steps to open the Accessibility Checker.

1. Select **File** > **Info**.
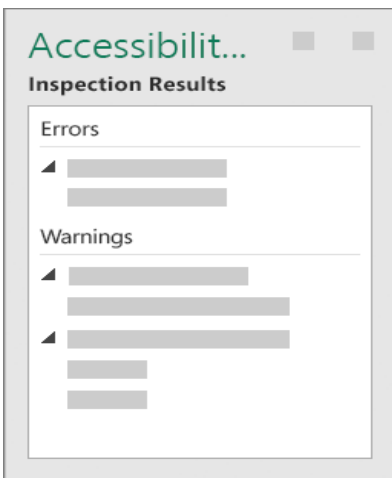2. Select the **Check for Issues** button.

   Tip: To the right of the **Check Accessibility** button, under the **Inspect** heading, is a list of any potential issues.
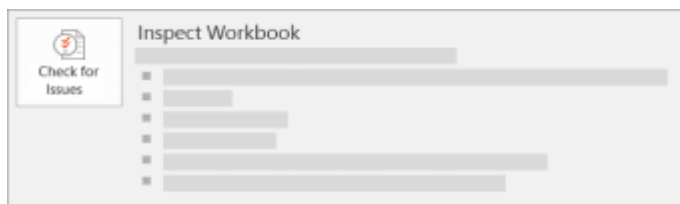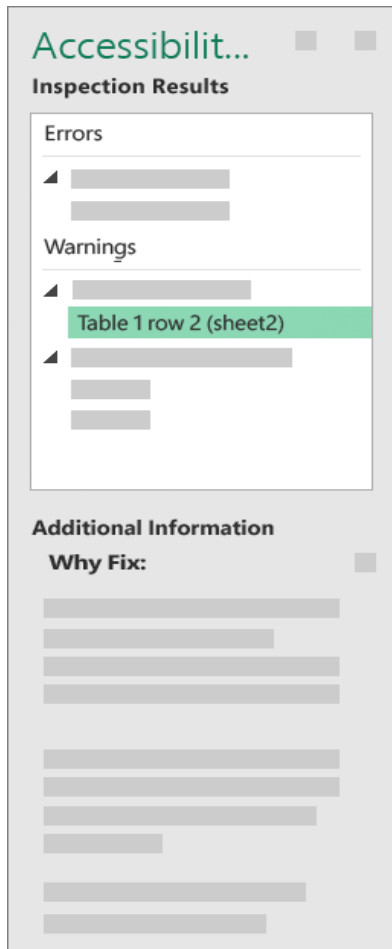

3. In the **Check for Issues** drop-down menu, select **Check for Issues**.

4. The **Accessibility Checker** task pane appears next to your content and shows the inspection results.

5. To see information on why and how to fix an issue, under **Inspection Results**, select an issue. Results appear under **Additional Information**, and you're directed to the inaccessible content in your file.

Training Videos on how to make Word docs 508 Compliant:

- Section 508 Compliant Videos for Word
- Making Microsoft Word source files Section 508 friendly
- Using Word to Create a 508 Compliant PDF
- Accessibility Checker for Word 2010