Microsoft Office: Creating Accessible Materials

Why make documents accessible?

It helps **communicate your message** to a diverse audience. Something created to help one group of the population ends up **benefiting many more people**. By making them accessible to people with disabilities you also make them better for others. It is the **curb cut effect**!

Accessible Word Documents

- Use styles for headings and in long documents.
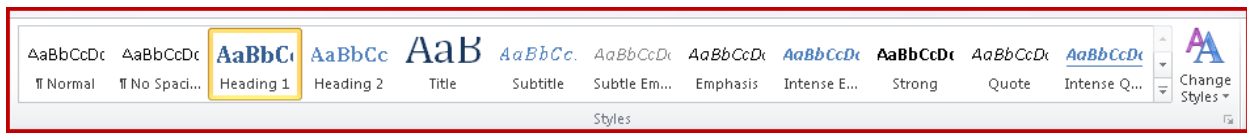
- Provide alt-text for images.
- Use simple table structure and provide column header rows in tables.
- Keep all headings short.
- Use meaningful hyperlinks: Patrick Henry Community College instead of https://www.patrickhenry.edu/.
- Use true numbered and bulleted lists with punctuation.
- Use font size of 12 points or more.
- Provide sufficient contract and do not use color as the only way to convey content.
- **Spell check!**
- Provide electronic version that can be enlarged or read by a screen reader.

Accessible PowerPoint

- Use slide layout templates and make sure that each slide has a unique title, even if invisible.
- Provide alt-text for images.
- Use simple table structure and provide column header rows in tables.
- Use meaningful hyperlinks: Patrick Henry Community College instead of https://www.patrickhenry.edu/.
- Use true numbered and bulleted lists with punctuation.
- Use sufficient font size and do not overcrowd the slide.

- Provide sufficient contrast and do not use color as the only way to convey content.
- Avoid automatic slide transitions to keep simple.
- Limit animations.
- Use outline and notes panels.
- **Spell check!**
- Provide electronic version that can be enlarged or read by a screen reader.
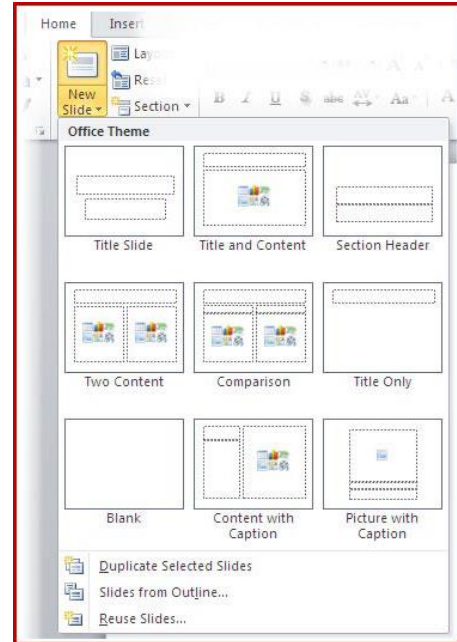
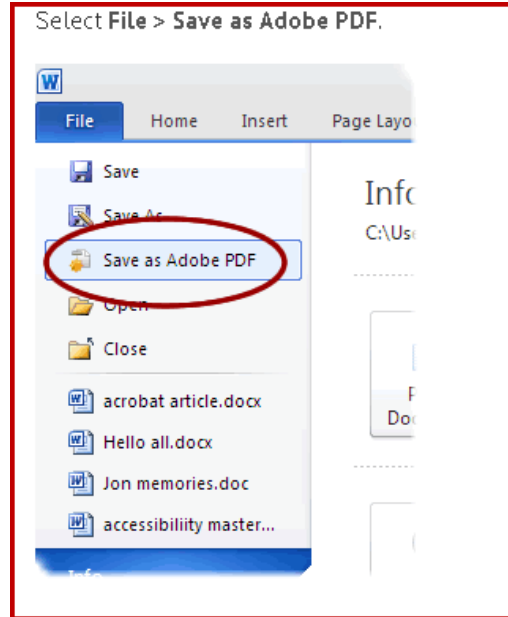**Accessibility Checker for Word & PowerPoint**

The accessibility checker is the same for both Word and PowerPoint.

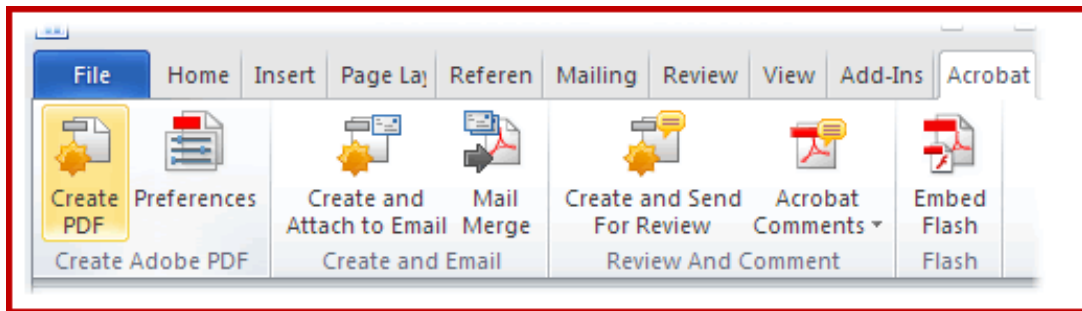**Warnings and tips** will be provided so corrections can be made.
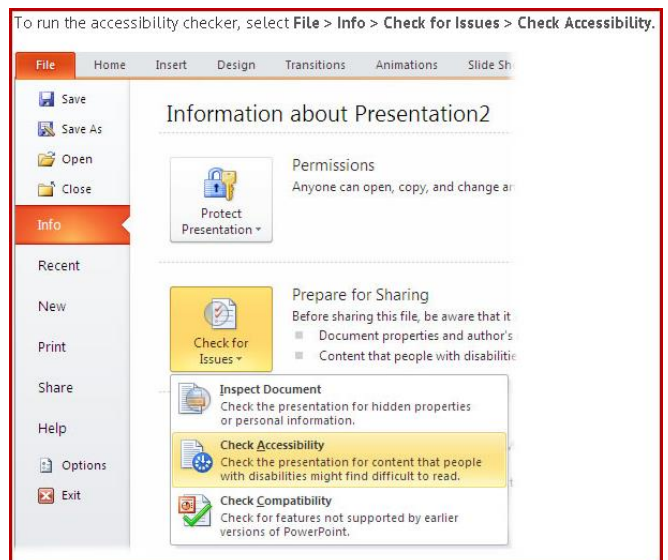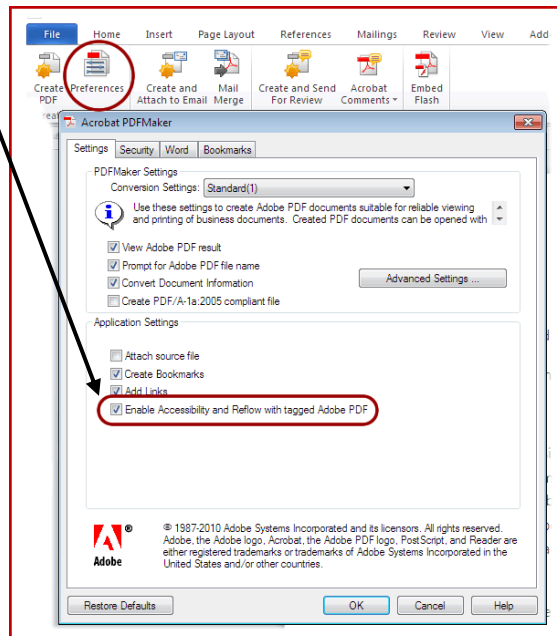
Converting Word and PowerPoint to PDF

Step 1: Select

Select **File > Save as Adobe PDF**.

OR

Step 2: Ensure that **Enable Accessibility and Reflow with tagged ADOBE PDF** is selected.

Accessible Email

- Keep it short and simple!
- Forwarded emails contain extra headings and recipient email addresses/names. Delete when possible.
- Avoid using a .JPEG as email content.
- Use black and white with 12 points font. Avoid all caps (unless necessary) or fancy fonts. HTML format is preferred.
- Use styles for headings and in long documents.
- Images and graphics (line up for reading order – Wrap text > In Line with Text and Alt-text).
- Ensure all attachments are accessible.
- Use a meaningful subject.
- Use meaningful hyperlinks: [Patrick Henry Community College](https://www.patrickhenry.edu/) instead of https://www.patrickhenry.edu/.
- Use true numbered and bulleted lists with punctuation.
- Spell check and spell out acronyms and abbreviations when first used.
- Avoid background images/stationary.
- Avoid special characters (copyright or emoticons).

Other Elements

Accessible Images – alternative text provides a textual alternative to non-text content (images, photos, tables, charts, etc.)

- Determined by context and surrounding of image.
- Functional vs decorative images.
- Alt-text vs long description.
- Accurate and equivalent.
- Succinct.
- Not redundant.
- Avoid using "image of…" and "graphic of…" unless important.

Alt-Text Illustration – To write alt-text, if the graphic is an illustration of what has been described in the text (see example on next page), no further description is needed. **Keep it simple: "**taking blood pressure."

In a chapter about taking blood pressure, the following text and photo are included.

"Proper positioning of the cuff, stethoscope and arm are important to accurate blood pressure readings. The arm should be relaxed and straight, resting on a flat surface. The cuff should be positioned just above the elbow. The stethoscope should be positioned over the brachial artery at the bend of the elbow. See example for proper technique."

Alt-Text Informational – If the graphic is informational (see example below from a math textbook), the alt-text could be just "a bell curve."

However, what is the student does not know what a bell curve is? Sometimes even a long description will not really convey the information in the graphic. The alt-text will not be sufficient for a student's needs. A tactile graphic may be necessary.

"The graph of a Gaussian function is a characteristic symmetric "bell curve" shape that quickly falls off towards plus/minus infinity."
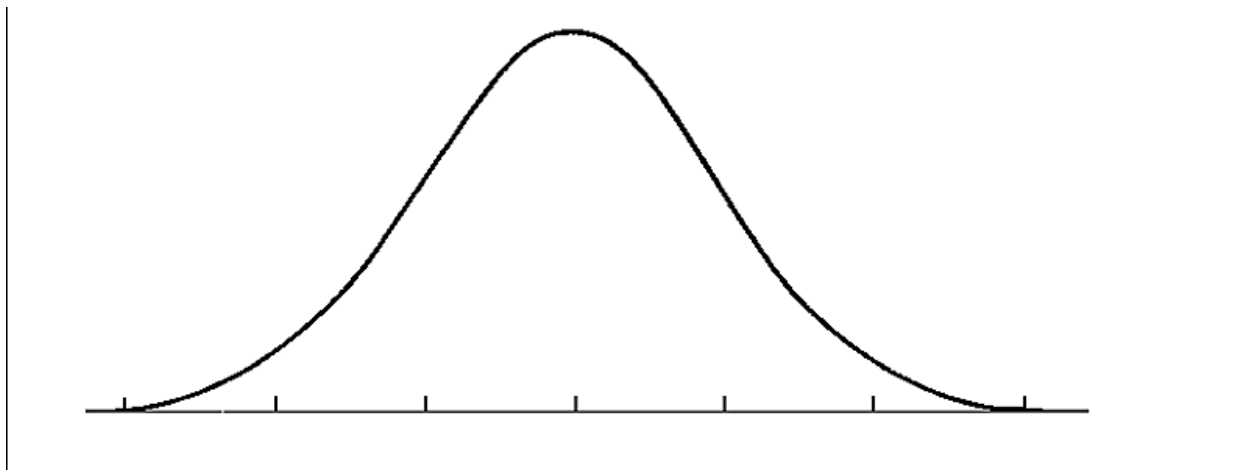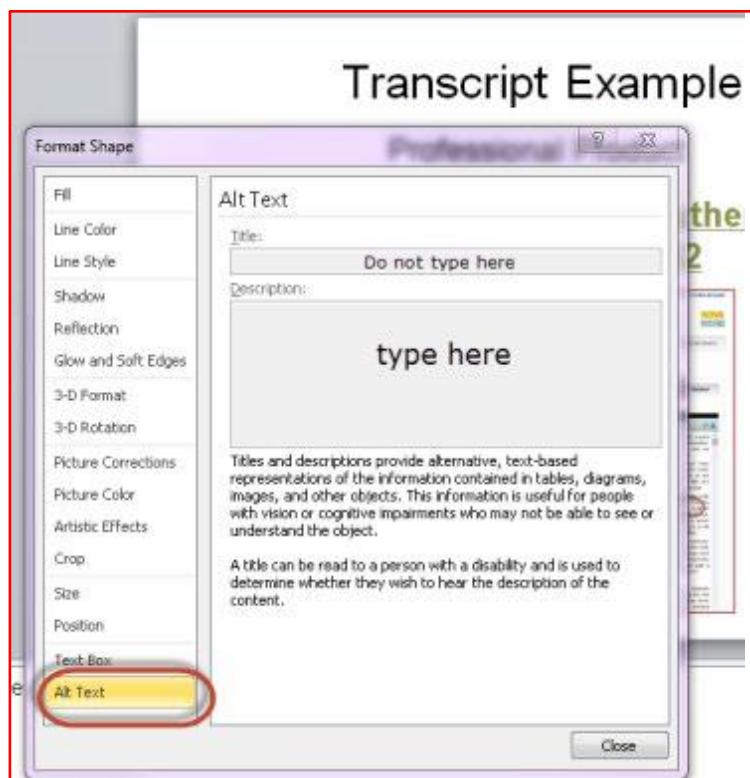
Adding Alt-Text

Step 1: Right click on the image. Scroll down to and click on Format Picture link.
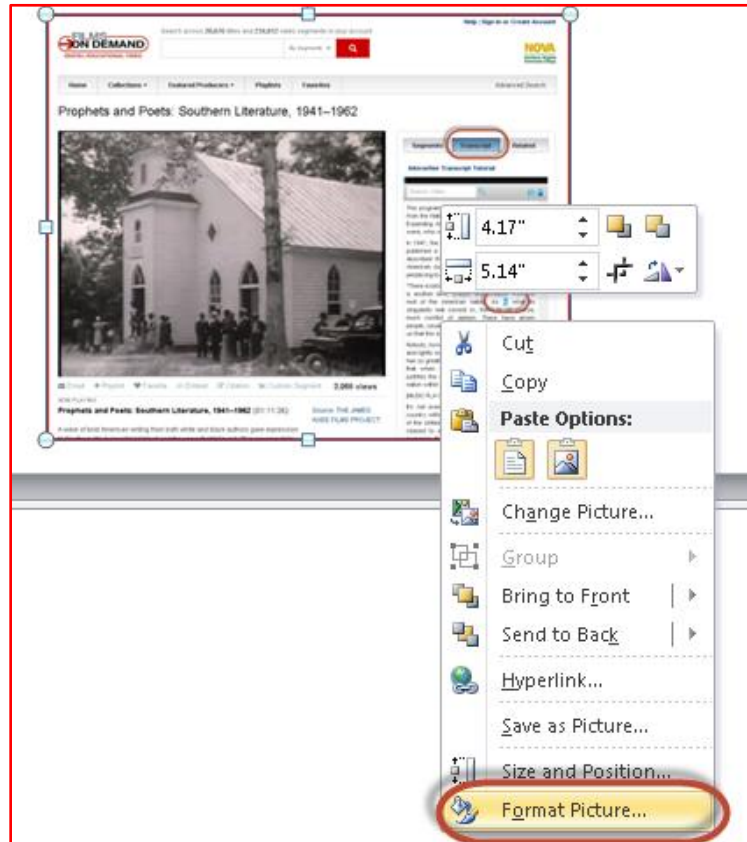
Step 2: Scroll down to and click on Alt-text link. Type description or "null" in Description box. Do not type in Title box.

Captioning Example

Please watch the "Good, Bad, and Ugly: Closed Captioning and Video Description" video (below) to experience the *good, bad, and ugly* of captioning and video description. Note the progression from bad to good captioning with the addition of visual cues (video description) that will help the student *see* as well as *hear* the video.
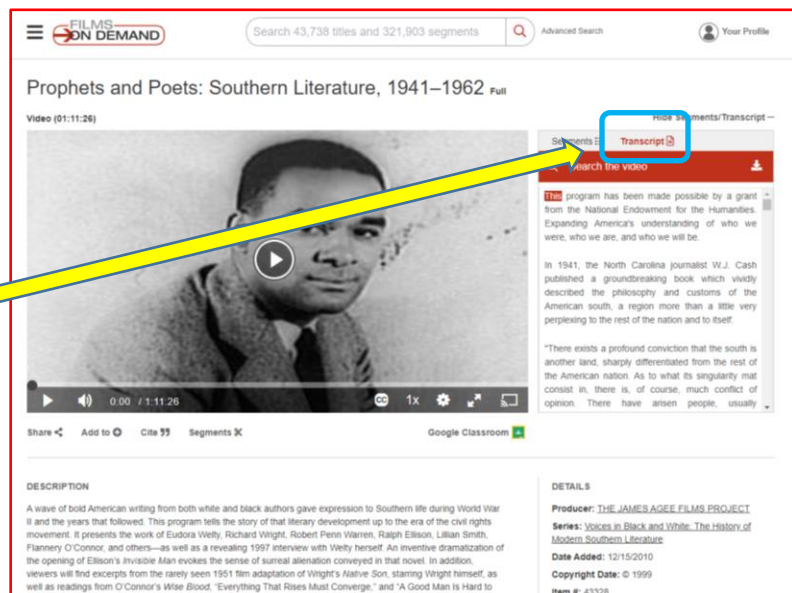
Remember to view with Closed Captions on.

Good, Bad, and Ugly: Closed Captioning and Video Description

Transcript Example

Please watch the "Prophets and Poets: Southern Literature 1942 – 1962" video (below) to view an example of a video transcript.

Remember to click on the Transcript link.

Prophets and Poets: Southern Literature, 1041 - 1962

Accessibility Checklist – Please use the following steps to ensure maximum accessibility for your audience. You should delete this slide when you are sure the presentation is accessible and ready to be shared.

- Be sure each slide has a title.
- Be sure each page has a page number.
- Be sure all photos are given alt text descriptions. (Right click on image, select "edit alt text" to add an image description.)
- Do not use any low-contrast text colors (like page gray, yellow, etc.).
- Run accessibility check (TOOLS / CHECK ACCESSIBILITY) and follow instructions to correct any report errors.

Resources

Word
- [WebAIM – Microsoft Word](#)
- [Make your Word documents accessible to people with disabilities](#)

PowerPoint
- [WebAIM – PowerPoint Accessibility](#)
- [Make your PowerPoint presentations accessible to people with disabilities](#)

PDF
- [WebAIM – PDF Accessibility](#)
- [WebAIM – Convert PowerPoint to PDF](#)

Email
- [Make your email accessible to people with disabilities](#)

Accessibility Checker
- [Improve accessibility with the Accessibility Checker](#)

Alternative Text
- [WebAIM – Alternative Text](#)