

Sound Transit's Guide to Creating Accessible Materials

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When trying to focus on accessibility, it's important to make information available both visually and auditorily.

Unless you are producing something with narration, making something available auditorily means creating materials that can be consumed using a screen reader such as JAWS.

General principles

- When you create graphics, use alt text or captions to describe the information being conveyed by the picture (these can be read by a screen reader).
- Set up materials so screen reader users can orient themselves:
 - Use the accessibility checkers in Microsoft products.
 - Use built-in headings. Screen readers can read these, allowing the user to skim the material and more quickly get to the information they need).
 - Use descriptive text for hyperlinks. Screen readers can read all the links in a page, allowing the user to quickly navigate to the page they are looking for — this works much better if hyperlink text concisely describes links).
 - Use simple table structure (the Microsoft materials below provide more detail on what this means).
 - If your final product will be a PDF, start by making sure the source document is accessible. How you create the PDF matters — see the PDF section below.

Microsoft resources on accessibility

Word

- [Word Document Accessibility](#)
- [Word Accessibility Video Tutorials from Microsoft](#)

Excel

- [Excel Accessibility](#)
- [Excel Accessibility Video Tutorials from Microsoft](#)

PowerPoint

- [PowerPoint Accessibility](#)
- [PowerPoint Accessibility Video Tutorials from Microsoft](#)

Outlook

- [Outlook Message Accessibility Video Tutorials from Microsoft](#)

Accessible PDFs

- Starting with an accessible source document makes creating an accessible PDF vastly simpler.
- If you have Adobe Standard or Pro (not Adobe Reader), WebAIM recommends using that to convert the Word document rather than doing the conversion in a Microsoft Office application. See [WebAim's PDF accessibility page](#) for instructions.
- If you don't have Adobe Standard or Pro, carefully follow Microsoft's directions to [create accessible PDFs using Word, PowerPoint or Excel](#).
- Note that table headers will not be properly tagged in the conversion process. (The document will be readable with a screen reader, but not as easy to navigate as it should be). If you have Adobe Acrobat Pro DC, you can fix that (see [WebAIM's page on converting documents to PDFs](#)).
- If you have Adobe Acrobat Pro DC, you can use it to [check](#) and [repair](#) accessibility. You can also use it to [convert scanned documents into accessible PDFs](#). [LinkedIn Learning](#), [Adobe](#), and the [GSA](#) have resources on this.

Accessible graphics with text

Color vision deficiency (otherwise termed as “color blindness”) is a common condition. If you ever create a graphic with text, it’s important to make sure the color contrast between the text color and background color is readable for people who might have difficulty distinguishing colors.

- [WebAIM color contrast checker](#) is one tool you can use to test color contrast.
- You may need to use a [color format converter](#) to use the WebAIM tool.

Further resources

- [WebAIM's articles on web and document accessibility](#)
- [UW's Creating Accessible Documents Website](#)