

GUIDELINES FOR MAKING PRESENTATIONS MORE ACCESSIBLE



Computer slide presentations can be visually engaging, but run the risk of being difficult to understand. Consider these guidelines when creating your presentations to make them as accessible as possible.

Give every slide a unique title. People who are blind, have low vision, or a reading disability rely on slide titles to navigate. For example, by skimming or using a screen reader, they can quickly scan through a list of slide titles and go right to the slide they want.

Use a larger font size (18pt or larger), sans serif fonts, and sufficient white space. To find potential issues related to fonts or white space, review your slides for areas that look crowded or illegible. People who have dyslexia describe seeing lines of text compress, merge, or distort. Reduce the reading load as much as possible. Use familiar sans serif fonts, such as Arial or Calibri. Avoid using all capital letters and excessive italics or underlines. Include ample white space between sentences and paragraphs.

Ensure that color is not the only means of conveying information. People who are blind, have low vision, or are colorblind might miss out on the meaning conveyed by particular colors. For example, add an underline to color-coded hyperlink text so that people who are colorblind know that the text is linked even if they can't see the color. For headings, consider adding bold or using a larger font. For graphs, use differing textures or clearly label each item. Don't rely on color-coded keys alone.

Use sufficient contrast for text and background colors. Look for slide text that's hard to read or to distinguish from the background. Make sure there is strong contrast between text and background, so people with low vision can see it well. Use dark text on a light background, or reverse it. White and black schemes also make it easier for people who are colorblind to distinguish text and shapes. If you do wish to use color, make sure that the background and text have a high contrast.

Provide a takeaway handout for attendees. Keep these same guidelines in mind when producing the handout—sufficient white space, good sized fonts, not too much language, clear and accessible visuals.

Include alternative text with all visuals and tables. If making your presentation available after the fact, keep in mind that some may be using screen readers or other translation aids. All visuals should have "alt text" to help people who can't see the screen understand what's important in images and other visuals. Avoid using text in images as the sole method of conveying important information.

Make sure slide contents can be read in the order that you intend. When someone who can see reads a slide, they usually read things, such as text or a picture, in the order the elements appear on the slide. In contrast, a screen reader reads the elements of a slide in the order they were added to the slide. PowerPoint contains built-in slide layouts that you can apply to any slide. When you use them with a new slide, these layouts automatically make sure that the reading order works for everyone.

Adapted from "Make Your PowerPoints Accessible," <https://support.office.com/en-us/article/Make-your-PowerPoint-presentations-accessible-6f7772b2-2f33-4bd2-8ca7-dae3b2b3ef25>, where you can also find how-to resources and tips.