

# PDF Accessibility

## Accessible PDFs benefits access for many students

- Text-based PDFs allow students to use apps to highlight text
- Text-based PDFs all students to use screen reading devices and apps to read the document out loud
- PDFs with tagged tree headings structures allows screen reading devices to navigate the organization of the document
- PDFs with alt text allow screen reading devices to read the description of an image or figure. Information conveyed through the image or figure is not invisible to the student.

## Strategies that will help make a PDF accessible

- Make sure the PDF text is readable to multiple devices such as screen readers and PDF readers. Often documents are scanned into PDFs, especially older files, which is a great way to take a print document digital. But it also makes the document unreadable to any screen reader software because the screen reader will see the text as an image.
- If you are using a scanned image of a textbook chapter or article, rather than changing the PDF, it might be easier to find a clean, text copy of the materials. Librarians can help with this search.
- In Adobe Acrobat, you can use the “recognize text” application under the “tools” tab to create text. Remember to check the text to assure quality and

consistency with the original scanned image.

- You can also check the readability of your text by choosing the “Read Out Loud” option from the “View” menu.

## **Using the Accessibility Checker in Adobe**

- Accessibility checker is a tool located on the right-hand navigation on the PDF editor (add image)
- Click on the Accessibility Icon
- Choose to Full Check from the Accessibility menu – a menu box will appear on the screen.
- Select “Create Accessibility Report” option
- Select individual elements or choose “Select All”
- Click “Start Checking” – an Accessibility Report will generate on the left side of the document
- Read through the issues
- Clicking the individual element to find its location in the document
- Suggestions for repairing accessibility issues in your document are located at the end of the accessibility report

## **Converting into a PDF**

If you are converting another type of document (Word document, PowerPoint presentation, etc.) into a PDF, you can easily check to make sure the PDF will be accessible:

- Make sure you are starting with an accessible word document or PowerPoint presentation (see above sections for advice on how to format these types of documents).
- Under the File tab, select Save as and then select PDF from the drop-down menu.
- Before you hit save, though, make sure to look under

Options to make sure Document structure tags for accessibility and Create bookmarks using Headings are checked. Or, you can make PDFs accessible in Adobe Acrobat Pro.

If you have the free Adobe Acrobat Reader (instead of the more expensive Adobe Acrobat Pro), you may not be able to make most of the changes to your PDFs, but you can still run an accessibility check.

In addition, one of the most important things you can do in terms of PDF accessibility is to tag your PDF files. You cannot see these tags on the PDF, but they provide an invisible textual representation of the content for screen readers. Depending upon your version of Adobe Acrobat, the option to add tags may be, within the Tools menu, included as an Add Tags to Document, or you may simply be able to use the Autotag option under Accessibility.

## Tutorials

- [Creating accessible PDFs from Microsoft Word](#)
- [Creating accessible PDFs in Adobe Acrobat \(Webinar\)](#)
- [Fixing inaccessible PDFs using Adobe Acrobat Pro](#)
- [Creating accessible PDF forms using Adobe Acrobat](#)
- [Creating accessible PDFs from Adobe InDesign](#)