

Making PowerPoint Presentations Accessible

Course content presented by an instructor via PowerPoint can be accessed by most students as long as they have either the program itself or the correct browser plug-in (PowerPoint Viewer). Problems arise when a student is deaf/hard of hearing, is blind or has low vision.

There are a number of things instructors can do to make their PowerPoint presentation accessible to all students, such as: **providing transcripts or captions for embedded audio; adding descriptions of images in the note pane; and providing alt-text descriptions for images that are non-decorative.** If you know one of your students is vision-impaired or hearing-impaired, you can improve your presentation immensely by providing the transcripts/descriptions of images/notes to them ahead of time so they can follow along during class. This is admittedly a lot of work up front, but the flow of your lecture will be smoother if you don't have to stop and explain each visual or audio file before showing it.

Designing a presentation

Normal View

The first step in designing an accessible presentation is to use Normal View to display the Outline/Slides and Notes panes.

- To view slides in Normal View: Click the **Normal View** button at the lower-left of the screen.

Outline Tab

In Normal View, the left pane consists of two Tabs: the Slides Tab and the Outline Tab.

Text on a PowerPoint slide is accessible if it can be viewed in the Outline Tab. You can even type the content of your slides in this tab:

- To move to the next slide, press **Ctrl+Enter**.
- To add additional text on a slide, such as bullets, after pressing **Enter**, press the **TAB** key.

Layout

Using layouts which have created ahead of time will help ensure new content is added to the presentation correctly and displayed in the Outline Tab.

- To view/change slide layouts:

On the **Task Pane** menu, click **Slide Layout**.

- If the Task Pane is not visible:

On the **View** menu, click **Task Pane**.

Notes Pane

Use the Notes Pane to describe all non-decorative images such as graphics and logos. Pay particular attention to informational images such as charts, graphs, and diagrams.

Making your pictures and exported content accessible

Add Alt-text to Images

An alt-text description will need to be provided for all non-decorative images.

1. Right-click selected image and then click **Format Picture**.
2. Click the **Alt Text** tab.
3. In the **Alt Text** box, type a title and description. Then click **OK**.

Provide an accessible electronic copy of the presentation

Another way to ensure accessibility is to create an electronic copy of the presentation in a tagged and accessible PDF format.

1. Click the **File** tab, and then click **Save As**.
2. Click the arrow at the **Save as type** field, and select **PDF**.
3. Click **Options**.
4. Make sure that the **Document Structure Tags for Accessibility** check box is selected, and then click **OK**.
5. Click **Save**.

Provide a transcript and captions for embedded multimedia

Providing students with a transcript and captions of any multimedia embedded in a PowerPoint presentation will add to the accessibility of the media. Vision-impaired students, hearing impaired students, students learning the English Language (and just about anyone) can benefit from the materials being provided to them ahead of time—either electronically or in hand-out form.