# MS Excel Accessibility Checklist for PC

For general accessible document design guidelines, see the [Accessibility Document Design Fundamentals](https://citl.illinois.edu/citl-101/teaching-learning/make-your-course-accessible/document-accessibility-guides/accessible-document-design-fundamentals).

For Mac instructions, see the [MS Excel Accessibility Checklist (Mac)](https://cdn.citl.illinois.edu/documentation/Accessibility/Checklists/excel-mac.docx).

**\*Note**: For accessibility support and features, please use the **MS 365 desktop version** or **older MS versions**. The online version of 365 lacks any such support or features.

## Use Table Titles and Avoid Blank Rows and Columns

* One widespread mistake is leaving column or row A blank (because it makes it look like a margin).
* Place the table title (aka caption) in the first cell in the row so screen readers can find it easily. Select the **Home**tab, go to the **Alignment** group, select **Merge & Center** to merge cells, and center the title.
* The title rests in a separate, merged row **before** the table. Do **not** include the title within the table.
* It's OK to have **merged cells in titles**, but **do not merge cells in the data part of the table**.
* Resize rows and columns to provide spacing that makes the table readable (rather than using blank cells to create spacing).
* Keeping **one table to a worksheet** is **preferred** when possible.
* If there are **two or more tables on the same worksheet**, leave **one merged blank row** between them; this is the **least preferred option**.
* Resize the blank row to create a visually appealing space if desired.
* **Delete** **extra blank rows and columns** other than the row between tables. Removing or hiding extra rows and columns ensures that users using screen readers know the existing table has ended.
  + To select the rows or columns, use the **Shift + End + Arrow keys** in Windows. Then choose **Hide** or **Delete** from the right-click menu.

## Table Cell Range and Header Cells: Define the Regions

* Use the **Names** feature to name a range of cells so that screen readers voice the header cells' names and each cell's value.
* Select the top-left cell in the table. Count all row and column headers as part of your table.
* Go to the Formulas tab in the Ribbon and choose **Name Manager** in the **Defined Names** group. Choose **New** in the top left corner.
* A new dialog box opens. In the **Name field**, type **TitleRegion,** then put a 1 if this is the first table on the worksheet, then a period, then the range of cells in the table from top left to bottom right (with a period in between), then another period, then the worksheet number. For example, the Title code might look like this: **TitleRegion1.a2.g7.2**.
* Activate OK and Close.

## Use Alt Text Descriptions for Charts

* Right-click on the chart and select **View Alt Text** orselect the image and go to **Review**> **Check Accessibility**> **Alt Text**.
* The **Alt Text** panel opens to the right. Type a **brief description** with enough detail to explain the chart, then close the panel.

## Use Place in Cell feature for Informative Images

**Avoid** using the **Place over Cells** feature to format images because it is not accessible. Screen readers cannot render floating images because they are not anchored to the sheet.

* In the Ribbon, go to the **Insert tab> Pictures> Place in Cell> This Device**.
* **Add** the image and it populates the cell. **Ignore** the **Place over Cells icon** at the top right corner (of the cell) by removing the image. It will float above the sheet.
* **Resize** the cell to enlarge the image by going to **Cells** under the **Home tab**; activate the Format and use the **Row Height** or **Column Width** to manipulate resizing.

## Use Alt Text for Informative Images

* Right-click the image, then select **View Alt Text** in the dropdown menu or select the image and go to **Review**> **Check Accessibility**> **Alt Text**.
* The **Alt Text** panel opens to the right side. Type a **brief description** with enough detail to explain the image, then close the panel.

## Use Meaningful Text for Links

**Avoid** link text like “more,” “click here,” or “here” that has no clear meaning out of context. Clear link text is helpful for everyone, especially assistive technology users who often pull up a separate list of links on a page that need to make sense out of their immediate context.

* Type text describing the link’s **destination** (e.g., WebAIM’s Contrast Checker).
* Select the text and open the submenu by right-clicking or selecting the right-click keyboard option
* Then, choose **Link**, and enter the URL.

## Use Sufficient Color Contrast

Use a free tool like [WebAIM’s Contrast Checker](https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/) to ensure sufficient color contrast between the foreground (text or graphics) and background. Be sure to check the color contrast of any links as well. See [WebAIM’s Link Contrast Checker](https://webaim.org/resources/linkcontrastchecker/).

* Use the **checker’s dropper tools** to select the **foreground** and **background** colors.
* The **checker results** indicate whether selected colors **meet** **accessibility standards**.
* The checker’s slider tool can be used to adjust colors as needed.

## Document Properties: Identify the Title and Author

* On the Windows main menu, select **File,** then expand the menu for **Info** and choose **Properties** on the right-hand side.
* From the **Summary** tab of the **Properties** dialog, add or change the **Title** and the **Author**.

## Additional Resources

* [TPGI Color Contrast Analyzer (CCA)](https://www.tpgi.com/color-contrast-checker/)
* [ColorZilla](https://www.colorzilla.com/chrome/) – Browser based color analyzer for Chrome
* [Excel Accessibility Guide](https://citl.illinois.edu/citl-101/teaching-learning/make-your-course-accessible/document-accessibility-guides/excel-accessibility-guide)

**Important:** If you are working with disabled students who use accessible course documents in your course, you must reach out to [DRES Accessible Media Services](http://dres-accessible-media@illinois.edu./) ([dres-accessible-media@illinois.edu](mailto:dres-accessible-media@illinois.edu)) for assistance.