# PDF Accessibility & Conversion Checklist for Mac

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 PC instructions, see the [PDF Accessibility & Conversion Checklist (PC)](https://cdn.citl.illinois.edu/documentation/Accessibility/Checklists/pdf-pc.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.

## Method 1: Converting MS Word to PDF Using the Acrobat Tab

The Adobe Acrobat plugin for Word produces fewer errors than Method 2. Use this Method 1 if you have **Adobe Acrobat Pro** installed on your computer. You can get Creative Cloud suite for free from the [U of I WebStore](https://go.illinois.edu/ccsuite).

* Start with a [well-structured Word document](https://citl.illinois.edu/citl-101/teaching-learning/make-your-course-accessible/document-accessibility-guides/word-accessibility-guide).
* In Word, select the **Acrobat** tab and select **Create PDF**.
* Enter a file name in the **File** name field.
* In the Save as type field, **PDF files** are automatically added.
* Activate the **Options** button and make sure the **Enable Accessibility and reflow with tagged Adobe PDF** is checked.

This method will tag the document so headings and lists are correctly interpreted by screen readers. Additional remediation using Adobe Acrobat Pro may be needed to adjust reading order.

## Method 2: Converting MS Word to PDF Using the File tab

Use this method if you do not have Adobe Acrobat Pro installed. Again, for better results, you are encouraged to install or update Adobe Acrobat to **Adobe Acrobat Pro** by getting the free Creative Cloud suite from the [U of I WebStore](https://go.illinois.edu/ccsuite).

* Start with a [well-structured Word document](https://citl.illinois.edu/citl-101/teaching-learning/make-your-course-accessible/document-accessibility-guides/word-accessibility-guide).
* In Word, select the **File** tab and select **Save As**. In the **Save As** type field, select **PDF (\*.pdf.)** and activate **More Options**…
* Enter a file name in the **File** name field.
* Select the **Options** button and make sure the **Document structure tags for accessibility** is checked.

This method will tag the document so headings and lists are correctly interpreted by screen readers. Additional remediation using Adobe Acrobat Pro may be needed to adjust reading order.

## Method 3: Remediating a Scanned Image Document

### Step 1: Check for an Existing Digital Copy

If the document is a scanned image, before using OCR, first check to make sure the journal article or book chapter isn’t available through our library, in full-text databases like EBSCO, for example, where the document is typically offered in one or more digital formats.

### Step 2: Run Optical Character Recognition (OCR) on the Scanned Image

If you cannot locate a digital copy, then you will need to resort to OCR. If you can locate a digital copy, then proceed to Step 3: Run Adobe Acrobat Pro Built-in Accessibility Checker.

**\*Note:** OCR alone is not sufficient for remediation purposes. Scanned image documents require remediation by a document accessibility specialist.

**Instructions for running OCR in Adobe Acrobat Pro:**

* Open the scanned PDF file in Adobe Acrobat Pro.
* In the **Tools** center or panel, select the **Scan and OCR tool** and select either **Enhance** or **Recognize Text** tab.

From the **Enhance tab**

* Activate the **Enhance** tab and select the **Scanned Document**.
* Check that **Recognize Text** is checked and activate the **Enhance** blue button.
* Check the **Tags panel** to see if it captures all the text. Use the **down arrow key** to navigate through the Tags tree; it displays **highlighted text** to ensure they are tagged.
* Fix errors if they are tagged incorrectly or if tags are missing.
* Go to the **File tab** and select **Save As**.

From the **Recognize Text tab**

* Select **In this file**.
* Activate the **Recognize Text** blue button.
* Check the **Tags panel** to see if it captures all the text. Use the **down arrow key** to navigate through the Tags tree; it displays **highlighted text** to ensure they are tagged.
* Fix errors if they are tagged incorrectly or if tags are missing.
* Go to the **File tab** and select **Save As**.

### Step 3: Run Adobe Acrobat Pro Built-in Accessibility Checker

* In the **Tools** panel, select **Accessibility** to bring up the Accessibility tools.
* From the Accessibility tools, select the **Accessibility Check** button. The **Accessibility Checker Options** dialog opens. Make sure all items are checked.
* Activate the **Start Checking** button.
* The **Accessibility Checker** with **results** will be displayed in the left pane.
* Following the Accessibility Checker’s results, it will ask you to check manually for two things:
  + Check the reading order; is it in logical (visual) order? Does it make sense?
  + Check the color contrast, e.g., link text, image, etc. See **Step 4: Run WebAIM’s Contrast Checker**.

**\*Note**: After making corrections manually, the Checker will still display manual checks required for reading order and color contrast. If you have checked both, you can safely disregard these warning messages.

### Step 4: Run WebAIM’s Contrast Checker

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, Author and Others

* In Acrobat Pro, select and expand the **Menu,** and select **Document Properties**. The Document Properties dialog opens.
* Add or change the Title and the Author from the **Description** tab of the Properties dialog.
* From the **Initial View** tab of the Properties dialog, see **Window Options** > **Show** and select **Document Title**.
* From the **Advanced** tab of the Properties dialog, see **Reading Options** > **Language** and select **English**.

## Additional Resources

* [TPGI Color Contrast Analyzer (CCA)](https://www.tpgi.com/color-contrast-checker/)
* [Convert an Image-only PDF with Text Recognition in Adobe Acrobat Pro](https://help.illinoisstate.edu/accessibility/website-and-digital/pdf-accessibility-with-adobe-acrobat-pro/convert-an-image-only-pdf-with-text-recognition-in-adobe-acrobat-pro)
* [Adobe Acrobat Accessibility Training Resources](https://helpx.adobe.com/acrobat/using/create-verify-pdf-accessibility.html)
* [Adobe Acrobat Accessibility](https://helpx.adobe.com/acrobat/using/create-verify-pdf-accessibility.html)
* [Accessing PDF Documents with Assistive Technology: A Screen Reader User's Guide](https://valleyrobotics.lodiusd.net/fs/resource-manager/view/c0224531-0133-4693-b109-f07d1cab074b)

**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.