



Technology & Accessibility Support

MAKING POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS ACCESSIBLE

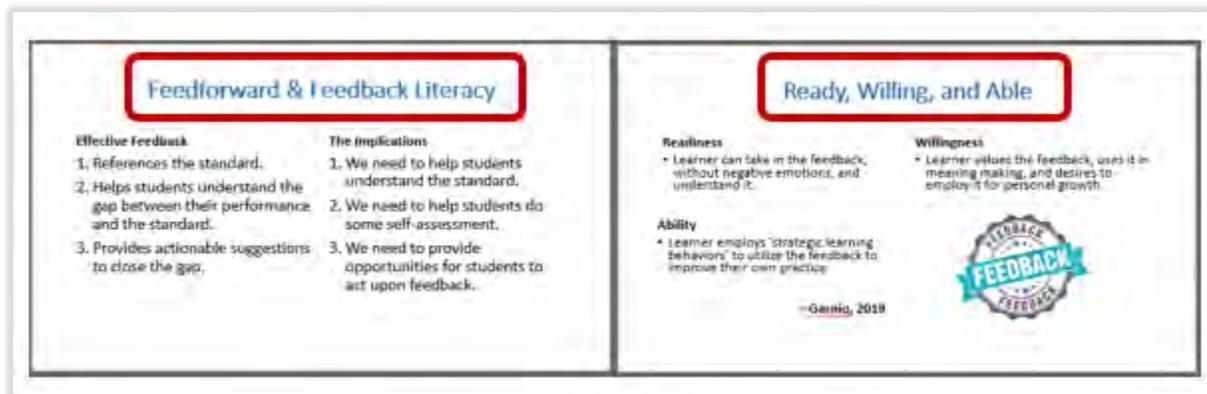
The Essentials

To make a PowerPoint presentation accessible, follow these basic rules:

- Give each slide a unique title
- Provide alternate text for images
- Create meaningful hyperlinks
- Use bulleted/numbered lists
- Be careful using color
- Avoid adding 'text boxes'
- Run the accessibility checker
- Check reading order

Give Each Slide a Unique Title

Assistive technology uses each slide's title to help the user navigate through the presentation. Therefore, it's important to make sure that each slide has a title and that each title is unique.



What If I Don't Want a Title to Appear on My Slide?

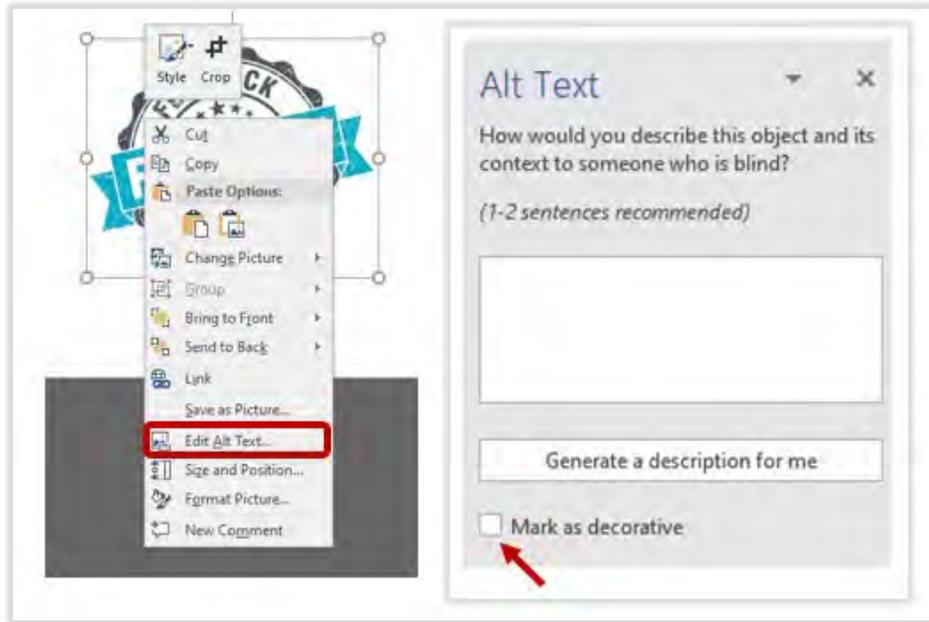
Don't delete the title. Instead, give the slide an appropriate title; then, click on title placeholder and move it off the slide but let it remain on the canvas.



Provide Alternative Text for Images

In general, the rule is that if an image provides information for a sighted reader, you need to provide “alternative text” or “alt text” for those using assistive technology. The easiest way to do so is simply right click on the picture and select **Edit Alt Text**.

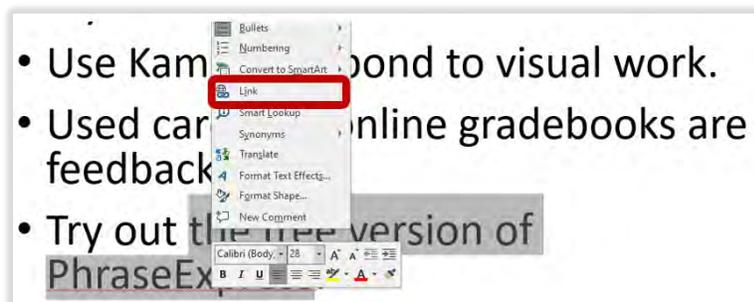
On the right side of the screen, the **Alt Text** dialog box will open. In the text box, provide a brief description of the picture. Keep it short, but you should provide the same information that a sighted person would be able to gather from the image. If the image does not add any significant information, you can simply check the **Mark as decorative** box.



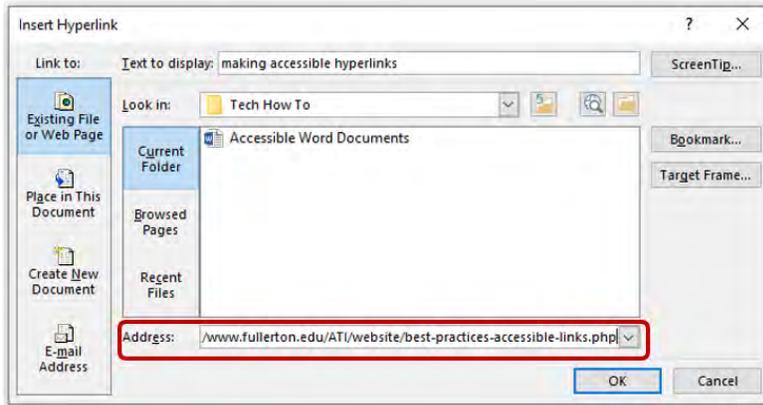
Create Meaningful Hyperlinks

In most cases, you want to use a small segment of plain text in your presentation’s content and that text should make sense as to where they link will take someone who clicks on it. Unless, you are providing the actual internet address for reference purposes, do not use a URL as a hyperlink.

To make that hyperlink, simply highlight the text you wish to turn into a link, right click, and select **Link**.



In the dialogue box that opens, paste the URL you want in the **Address** field. Then click **OK**.



For more tips, you can read about [making accessible hyperlinks](#).

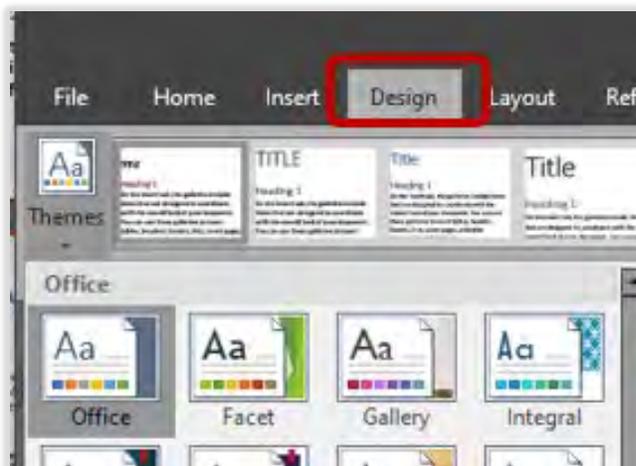
Use Bulleted & Numbered Lists

PowerPoint often defaults to using the bulleted list, which is often exactly what's needed. Use bullets to create an unordered list and numbers to create an ordered/chronological list. Without using such tools, you haven't really formatted a list, so a screen reader will not identify it as such. Note that the customizable list options (available by clicking on the dropdown menus) also create accessible lists.

Be Careful Using Color

In making accessible PowerPoint presentations, pay attention to two aspects about color:

1. Do not rely on color alone to send a message. Remember those with color-blindness may not receive your message if they cannot tell the difference between two bars on your graph. Therefore, in addition to color, it's important to use text and/or patterns to help distinguish between graphic elements that convey meaning.
2. Ensure that sufficient color contrast exists between any text and the background. The themes available under PowerPoint's **Design** tab generally provide sufficient color contrast, and changing to one of the available color schemes maintains that contrast.



You can find many other accessible templates by clicking on the **File** tab and selecting **New**. In the search box at the top, type **accessible templates** and PowerPoint will find a variety of free, accessible templates.



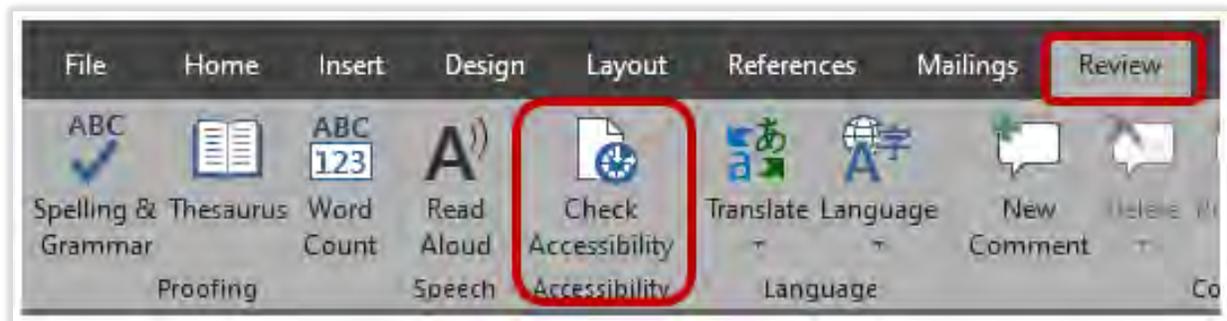
If desired, ITS/eLearning has also made available [UMW-branded, accessible PowerPoint templates](#).

Avoid Adding Textboxes

At times, we want to add another element to the slide. However, it's important to not add a textbox to do so. PowerPoint considers textboxes graphic elements, which will require you to add alternative text. Instead, click on one of the existing "placeholders" then copy and paste it. Move the placeholder to where you wish it to appear then adjust the text as needed.

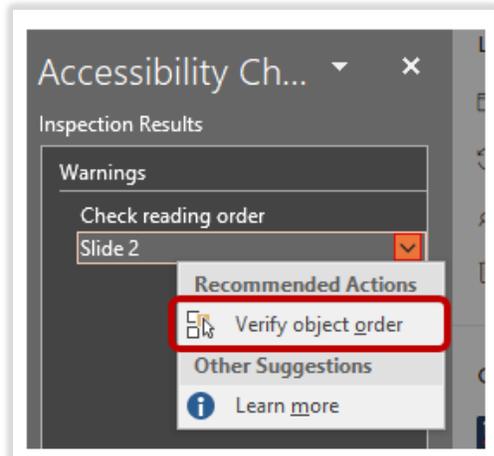
Run the Accessibility Checker

Running the accessibility checker will look for accessible design problems, including alerting users to possible color contrast problems. On the ribbon, click on the **Review** tab then click on **Check Accessibility**. Fix problems as necessary.

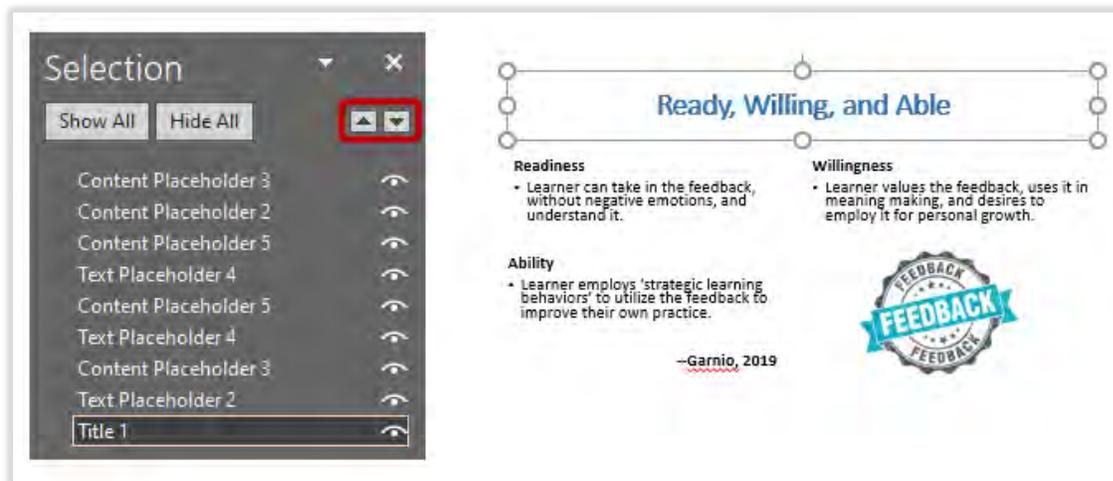


Check the Reading Order

One of the warnings users may receive when checking PowerPoint accessibility is **Check reading order**, which means the user needs to verify that assistive technology will read the slide in the order intended. Under the **Inspection Results**, PowerPoint will note the **Check reading order** warning and list all slides that need checking. Click on the down arrow for a slide and select **Verify object order**.



In the **Selection** pane, PowerPoint lists the elements to be read *in reverse order*. When you click on an element in the list, PowerPoint highlights that element on the slide. Starting at the bottom of the reading order list and working your way up, verify that assistive technology will read the elements in the desired order. If you need to move an element to a different spot in the reading order, highlight the element within the list, and use the up/down arrows (or simply drag-and-drop) to move the element to its proper spot in the reading order.



When the reading order is correct, click on the **X** to close on the Selection pane and move onto verifying the reading order of other slides.

Special Considerations when Presenting

When presenting, remember that blind and visually impaired participants will not be able to see images. If those images convey or add meaning to your presentation, make sure to verbally describe them—this is especially true about presenting data. Also, if you’re presenting in a web conferencing format, limit the amount of text on a slide and make the text larger; a “shared” screen is often difficult to read when crowded with small text.

If you need assistance, please contact eLearning at elarning@umwestern.edu.