

Tips for creating Accessible Presentations

Accessible Templates & Layouts

Start with PowerPoint built-in templates such as “Universal presentation” or “Geometric presentation”

Reading order is automatically built in

Use slide layouts with placeholders (title, content) not text boxes.

Each slide must have a unique title.

Text, Fonts & Alignment

Use sans-serif fonts such as Arial or Calibri

Font size should be:

≥18 pt for text

≥24 pt for headings

Align text left; avoid full justification

Use white space and line spacing ≥1.15.

Avoid italics, all caps, or underlining

Colour Contrast

Have a sufficient contrast between text and background

Minimum ratio: 4.5:1

Example, black text on white or yellow text on navy has good contrast

A light grey on white or red on black has a poor contrast

Text with grayscale view to check readability.



Use online tools like the [WCAG Contrast Checker](#).

Don't Use Colour Alone

Do not rely on colour alone to convey meaning.

Add symbols, labels, or special characters with colour

Example: ✓ Completed | ✗ Not done (instead of red/green).

Clear & Inclusive Language

Keep sentences short — 20 words maximum

Use active verbs and phrases

Spell out acronyms on first use.

Aim for an eighth-grade reading level

Define language in Slide or portion of text in a different language

Lists & Hyperlinks

Use PowerPoint's bullet/number tools (not dashes)

Screen readers recognize only real lists

Hyperlinks must be descriptive

For digital handouts: use informative text links such as
"to learn more, visit RickHansen.com"

For on-screen slides: use short URLs in CamelCase
"RickHansenFoundation.com"

Alt Text for Images

Add alt text to images

For informative images, be concise: use 150 characters or less

Example: “Bar chart showing sales growth from 2022–2025.”

Use long descriptions for complex images

Do not describe decorative images

Avoid “picture of” or “image of”

Charts & Graphs

Keep charts simple, no overload of data.

Summarize the main takeaway in text.

Example: “Chart shows steady growth of 20% per year.”

Provide a data table if details are needed.

Audio, Video & Captions

Add captions to videos.

Avoid auto-generated captions

Provide transcripts for audio clips.

Use audio descriptions for visuals in videos.

Reading Order

Ensure the reading order is accurate

Check the reading order via “Selection Pane.”

Ensure title → text → images is logical.

Use PowerPoint’s Accessibility Checker

Questions?

Email us at Info@RickHansen.com

Accessible PowerPoint Templates Step-By-Step Guide

How to access Microsoft's Accessible PowerPoint Templates

Microsoft PowerPoint offers a selection of accessible templates designed to meet basic accessibility standards. These templates help ensure your presentation is readable and usable by all audiences, including those using assistive technologies.

- Open PowerPoint and search for pre-defined accessible templates.
- Go to File > New.
- Type “accessible templates” in the search text field.
- Select a template to view its accessibility information.
- Click Create to open a new presentation based on the template.
- Browse PowerPoint themes for additional color, style, and font options

In addition to accessible templates, PowerPoint themes offer customizable design options. When choosing a theme, prioritize accessibility by selecting styles that support readability and visual clarity:

- On the Design tab, expand the Themes menu.
- Select a theme with appropriate accessibility features.
- Choose templates and themes that use:
 - Sans-serif fonts (18 pt or larger)
 - Solid backgrounds with high-contrast text colors