# Microsoft Excel Microsoft Excel Icon

# Making Documents Accessible

Creating an accessible Excel document can be achieved by making sure the structure and design of your spreadsheet is as accessible as possible to everyone. The layout of a spreadsheet makes it fairly straight forward for a screen reader to navigate, below are some tips on best practice when creating excel files.

## Best Practice

* Tables should be created on separate worksheets.
* Use a simple table structure.
* Give your table a title.
* Text should be Arial Point 14 and colour set as automatic.
* Adjust the cell so that all the text is visible.
* Tables should be positioned at top left of worksheet.
* Use shading on alternate rows, this will make it easier to follow each row. Auto fill blank row with light grey.
* Keep text horizontal in your columns and cells.
* Explain your data layout at the top - mapping - if this is more complicated use the first sheet for this.
* Include row and column headings to help with navigation of the table.
* Add alt text to images, such as pictures, screenshots, icons, videos, and 3D models, so that screen readers can read the text to describe the image.
* If your workbook has numerous worksheets, then keep the first worksheet as an index or contents. In this index you can have hyperlinks that will take you to the individual worksheets. Using meaningful text to describe hyperlink.
* Think about the correct naming of your workbook and the names of your worksheets within the workbook.
* Use accessibility checker (available from versions 2013 and later) - This is a free tool located in the Review tab that, once selected, will let you know of any accessibility issues and offer suggestions.
* When closing your document keep your cursor at the top left first cell.

## Things to avoid

* Don’t merge cells, split cells or use nested tables (table within table) A screen reader cannot navigate a merged cell. A title can have a merged cell but only the title.
* Don’t have text vertical and diagonal in the cells.
* Don’t have any unused worksheets.
* Don’t have empty cells within your table – you can add N/A (not applicable).
* Don’t use track changes.

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