# Microsoft PowerPoint Power Point Icon

# Making Presentations Accessible

As a visual medium PowerPoint is seldom the first choice when presenting to a group of visually impaired people, however it is accepted that it is a frequently used tool. Below is listed best practice for making your PowerPoint presentation accessible to all.

## Slide layouts

The most important aspect of PowerPoint accessibility is the correct use of slide layouts. These ensure that the information on the slides has the correct heading structure and reading order.

PowerPoint has a number of inbuilt slide layouts to choose from:

* On the “Home” tab select “New Slide”.
* Choose from one of the inbuilt slide layouts.

Most slide layouts include a title and one or more placeholder areas (where you add lists, text, pictures etc.). The title will be presented as a heading to screen reader users and is the first thing read on each slide.

Each slide should have a unique and descriptive slide title as this will make it easier for screen reader users to navigate the presentation. If you have two (or more) slides with the same title this will be highlighted as an error in the accessibility checker (“duplicate title”) – if you want to keep the slide titles the same you can add numbers at the end of the title to help differentiate different slides e.g. Introduction 1, Introduction 2 etc.

If you don’t want a title to appear on a slide you can add a hidden title as follows:

* Type title text in to the title box on your slide.
* On the “Home” tab click “Arrange”, then select “Selection Pane”.
* In the Selection Pane click on the eye icon next to the title – this will hide it on the slide but it will still be read by a screen reader.

## Font size

The suggested font size for titles in PowerPoint is 36-44pt and other text should be 24-28pt. Ideally there should be a maximum of 6-8 lines of text per slide. Extra detail can be added to the notes section of the presentation.

## Contrast – Text and background

Use contrasting text to background with large screen presentations, an off white or duller background is more preferable to low vision attendees as this will go some way to preventing glare. Inverted colours are also an option here.

Do not use coloured text to highlight a point

Any diagrams or graphs should also be the same base colour scheme as the main presentation – good contrast will enable those that are colour blind to distinguish shapes.

## Tables

Use a simple table structure, and specify column header information.

Screen readers keep track of their location in a table by counting table cells. Screen readers also use header information to identify rows and columns. Don't contain split cells, merged cells, or nested tables.

## Images

As with Word, any images used in PowerPoint should be formatted to include alt text.

In PowerPoint 2016 and later

* Right click the image and select “Format Picture”
* In the Format Picture pane select the third icon (Size and Properties)
* Select Alt Text and type a description of the image in the “Description” box. **Do not** add any text to the “Title” box.
* If images have to be included remember that you must provide an audio description of the image as it appears on the presentation.

## Animation

It is best to avoid using animation, however, where animation is necessary to the content of the presentation (e.g. revealing answers to a quiz) ensure that you use simple animation effects.

## Hyperlinks

Hyperlinks within the presentation should be descriptive. If the presentation is going to be printed as a handout and provided electronically both a description and the website URL could be included in the link text e.g. [Visibility Scotland website (visibilityscotland.org.uk)](http://www.visibilityscotland.org.uk/)

## Check reading order

If slide layouts have been used to create a presentation then the reading order should be correct. However, on occasion you may need to add additional objects to a slide e.g. an image.

If you have added any objects to a slide you can check the reading order using the Selection Pane. On the “Home” tab select “Arrange” then “Selection Pane”.

When a screen reader reads through a slide in PowerPoint it reads the objects on the slide in the **reverse order** listed in the Selection Pane i.e. the slide title (which will be read first) will appear at the bottom of the list in the Selection Pane. You can reorder the objects on a slide in the Selection Pane if the reading order is not correct.

## Printing

If providing printed copies of a presentation to attendees use the three slides per page layout. It is worth taking a few copies of the presentation printed with a slide per page in case any attendees require a larger size.

If possible, share the presentation in advance as being able to review the slides ahead of time may help attendees to follow along and focus on the presenter rather than the slide content.

## Quick Summary

* Ensure each slide has a unique and descriptive title.
* Check reading order of your slides (selection pane).
* Avoid using animation and slide transitions – keep these simple if you do use them.
* Suggested font size is 36-44 for titles and 24-28 for other text – try to avoid text smaller than 22.
* Ideally no more than 6-8 lines of text per slide.
* When inserting tables – keep the table layout simple.
* Its good practice to use the **Accessibility Checker** once finished creating your presentation.

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