Accessibility Best Practices

for Excel Documents

## PART 1. DOCUMENT CONTENT

| **SUBJECT** | **DO** | **DON’T** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Plain Language | * Use plain language ([TermiumPlus - Plain Language](http://www.btb.termiumplus.gc.ca/tcdnstyl-chap?lang=fra&lettr=chap_catlog&info0=13));
* Know your audience ([A way with words](https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/disability/arc/words-images.html)); and
* Choose straightforward vocabulary and simple structures.
 | * Do not confuse with oversimplified or condescending style; and
* Do not write sentences of more than 20 words.
 |
| Organize content | Unilingual document. | * Avoid using Excel for playbook, user guide or for large volume of text; and
* Avoid using more than one language in the same document.
 |
| Acronyms | * Spell out the first time in usage; and
* Write them in uppercase.
 | Do not add a period or an apostrophe to acronyms. |

## PART 2. DOCUMENT FORMAT[[1]](#footnote-1)

[Run the Accessibility Checker (Microsoft website)](https://support.office.com/en-us/article/rules-for-the-accessibility-checker-651e08f2-0fc3-4e10-aaca-74b4a67101c1)

| **SUBJECT** | **DO** | **DON’T** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Named Styles | * Format your text using built-in styles;
* Use proper style order (1-2-3); and
* Modify the style appearance to better fit your needs;
 | * Avoid large amount of italic text, bold, underline and uppercase letters of text;
* Avoid identical headings.
 |
| Text ([Contrast Checker](https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/)) | * Use 12 points font size minimal for text;
* Use sufficient contrast between text and background (ratio 4.5:1);
* Choose Sans serif fonts, such as Arial, Helvetica, Verdana, or Century Gothic.;
 | * Avoid using ‘Justify’ for the alignment;
* Avoid hyphenated text;
* Avoid runs of blank spaces, Tabs, or returns for formatting;
* Avoid large amounts of text in bold, italics, underlined or all caps; and
* Avoid animated text.
 |
| Table Structure | * Use simple layout structure;
* Specify clear and concise table headers;
* Define header row; and
* Define name for range of cells.
 | * Avoid merging and splitting cells; and
* Avoid blank cell/row/column for formatting.
 |
| Colour (Colour Contrast Analyzer[[2]](#footnote-2)) | * Use sufficient contrast between text and background. Choose a contrast ratio of at least 3:1 for large text (18 point font); and
* Use pattern with colour for charts: distinguish between lines with shape, texture and line types.
 | Do not use colours to distinguish cells. |
| Visual Content | * Add Alternative (Alt) text to define content and function;
* Label images with a figure number and refer to them by their number;
* Add a title and axis labels to charts; and
* Add data table for complex objects such as charts.
 | * Avoid repeating information from the document in the image Alt-Text;
* Avoid Alt-Text longer than 2 sentences;
* Do not rely solely on charts to convey information;
* Avoid referring to images by their appearances;
* Avoid using “image of”, “graphic of” in the Alt-Text; and
* Avoid using images of text.
 |
| Audio and Video objects | * Add closed captioning;
* Add [AMI - Video Description](https://www.ami.ca/captioning-and-transcription); and
* Add text transcription.
 | Avoid long video to prevent pause/stop due to buffering. |
| Hyperlink | * Provide a descriptive text to hyperlinks (to where it leads); and
* Hyperlink text has to be clear “out of context”.
 | Avoid hyperlink text such as “click here” and “link to”. |
| Worksheet Name | * Give all sheet tabs descriptive and unique names; and
* Remove blank sheets.
 |  |



Please use the [Intake Form](http://iservice.prv/eng/imit/A11Y/intake.shtml) on iService or email us at edsc.ti-it.a11y.esdc@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca to request an Accessible Information and Communications Technology service.

1. [Creating Accessible Excel - Algonquin College](https://www.algonquincollege.com/accessibility-resources/accessible-education-tools/creating-accessible-documents/)

Make your [Excel documents accessible by Microsoft](https://support.office.com/en-us/article/make-your-excel-documents-accessible-to-people-with-disabilities-6cc05fc5-1314-48b5-8eb3-683e49b3e593) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Colour Contrast Analyser is available in the department. To obtain the tool, issue a ticket with the National ServiceDesk [↑](#footnote-ref-2)