

# Making Word Documents Accessible

## Using the Accessibility Checker

### How the Accessibility Checker Works

The accessibility checker in Word is a good place to start to ensure your document follows the basic accessibility requirements.

The accessibility checker checks your document against a set of possible issues. Each Issue that the checker finds is classified as an Error, Warning or Tip.

- An **error** is for content that makes a document difficult or impossible to read and understand for people with disabilities
- A **warning** is for content that in most (but not all) cases makes a document difficult to understand for people with disabilities
- A **tip** is for content that people with disabilities can understand but that could be presented in a different way to improve the user's experience

More details are provided at the end of this document describing the accessibility checker rules, what they check for, as well as how to fix each issue and why.

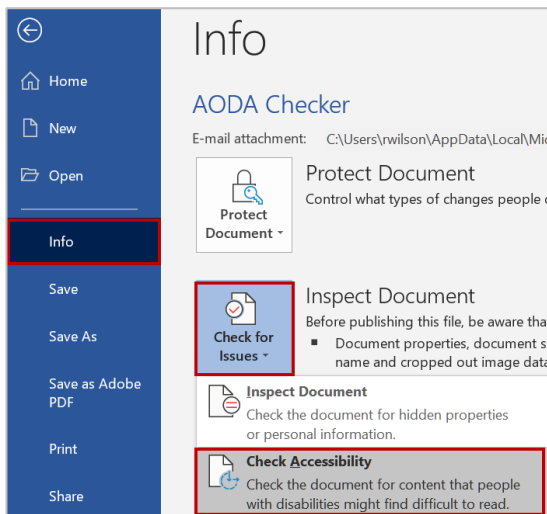
### Checking Your Document's Accessibility (if you have Office 365)

#### Open the Accessibility Checker Pane

There are two ways to access the accessibility checker.

##### Method 1 – The File Menu:

1. Click on the **File** tab and select **Info**.
2. Click **Check for Issues** and select **Check Accessibility** from the drop-down. *The Accessibility Checker pane opens.*

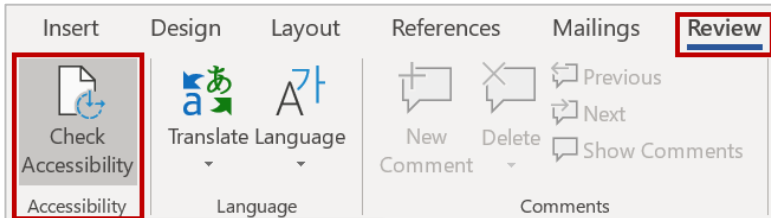


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### Method 2 – The Review Tab:

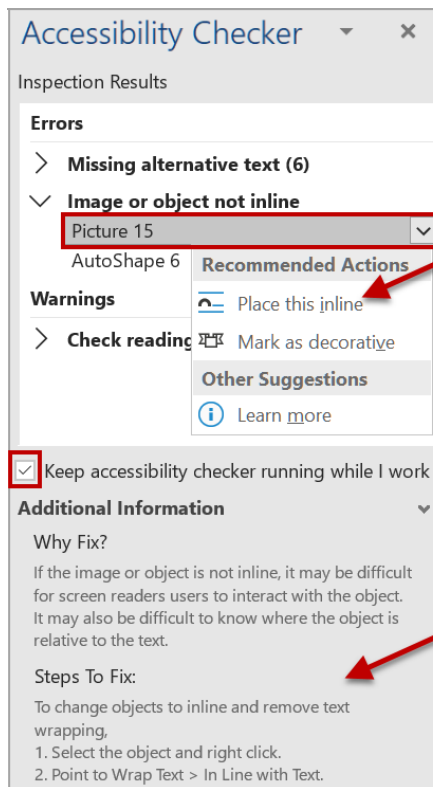
Click the **Review** tab and select **Check Accessibility**. *The Accessibility Checker pane opens.*



### Fixing Accessibility Issues

Whenever the Accessibility Checker finds an issue, the task pane shows information about why the content might be inaccessible. When you select an issue, it shows you how to repair or correct it.

The top of the pane displays the Inspection Results with all errors, warnings and tips listed. The Additional Information section at the bottom of the pane displays reasons the item should be corrected and the steps to fix it.



Selecting an item drop-down provides you with recommended actions

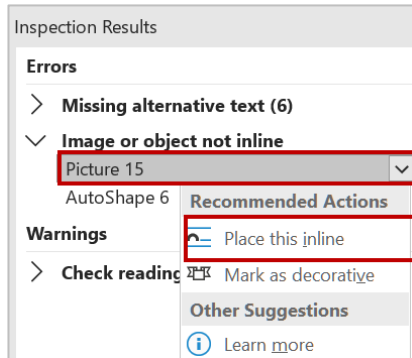
Instructions on how to fix the issue are listed here

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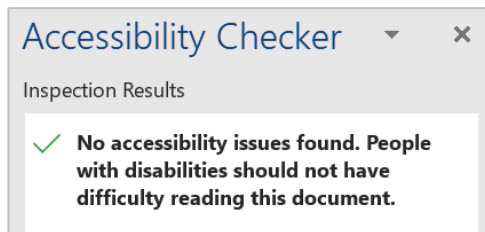
## Using the Accessibility Checker

To correct accessibility errors and warnings:

1. Select an issue listed in the Inspection Results that you want to correct.
2. Click the drop-down for that issue to open the Recommended Actions options.
3. Select an action from the drop-down to apply a one-click fix or go to the item location in your document to make corrections there.



4. After all errors have been corrected, the Accessibility Checker will display the message: **No accessibility issues found. People with disabilities should not have difficulty reading this document.**



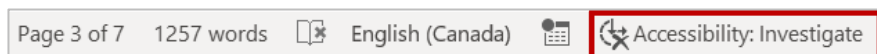
### Checking Accessibility While You Work

Another option is to keep the accessibility checker running while you work to keep track of accessibility issues in real time.

1. Check the **Keep accessibility checker running while I work** box in the Accessibility Checker.



2. The accessibility status of your document will display in the status bar at the bottom of your screen, with messages such as **Accessibility: Good to go** and **Accessibility: Investigate**.

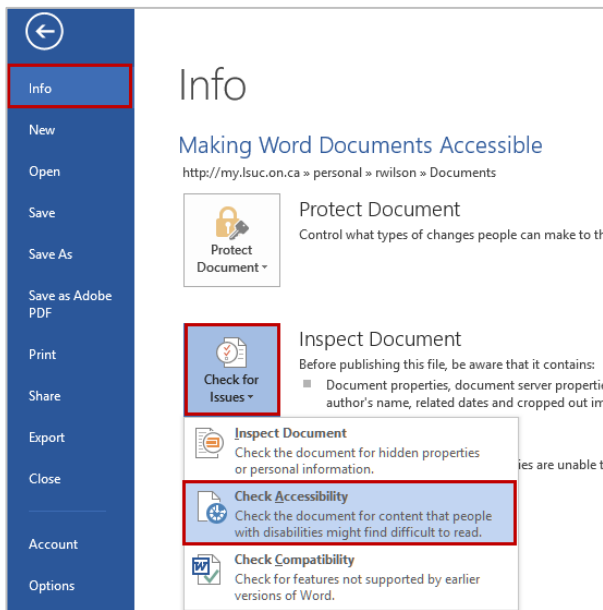


3. Click on the message on the status bar to open the Accessibility Checker pane where you can review any issues.

### Checking Your Document's Accessibility (if you have Office 2013)

#### Open the Accessibility Checker Pane

1. Click on the **File** tab and select **Info**.
2. Click **Check for Issues** and select **Check Accessibility** from the drop-down. *The Accessibility Checker pane opens.*



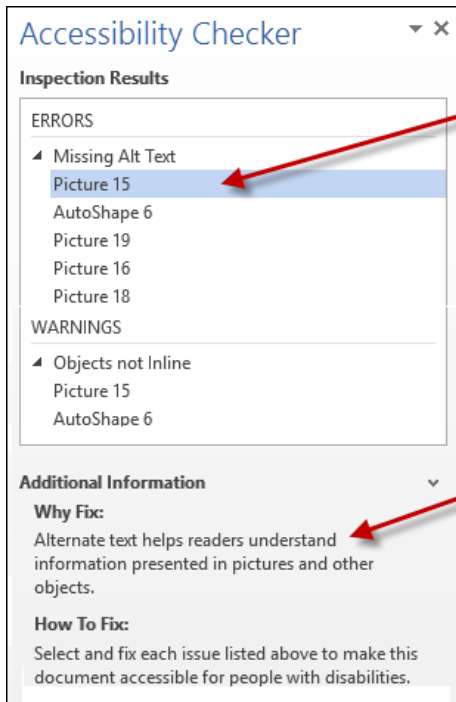
#### Fixing Accessibility Issues

Whenever the Accessibility Checker finds an issue, the task pane shows information about why the content might be inaccessible. When you select an issue, it shows you how to repair or correct it.

The top of the pane displays the Inspection Results with all errors, warnings and tips listed. The Additional Information section at the bottom of the pane displays reasons the item should be corrected and the steps to fix it.

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Selecting an item takes you to the item location in the document

Instructions on how to fix the issue are here

To correct accessibility errors and warnings:

1. Select an issue listed in the Inspection Results that you want to correct.
2. Review the Additional Information at the bottom of the checker to identify the most appropriate fix.
3. After making corrections, go back to the accessibility checker to ensure the fix was effective.

## About Errors, Warnings and Tips

The following tables itemize the Accessibility Checker rules, what they check for, where to learn how to fix each issue, and why you should fix each one.

### Errors

If content in the file makes it very difficult or impossible for someone with a disability to use, the Accessibility Checker classifies it as an error.

Rule	Accessibility Checker verifies	Why fix this?
All non-text content has alternative text ( <b>alt text</b> ).	All objects have alt text and the alt text doesn't contain image names or file extensions.	Screen readers speak the alternative text to describe images and other non-text content that users can't see. Based on alt text, users can understand the purpose and meaning of the described content.

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Rule	Accessibility Checker verifies	Why fix this?
Tables specify column header information.	Tables and/or blocks of cells have the header box selected or a header row indicated.	Users rely on the table headings to understand the content that is subsequently read by the screen reader. Also, assistive technology often uses the table header row to help convey to the user the current cursor location in the table and to provide information that enables the user to navigate the table.
Image or object is inline with the text.	Images or objects are positioned inline with the surrounding text.	If the image or object is not inline, it may be difficult for screen reader users to interact with the object. It may also be difficult to know where the object is relative to the text.

### Warnings

If the content in most (but not necessarily all) cases is difficult for people with disabilities to understand, the Accessibility Checker gives a warning.

Rule	Accessibility Checker verifies	Why fix this?
Table has a simple structure.	Tables are simple rectangles with no split cells, merged cells, or nesting.	Users navigate tables via keyboard shortcuts and assistive technology, which rely on simple table structures.
Sufficient contrast between text and background.	Colors of the text and background are different enough to make the text easy to see.	People with low vision often find it hard to read text that does not contrast with the background. If your document has a high level of contrast between the text and background, more people can see and use the content.

### Tips

When there is content that people with disabilities can understand but that could be better organized or could be presented in a way that can improve their experience, you see a tip.

Rule	Accessibility Checker verifies	Why fix this?
Layout tables are structured for easy navigation.	The layout order is logical for the language, and the tab order is not circular.	Users rely on the table layout to navigate through the content. It must be ordered logically for users to understand and navigate the content.
Documents use heading styles.	Content is organized with headings and/or a Table of Contents (TOC).	Headings and TOCs provide structural context to users and enable navigation and easier searching in the document.