Checking Documents for Accessibility & Saving Accessible PDFs

Because information is for everyone.

Topics

- How do I save an accessible PDF?
- How do I check my documents for accessibility?
- Where can I learn more?

How do I save and accessible PDF?

Saving an accessible PDF from Word & PowerPoint

- **Do not** print to PDF to save your file
- Use File > Save As or File > Save a Copy
  - On Windows, choose PDF from the file type dropdown, select “More options, select “Options”, select “Document structure tags for accessibility” checkbox, and save the file
  - On Mac, choose PDF as the file format, select “Best for electronic distribution and accessibility”, and save the file

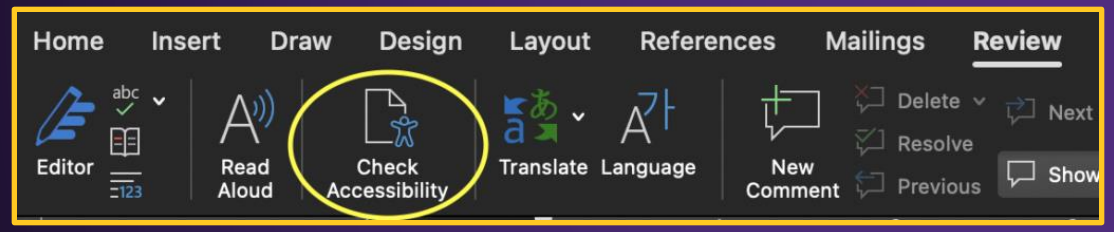
Saving an accessible PDF from InDesign

- **Do not** print to PDF to save your file
- In InDesign, go to **File > Export** and choose “Interactive PDF” as the file type.
- Make sure “All” is chosen for Forms and Media
- Make sure “Create Tagged PDF” and “Use Structure for Tab Order” are checked
- Under Advanced, make sure the Display Title is set to “Document Title” instead of “File Name”

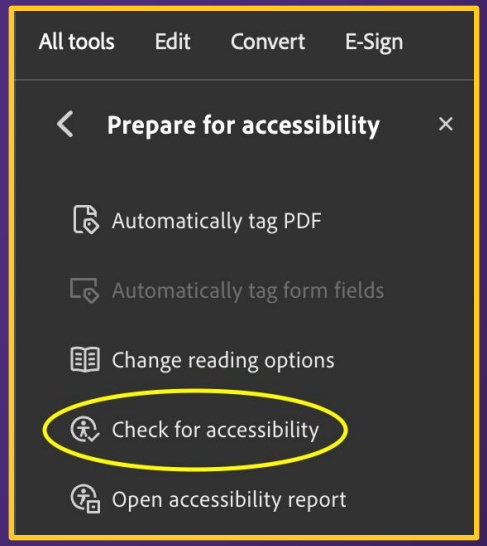
How do I check my documents for accessibility?

Start with automated checkers

For Microsoft products, use the built-in checker on the Review ribbon.



For PDFs, use the built-in checker in Acrobat Pro



Use PAC Checker if Using a Windows Machine

PAC Checker is a free program available for download on Windows machines that is capable of a more in-depth automated check for PDF accessibility.

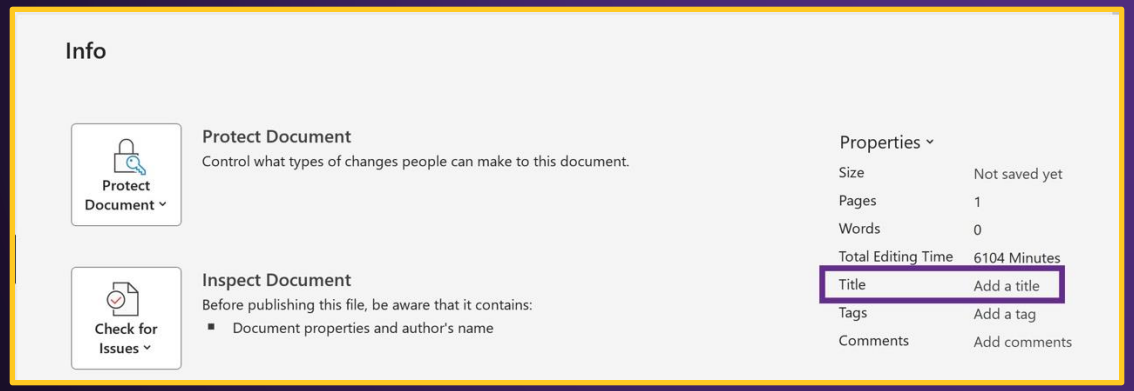
Automated Checkers Can’t Catch Everything

- Make sure you add a descriptive document title
- Use the built-in styles to tag headings and lists
- Replace empty paragraphs with space before/space after settings
- Check your image alt text to make sure it is accurate
- Ensure link text is descriptive
- Check your color contrast – especially for text over images
- Check the document reading order to make sure it matches the visual reading order

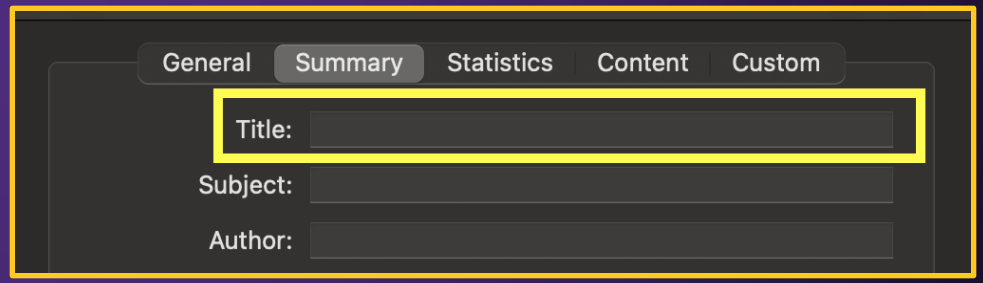
Checking Your Document Title in Word & PowerPoint

Make sure the document title is readable and properly describes the topic of the document.

On Windows, go to File > Info and check the Title field under the Properties section



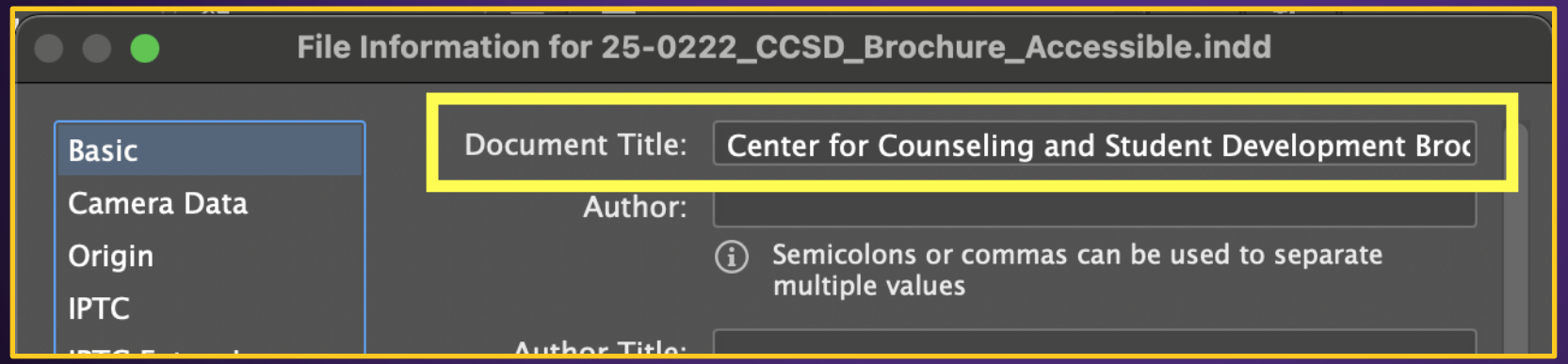
On Mac, go to File > Properties > Summary and check the title to the Title field



Checking Your Document Title in InDesign

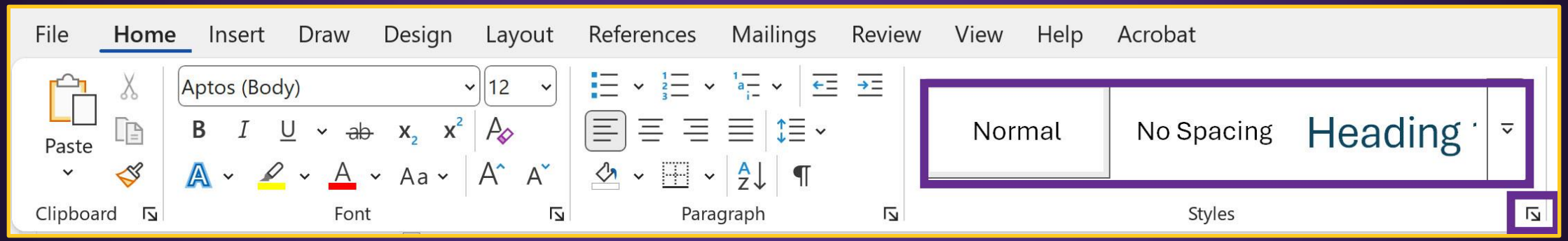
Make sure the document title is readable and properly describes the topic of the document.

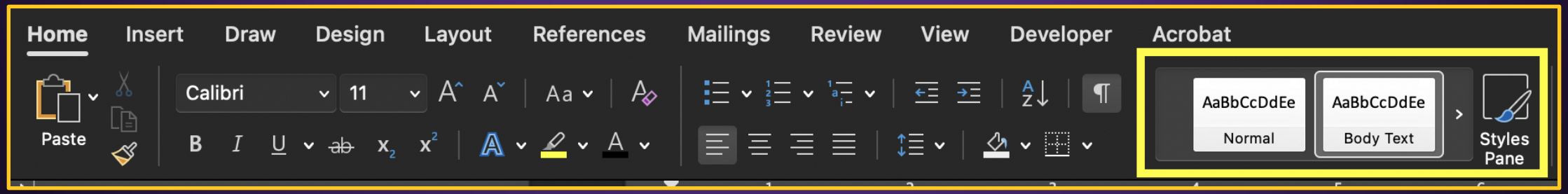
In InDesign, check the document title under **File > File Info** in the **Document Title** field.



Checking Headings in Word

Make sure the appropriate heading style is applied to text that functions as headings in the document.

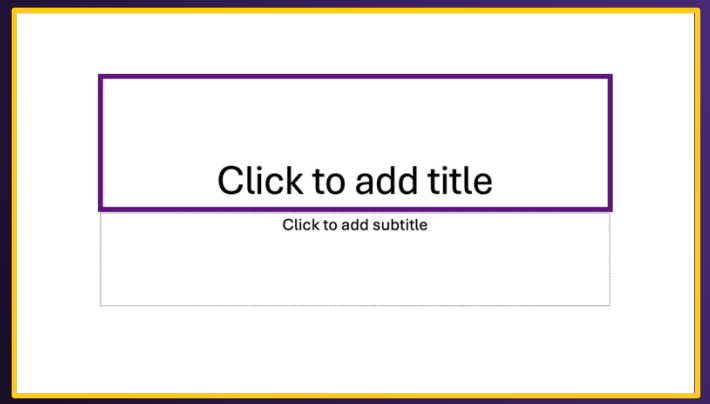


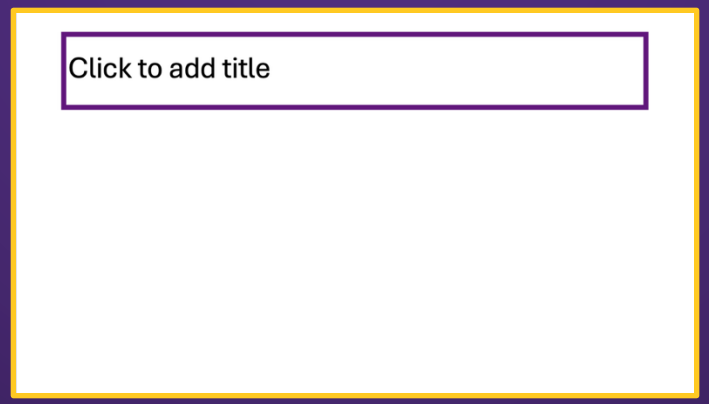


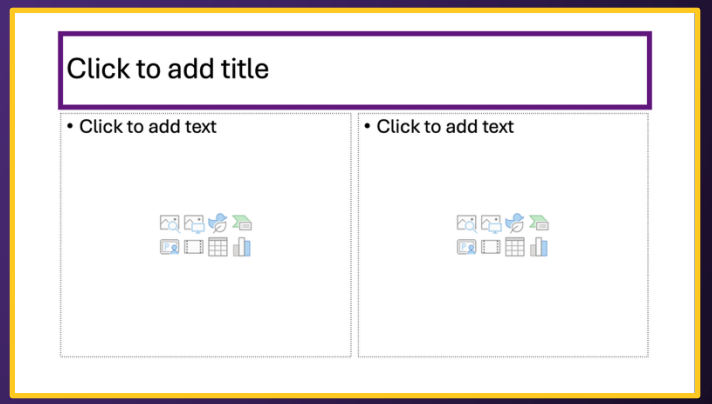
Checking Headings in PowerPoint

Make sure the tile of each slide is inside PowerPoint's built in title text boxes. Ensure each slide has a unique, descriptive title.

Reminder: PowerPoint allows only one heading per slide.

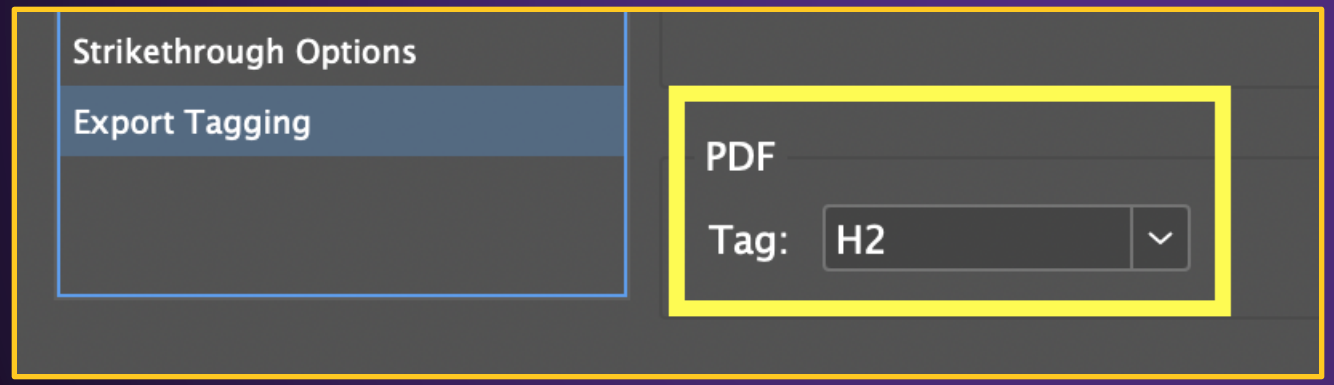






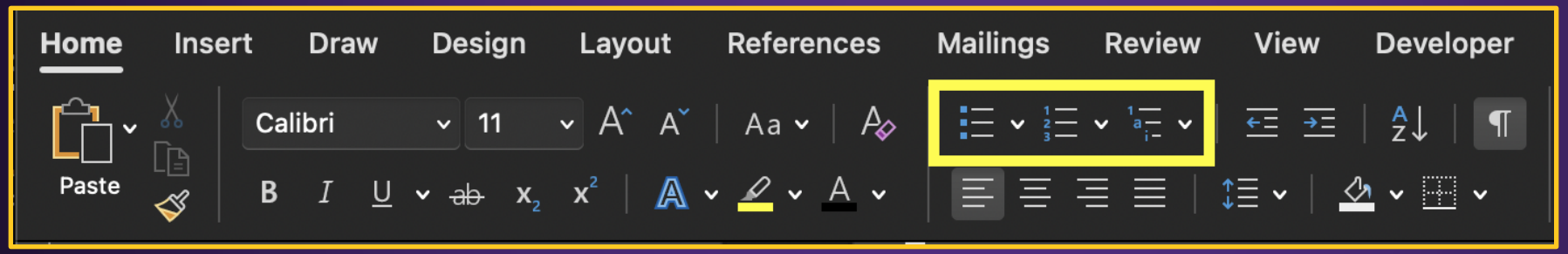
Checking Headings in InDesign

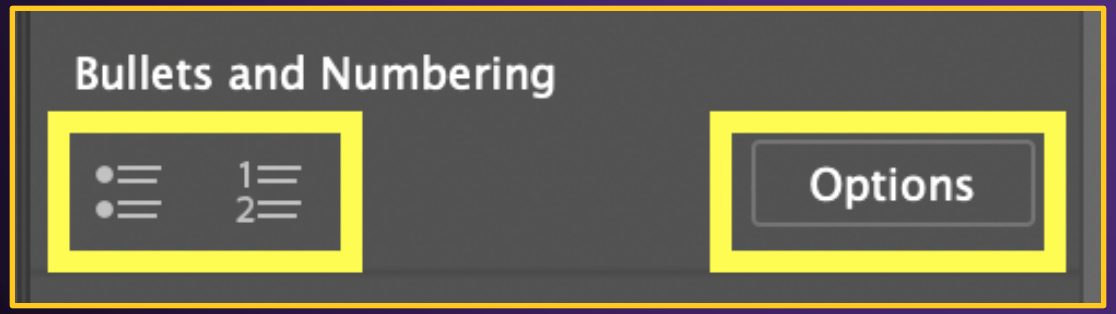
Make sure text that functions as headings has a paragraph style applied with the appropriate heading level set under the **Export Tagging** section of the **Paragraph Style Options**.



Checking Lists

Use proper list markup (unordered or ordered) to structure visual lists instead of manually typing bullets/numbers.

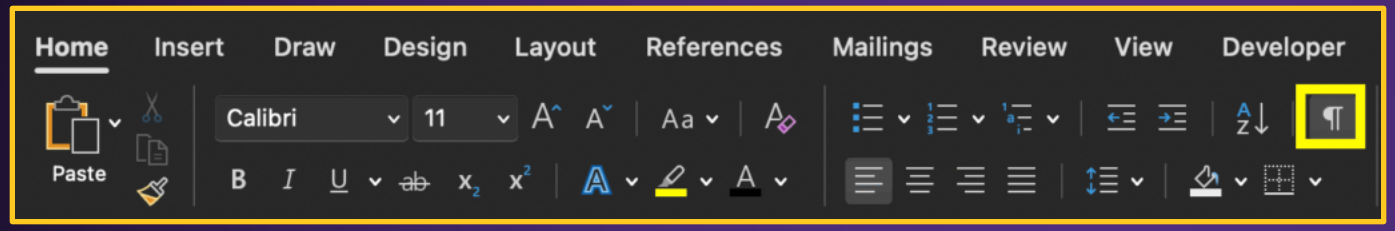


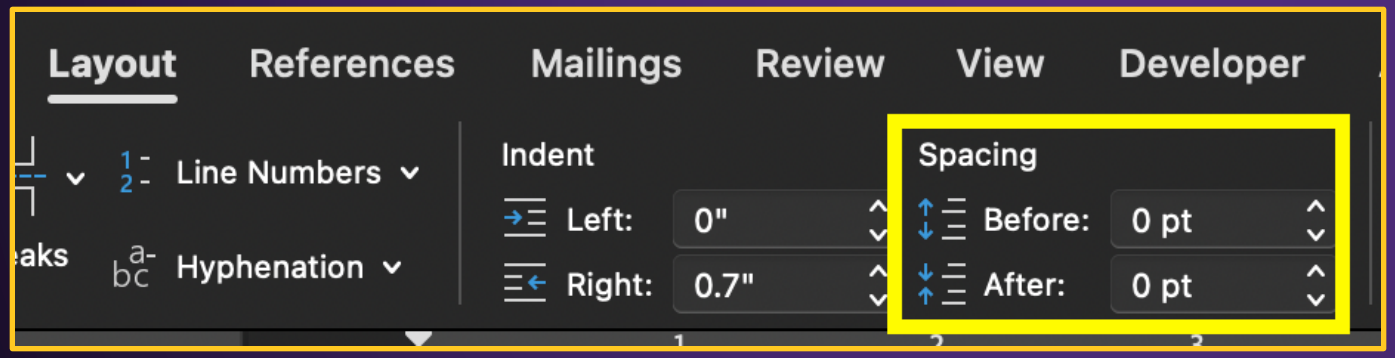


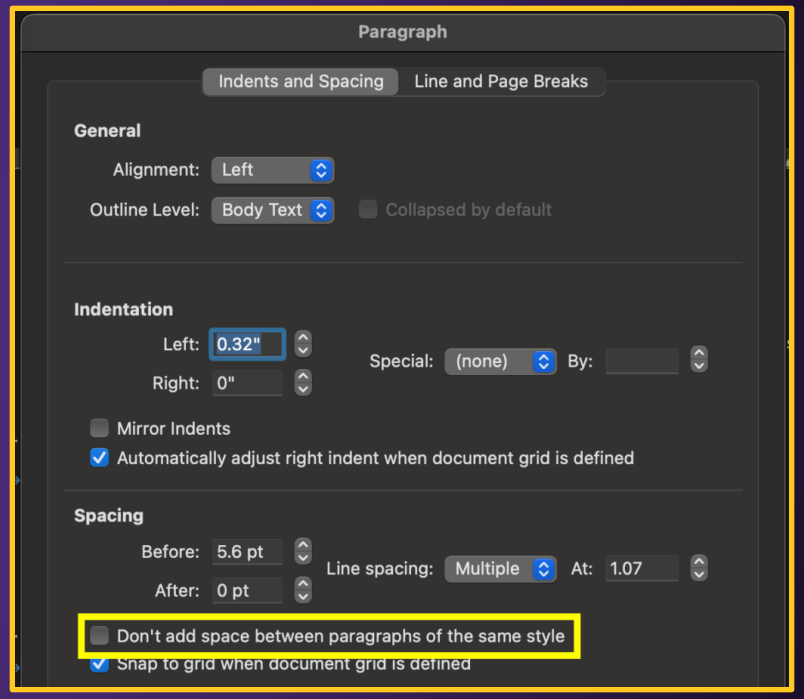
Checking Spacing in Microsoft Word & PowerPoint

- Tun on Show/Hide Special Characters in the **Home Ribbon** to locate empty paragraphs. A ¶ symbol on a line by itself is an empty paragraph.
- Use **Space Before/After in the Layout Ribbon t**o create space between blocks of text instead.
- To ensure spacing between same-styled paragraphs, select the text, right-click > **Paragraph** > uncheck *“Don’t add space between paragraphs of the same style.”*
- To move text to the next page, use a **Page Break.**

Spacing Screenshots for Word & PowerPoint

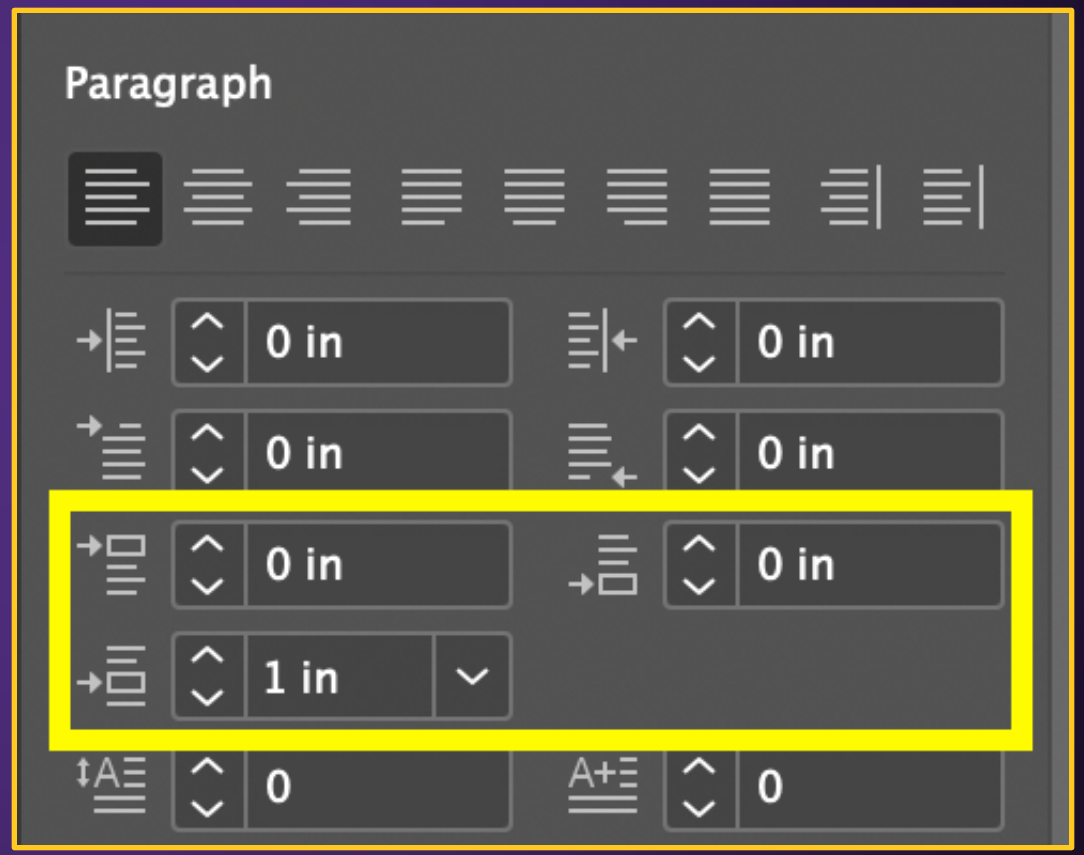






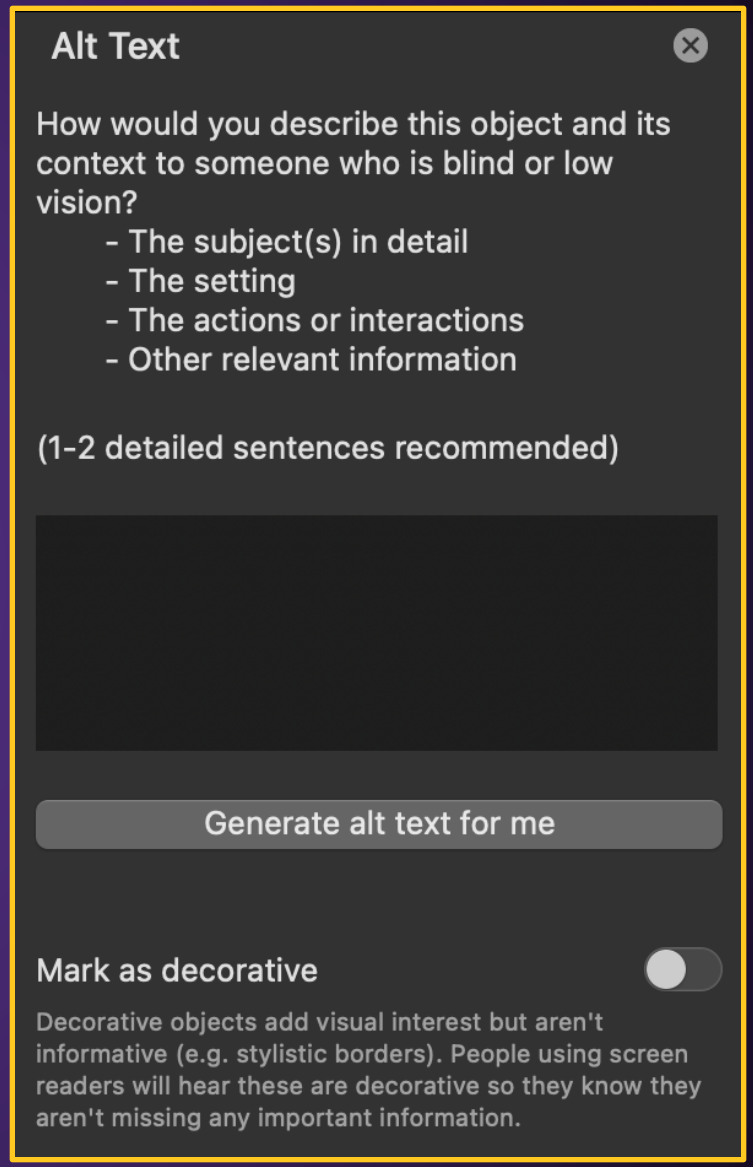
Checking Spacing in Adobe InDesign

- Locate empty paragraphs by viewing special characters (**Type** > **Show Hidden Characters**). A ¶ symbol on a line by itself is an empty paragraph.
- Use **Space Before/After** and **Space Between Paragraphs Using Same Style** in the Properties panel or apply via paragraph styles.



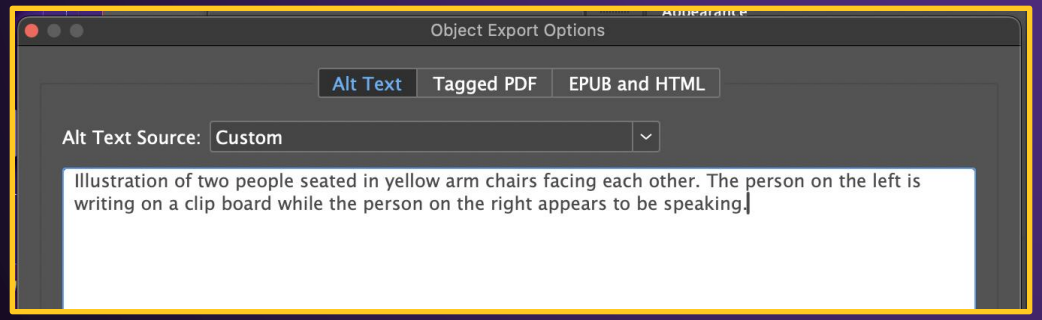
Checking Alt Text in Word & PowerPoint

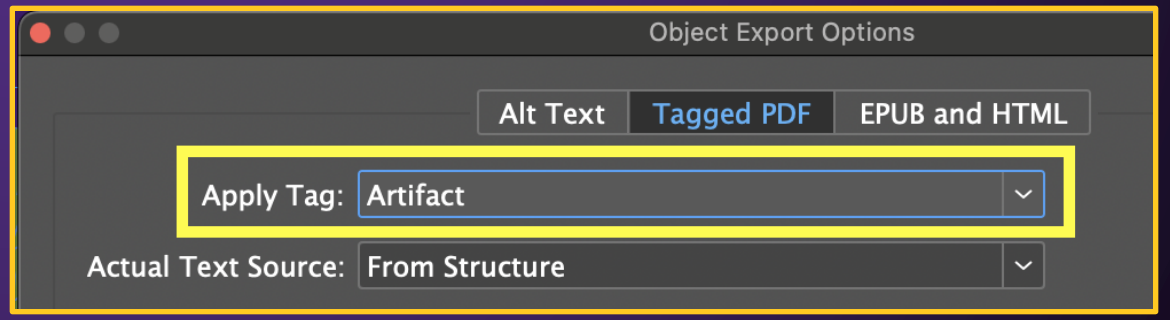
- Right click on the image and choose **View alt text**
- Important/descriptive images should have alt text added in the text box.
- Decorative images should have the **Mark as decorative** toggle turned on.



Checking Alt Text in InDesign

- Select the image and go to **Object > Object Export Options**
- Important/descriptive images should have alt text added under the **Alt Text** tab
- Decorative images should be tagged as **Artifacts** under the **Tagged PDF** tab





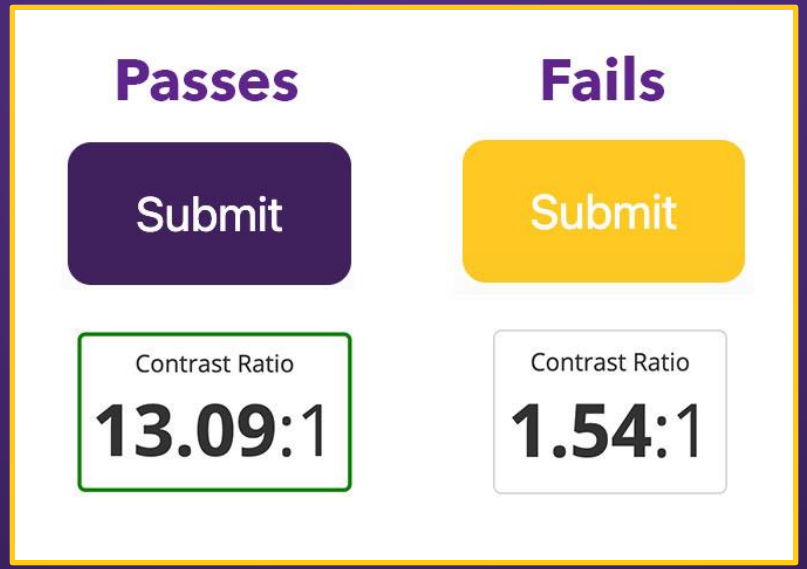
Checking Link Text

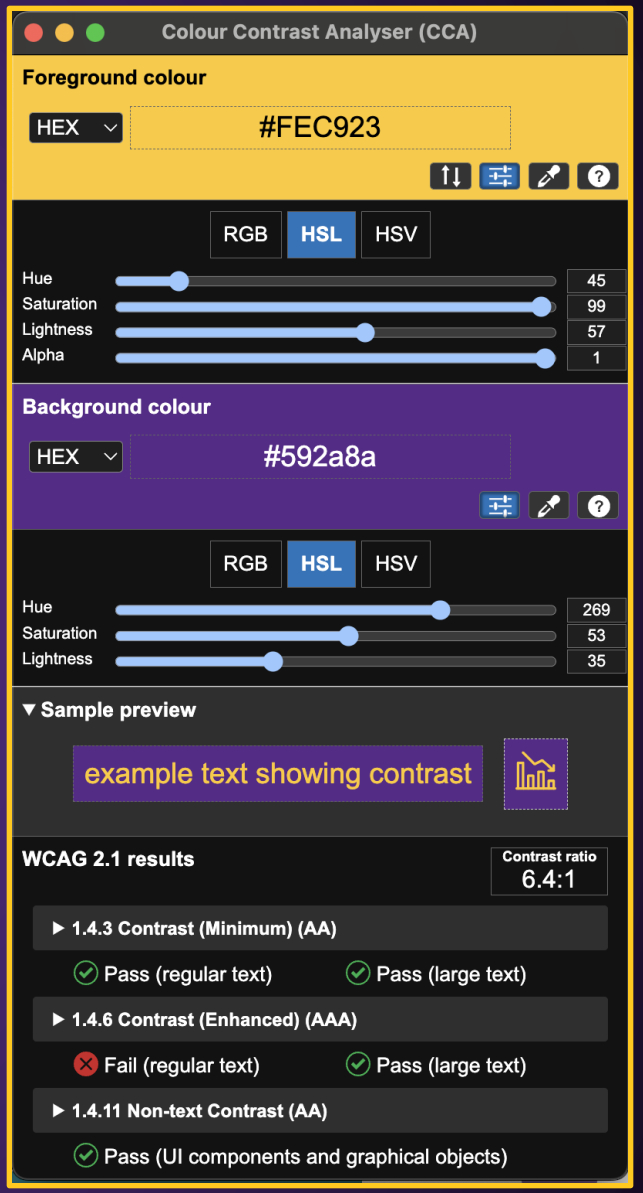
- Ensure text for links clearly explains their purpose and destination.
- Avoid generic phrases like “click here” or “read more,” as these provide no context for users relying on screen readers.
- Avoid using URLs as your link text (https://www.ecu.edu). Use the name of the page or site you are linking to instead to help the user understand where the link will take them.

Checking Color Contrast

Ensure that text has sufficient color contrast against its background to be readable by users with visual impairments. Tools like the TPGi Color Contrast Analyser can help evaluate color contrast.

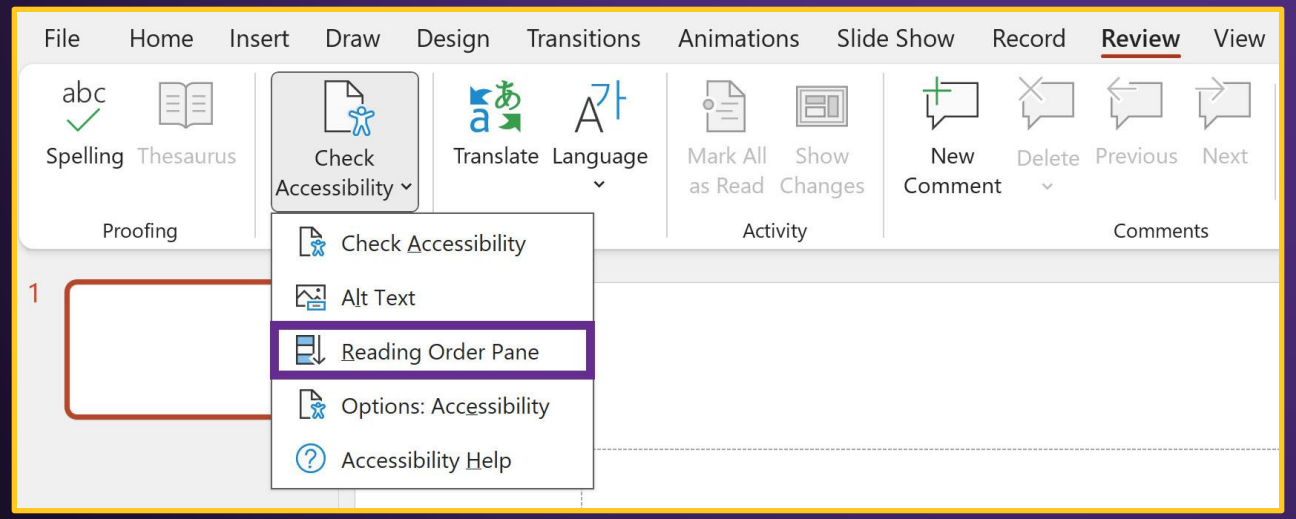
(available in Company Portal for Windows users)





Checking Reading Order in PowerPoint on Windows

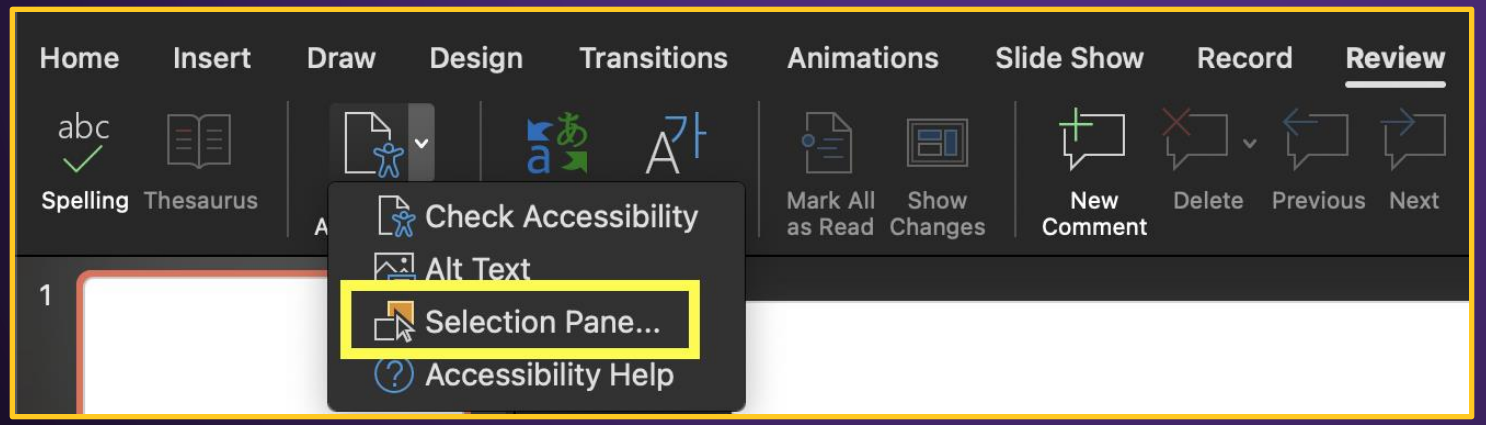
- Go to **Review ribbon** and click on the **Check Accessibility icon.**
- Choose **Reading Order Pane** from the menu.
- Click and drag the elements in the **Reading Order Pane** to be in the proper reading order.



Note: The reading order is **top to bottom**—the first item in the list is read first

Checking Reading Order in PowerPoint on Mac

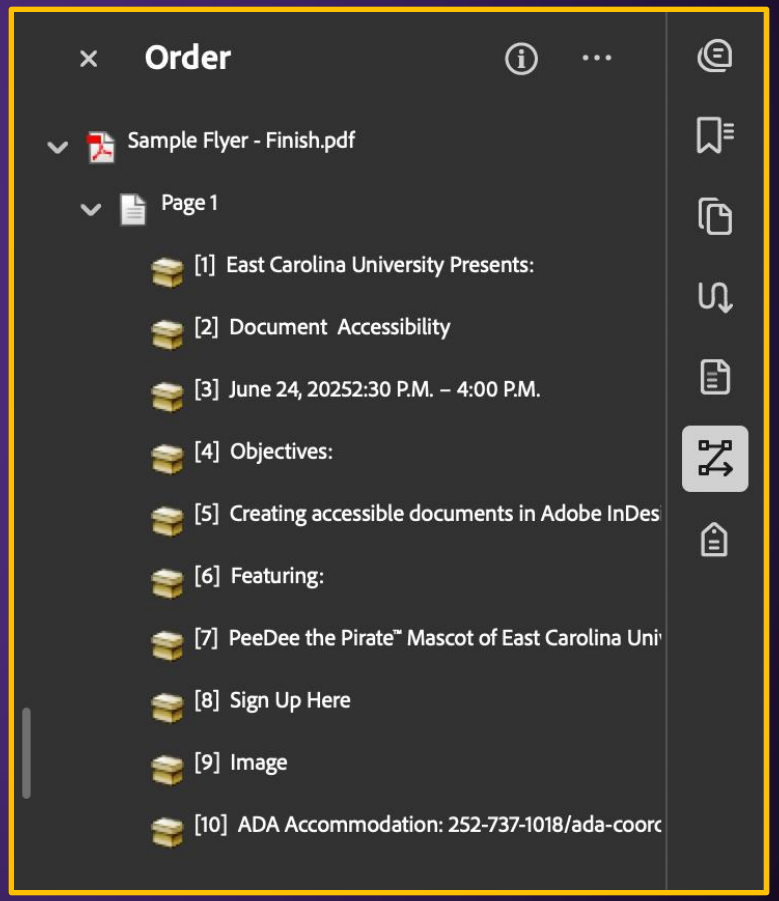
- Go to **Review ribbon** and click on the **Check Accessibility icon**.
- Choose **Selection Pane** from the menu.
- Click and drag the elements in the **Selection Pane** to be in the proper reading order.



Note: The reading order is **bottom to top**—the last item in the list is read first.

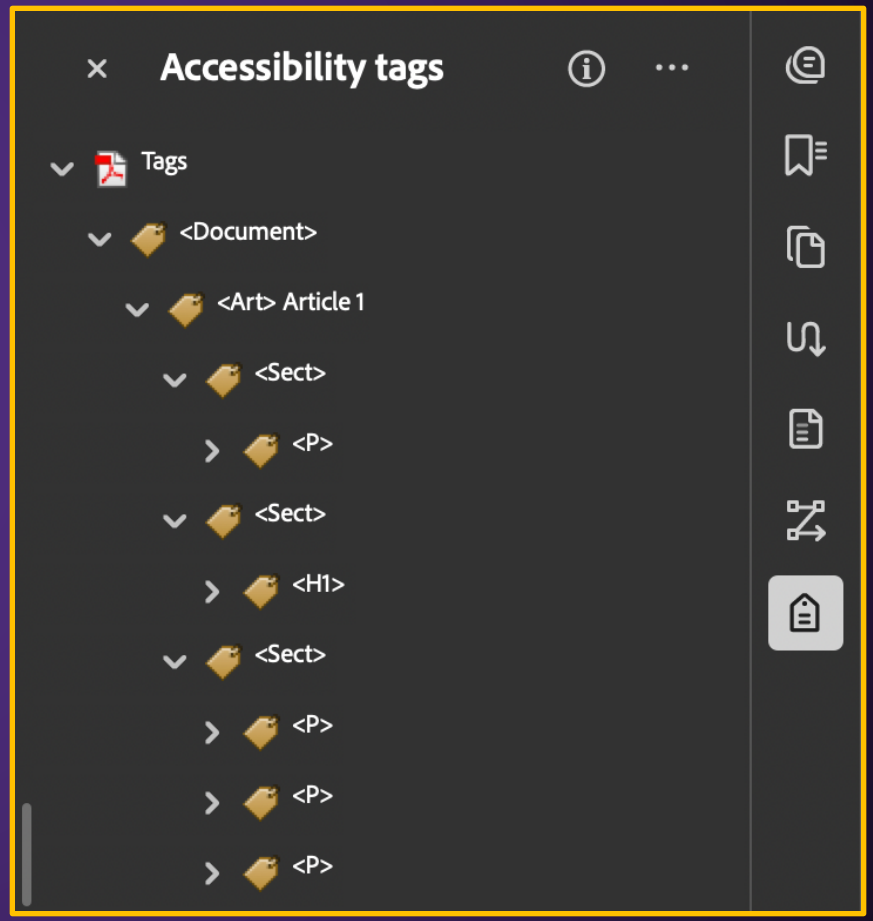
Checking Reading Order in Acrobat

- Use the **Order panel** in Acrobat to ensure the order of elements listed matches the visual order of elements in the document.
- If adjustments need to be made, go back to the source document, if possible.
- To adjust reading order in the PDF, use the **Content panel**.



Checking Accessibility Tags in Acrobat

- Use the **Accessibility Tags panel** in Acrobat to ensure each element is tagged appropriately.
- Headings should be tagged as headings (<H1>, <H2>, <H3>, etc.)
- Lists should be tagged as lists (<L>)
- Regular text should be tagged as paragraphs (<P>)
- Watch for empty paragraph tags



Where can I learn more?

Learn More About Digital Accessibility

Visit ECU's Digital Accessibility website for more information about creating accessible digital content, links to training, and other accessibility resources.

accessibility.ecu.edu/digital

Register for My Spring OFE Sessions!

- **Intro to Document Accessibility** – January 20 at 11:30AM
- **Formatting Text for Accessibility** – February 3 at 11:00AM
- **Alt Text and Link Text** – February 17 at 11:00AM
- **Color Contrast** – March 3 at 11:00AM
- **Reading Order** – March 17 at 11:00AM
- **Table Formatting** – March 31 at 11:00AM
- **Checking Your Documents for Accessibility and Saving Accessible PDFs** – April 14 at 11:00AM

Visit the OFE Accessibility Workshop Series page to view recordings of previous sessions from this semester.

Questions?