

PowerPoint Accessibility

NNLM Region 3 Health Bytes - September 2026 Presentation

Outline View

The outline view offers a quick way to focus on the text of the presentation and ensure slide titles are accurate. “Outline View” is only available in the desktop version and is found under the “View” menu tab.

Accessibility in PowerPoint

Looks much like accessibility in Word! Shared tools: accessibility assistant, alt text, hyperlink edit, table design, language proofing, and document info.

Two tools that differ from Word:

- Slide Title
- Reading Order

Slide Titles

Slide titles act as the PowerPoint version of “Heading 1”. No other headings are applicable in a slide deck, and the designation as “Slide Title” does not affect the font style of the text.

* If PowerPoint is being used to create a research poster, the research title should be assigned as the slide title.

Slide titles can be assigned by using the appropriate text box in a template slide deck, or assigned afterward with the “Slide Title” tool found in the Accessibility menu ribbon.

Reading Order

In Word, reading order follows the text top to bottom, left to right.

In PowerPoint, reading order is assigned to content boxes as they are added to the slide and therefore can be all over the place! It is very important to check this, especially for a research poster with multiple text boxes and images. And especially when saving to PDF format!

* Moving a content box on the slide will not change its placement in the reading order!

Reading order is adjusted by dragging-&-dropping the content boxes within the “Reading Order” pane. This pane is found in the Accessibility menu bar or accessed via the Accessibility Assistant dialog box.

Important: “Reading Order” is different from “Selection Pane” found in the “Arrange” drop down menu - and in fact, they work opposite of each other! Content in the Reading Order pane displays top-to-bottom; content in the Selection Pane displays bottom-to-top.

Check Accessibility tool

Found under “Review” tab; sometimes will not open in the browser version.

Double check the slide deck or research poster for slide title, reading order, alt text, table headers, color contrast, language proofing, and other potential issues.

Document Info

Keep control of your metadata! Assign title and author info.

- Click “File” tab
- Click “Info” tab
- Hover cursor over “Add a Title” and the fillable field will appear.
- Confirm Author info is correct

This dialog box is only available in the desktop version of PowerPoint.

Save to PDF format

Avoid the “Save as PDF” tool – the accessibility structure will not always transfer!

1. Use “File” tab
2. Save a copy
3. Select “.pdf” from format options
4. Always check the PDF for accessibility

Research Posters & Accessibility

Current best practices suggest making a text-only attachment for research posters. To be successful, the text must include any data relayed via figures and graphs.

- For printed posters, the text-only version can be linked via a QR code added to the poster -- make sure the linked doc is formatted for accessibility!
 - when sharing an electronic version of the poster, make the QR code a hyperlink to the text-only doc, or mark it as decorative if the slide has been properly formatted
- For digital versions, the text-only portion can be a second slide -- set the slide title as “Accessible version” or “Text-only version”
- For PDF versions, the text-only portion can be a second slide/page -- format the first page as an image with the alt text directing the user to the second page for a text-only version of the content.

Important: your institution’s accessibility auditor may have opinions about how to handle research posters – always defer to your institution’s guidelines!