

Section 508 Quick Reference Guide – MS PowerPoint 2013

Document Layout and Formatting

Element	Description	Quick How To
Bullets and Numbering	Use the automatic list formats available in PowerPoint. Do not manually type lists preceded by special characters, such as hyphens or asterisks. Wingdings are not acceptable bullets.	Click "Home" then the "Bullets" or "Numbering" icon.
Color Contrast	Text must be easy to read in comparison to the background. Use very dark-colored lettering on a white or light-colored background.	Test color contrast by printing in grayscale or by using one of the color contrast analyzer tools found online.
Color Emphasis	Do not use color for emphasis without providing an alternative method of emphasizing text (e.g., bold, italics, or both); do not use color alone.	
Comments	Remove all comments from the text.	Right click on comment then select "Delete Comment."
Flashing, Flickering, or Animated Text	Do not use flashing, flickering, or animated text.	--
Fonts	Use recommended fonts: Times New Roman, Verdana, Arial, Tahoma, Helvetica, or Calibri.	--
Footnotes	Create footnotes using the Footnotes linking tool.	Click "Insert" and then "Footer and Header"
Multimedia	If you are using multimedia (i.e., audio or video clips) in your presentation, make sure it passes the HHS 508 Checklist for Multimedia Files.	
Print Preview	View the document in Print Preview and check to see if it flows correctly from page to page. Look out for image placement, table format, and stray ("orphaned" or "widowed") lines and characters.	Click "File" then "Print." A preview of the document automatically appears on the right-hand side of the screen.
Outline View	All slide text must be viewable in the Outline view. (Only text that appears in Outline view can be read by screen readers.)	--
URLs and E-mail Links	All Web citations (URLs) and e-mail addresses must be correct, complete, and linked to an active Web or e-mail destination.	Example: https://www.dsdlabs.com not www.dsdlabs.com Example: jane.doe@dsdlabs.com

Images

Element	Description	Quick How To
Alternative Text (Alt Text)	Provide alternative text descriptions ("alt text") for all images, graphics, grouped images, and non-text elements that convey information. Do not provide alt text for images that are purely decorative.	Right click on image. Select "Format Picture" then "Alt Text." If the image is purely decorative, the alt text field should be left blank.
Background Images or Watermarks	Do not use background images or watermarks.	Do not use pictures as slide background. Do not use pictures or text boxes to create watermarks.
Chart Labels	All charts must have a title, a legend, and axis labels (where applicable).	--
Descriptive Text	Provide descriptive text near a complex image, such as a chart or graph.	In a paragraph right above or below the image, describe the information the image is intending to convey.
Grouping Images	Individual images, objects, or graphics on a page that make up one combined graphic image must be grouped as one object.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hold the Shift key and click on each object. 2. Right click on one of the objects and select the "Group" drop-down menu. 3. Click "Group."
SmartArt	Do not use SmartArt.	--

Element	Description	Quick How To
Text Boxes	As a general rule, do not use text boxes for graphics or floating text.	Exception: Text boxes are okay if the final format will be PDF or HTML.

Tables

Element	Description	Quick How To
Avoid Tabs or Spaces	Do not use tabs or spaces to create a table-like structure. Instead, use PowerPoint's table formatting.	Click "Insert" then "Table."
Blank Cells	Avoid blank cells.	--
Creating Tables	All tables should be created within PowerPoint. Tables created outside PowerPoint should be imported as images and treated as such.	To create tables in PowerPoint, click "Insert" then "Table."
Descriptions and Labels	All tables should be described and labeled. Exception: In some cases labeling a table may not be appropriate. For example, a small data table in a presentation may not need a label.	Create a caption or brief description for the table in the slide's Title placeholder.
Logical Reading Order	Use a logical reading order from left to right, top to bottom.	--
Merged Cells	As a general rule, avoid merged cells.	Exception: Merged cells are okay if the final format will be PDF or HTML.
Row and Column Headers	Provide a descriptive heading for each row and column in a data table, starting with the first left-hand column.	--
Row Page Break	In Table Properties, uncheck "Allow row to break across pages" (no matter if your table fits on one page or spans multiple pages).	Right click within last table row on page. Select "Table Properties" then "Row." Uncheck "Allow row to break across pages."
Table Header Row	The first row of your table must be designated as a "Header Row" in the Table Tools Design tab.	Click within the top table row. Select "Table Tools" then "Design." In the "Table Style Options" group, check "Header Row."

File Name

Element	Description	Quick How To
Be Concise	The file name must be concise, clear, and generally no more than 30 characters in length.	Example: Making508EasyDemo.pptx
Spaces and Special Characters	Do not use spaces or special characters in file names. Hyphens (-) are acceptable in file names.	Example: CommonElements.pptx or Common-Elements.pptx

Document Properties, Complex Content, and PDF Conversion

Element	Description	Quick How To
Complex Content	If there is no other way to make the content accessible, provide a separate accessible version.	Example: Organizational charts are often complex. Provide a separate full-text version that is 508-compliant.
Converting to PDF (if you have Adobe Acrobat Professional)	Convert documents to PDF by using the Acrobat add-in on your toolbar (preferred method) or by clicking "File," "Save as Adobe PDF." Do not use "Print," "Printer," "Adobe PDF."	If the Acrobat add-in on your toolbar doesn't convert all the formatting elements in your original document, try "File," "Save as Adobe PDF."
Document Properties	Fill out Title, Author, Subject (description), and Tags (keywords). Note: Author must be a government organization (e.g., CMS).	Click "File," "Info," "Properties." Choose item in "Properties" you wish to update.