CREATING ACCESSIBLE PDF DOCUMENTS

A list of "Do and Don't" when creating PDF documents. This is not an exhaustive list, but the most common mistakes that create barriers.
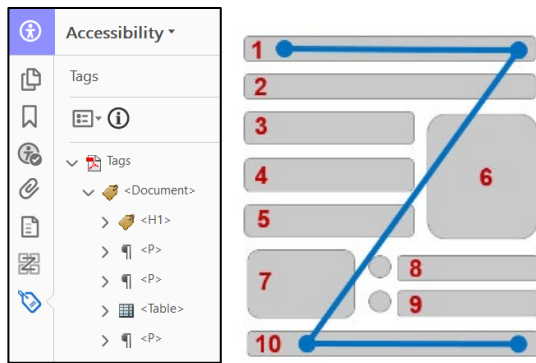
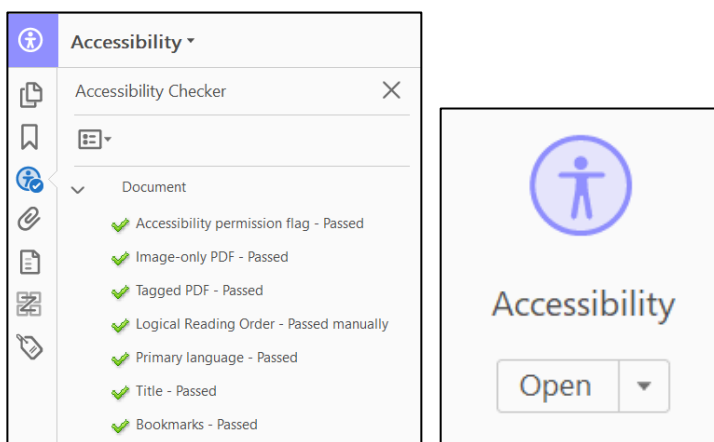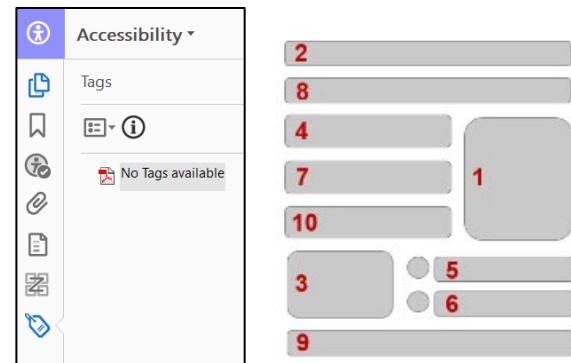| DO ✔	DON'T 🛑
Do use accessible documents (e.g., Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.) to create accessible PDFs.	Don't save images containing text as PDFs (e.g., avoid scanned documents). If the source document is unavailable, use the Export To option.
Do use Save As when converting documents such as Word to PDF. Do select PDF as type in Save As dialog. Select Options: (1) Document structure tags for accessibility, (2) Document Properties, and (3) Create bookmarks using: Headings	Don't print to PDF.
Do ensure every piece of content is tagged with the correct tag. Tags are invisible identifiers that will assist technologies (e.g., screen readers) to make sense of the content.	Don't use paragraphs only without headings.
Do use proper tags for elements of the document and reading order.	Don't use untagged content and incorrect reading order.
Do use tags to set the reading order.	Don't use the Order Panel to rearrange the logical reading order sequence.
Do use color and descriptions to convey meaning if you must use color.	Don't use color alone to convey meaning.
Do ensure sufficient color contrast ratio. If unsure, use a color contrast checker from WebAIM.	Don't use insufficient color contrast.
Do provide alternative text, or Alt Text, for all images or mark them as decorative. Provide a concise description for images and consider the purpose and importance—limit the description to under 200 characters. Do not include hyperlinks in descriptions. Hayes Hall on a clear day	Don't use images with embedded text. Screen readers cannot recognize that text. Don't use the image name as Alt Text. Don't leave Alt Text blank. Don't use "Image of..." or "Photo of..." to begin the image description.
Do use Captions for Images/figures. Make Captions and Alt Text different.	Don't duplicate Alt Text as Caption or vice-versa, or leave blank.
Do use "Background/Artifact" on elements that convey no information and are included purely for visual effect (e.g., lines, borders, shapes).	Don't provide Alt Text for purely decorative images.
Do add document title (File > Properties > Description).	Don't leave the document title blank.
Do indicate language for your PDF document (File > Properties > Advanced). Screen readers can "speak" different languages.	Don't leave language unspecified.
Do delete empty tags. Screen readers will read these as "blank".	Don't leave empty tags in the document.
Do conduct an Accessibility **Full Check** when you create a PDF.	Don't just hope your PDF is accessible.
Do add shortcuts for Accessibility and Action Wizard if you use Adobe Acrobat Pro for the first time (Tools > Accessibility, Right-click, add Shortcut from the pop-up menu).	Don't search for the helpful tools each time via the Tools tab.
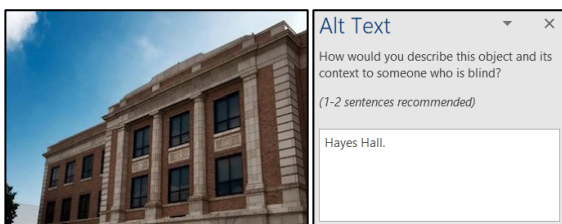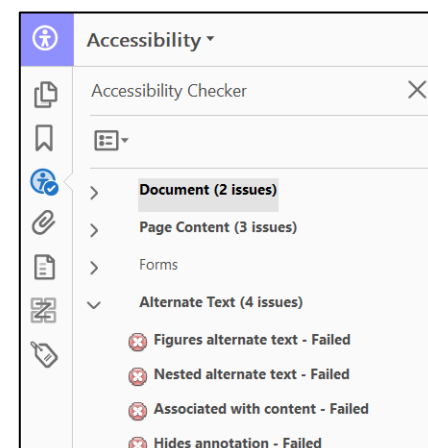
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