Accessibility Manual

PDF Documents

(Note: The topics discussed in this guide include the use of Adobe Acrobat Pro DC and the Microsoft Office 365 suite of applications.)

The most important thing to consider when making a PDF accessible is to design your original document with accessibility in mind. The more you use built-in design features of the Microsoft Office 365 suite, the more accessible your document will be and the easier it will be to convert it to other formats.

Some important questions to ask yourself before moving forward with creating the original document:

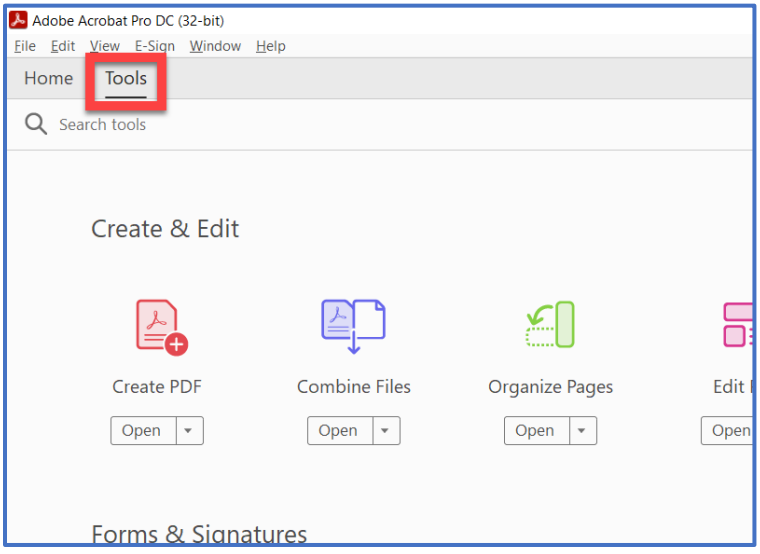
1. Does this information need to be in PDF format?
    - If there is any chance your document will be revised, it is advisable to keep it in Word format as it is much easier to edit the document in this state.
2. If creating for the web, can this information be made into a webpage instead?
    - Instead of making a user download a PDF, can the information in that PDF be formatted as a webpage?
3. Is your document a fillable form?
    - If your document is going to be on a webpage, just create a web form. Web forms are much more accessible than forms housed within a PDF or Microsoft Word file.

Making a PDF Accessible

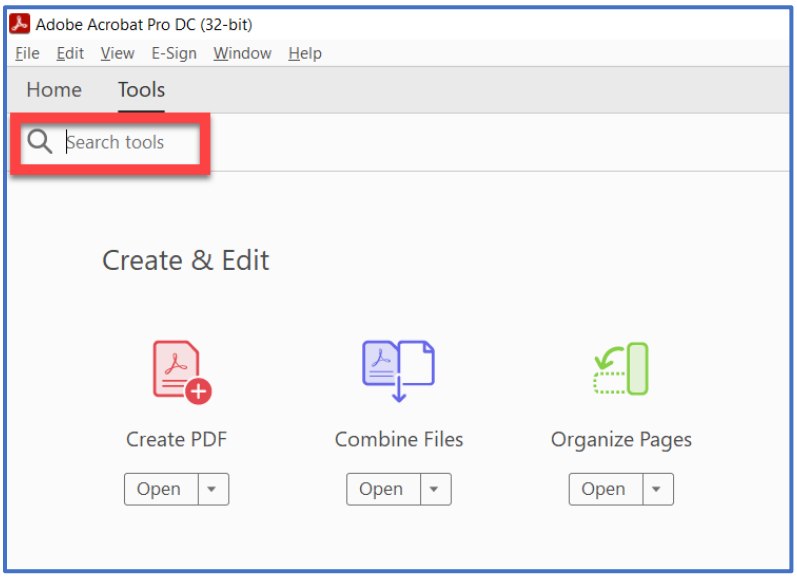
To make your PDF accessible, you will begin by running the Action Wizard. Since some versions of Adobe Acrobat will not have the Action Wizard button in the Tools section, you may need to add a shortcut to this.

Adding a Shortcut to the Action Wizard:

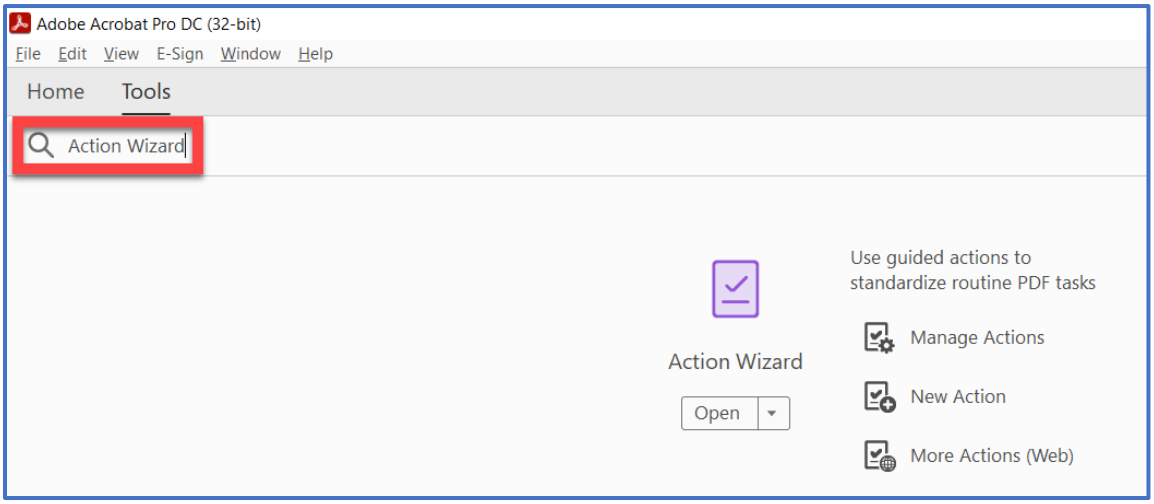
1. Click the Tools button in the top left corner of the screen



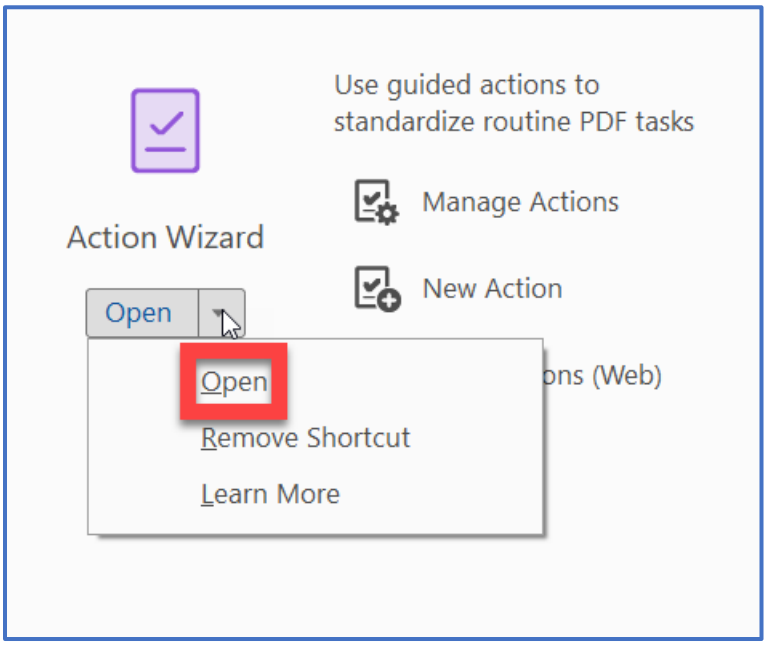
2. Click under the Tools button where it says Search tools



3. Search for “Action Wizard” (without the quotation marks)



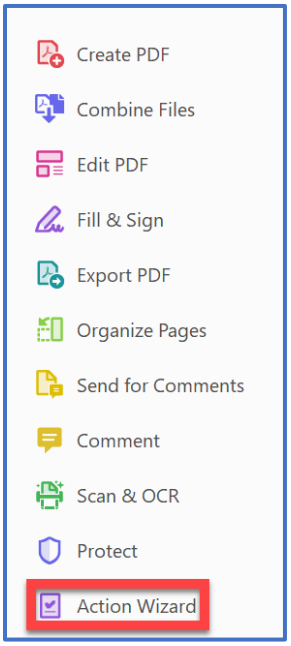
4. Click the down arrow under the Action Wizard icon and select Add Shortcut



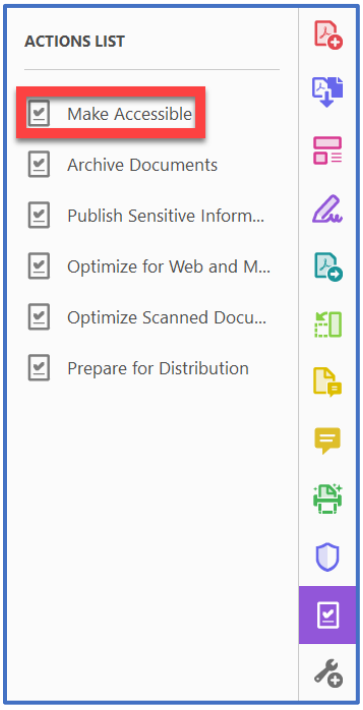
5. The shortcut to the Action Wizard will populate in the menu on the right side of the screen. This shortcut should remain as long as you are using the same computer.

Running the Action Wizard:

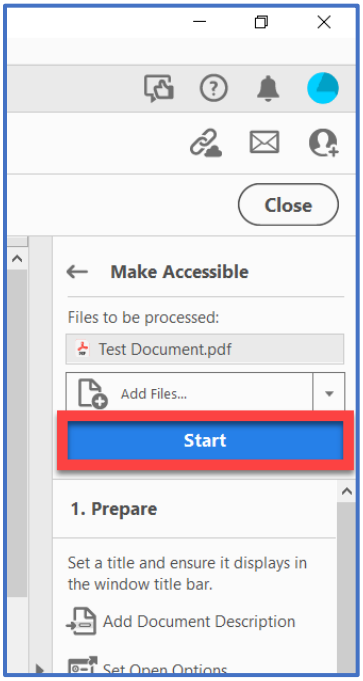
1. Navigate to the Action Wizard by clicking on the Action Wizard button that you recently created or by searching for “Action Wizard” (without the quotation marks) in the Tools section.



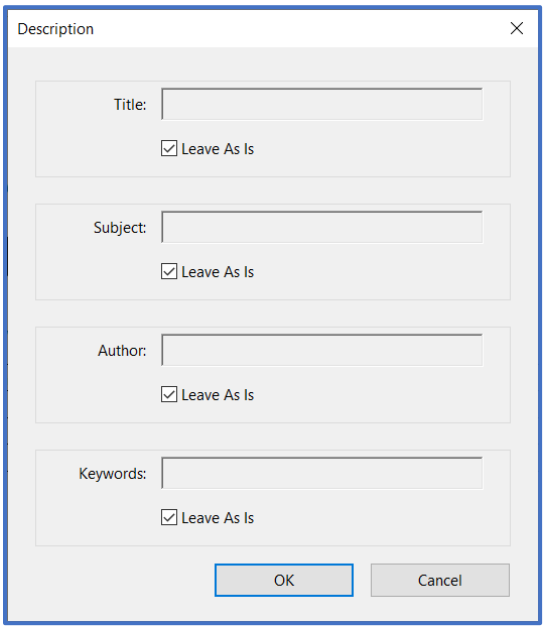
2. If your document is not already open, click Select a File to locate and open your document
3. Click Make Accessible in the menu on the right side of the screen



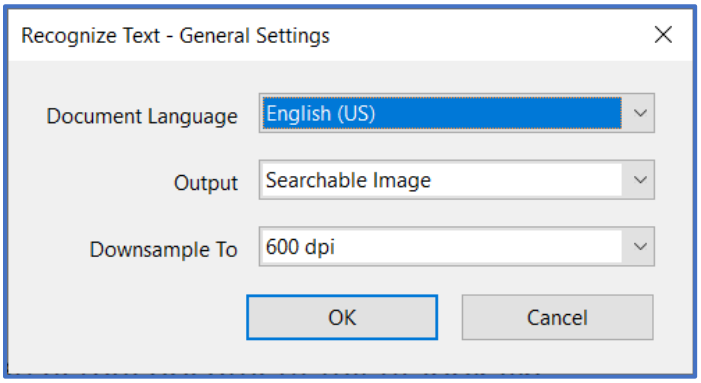
4. Click Start



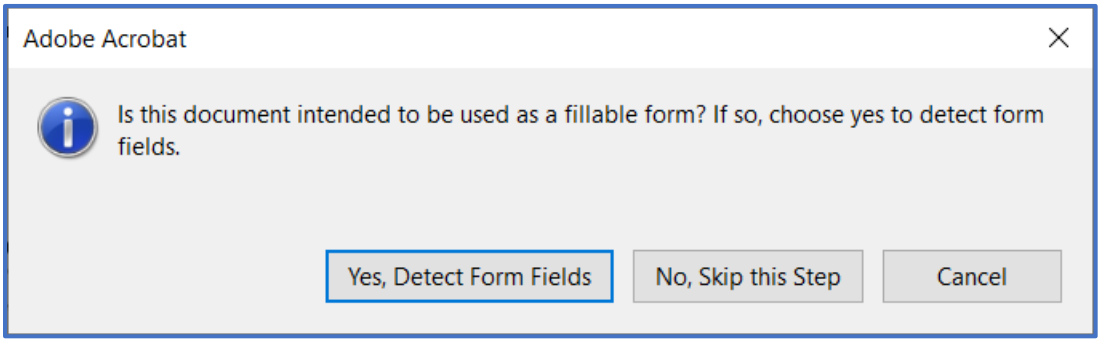
5. Options for document Title, Subject, Author, and Keywords can be edited here. It is best practice to at least provide a document title. Make sure the title is descriptive and is easy to differentiate from other related documents. If any attributes do not need to be changed, simply click the checkbox next to Leave As Is. Once you have made any necessary changes, click Ok.



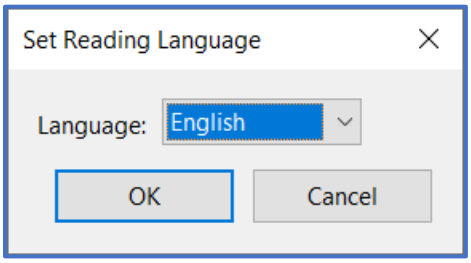
6. Next, you need to provide the Document Language, Output Type, and Downsample Size. Make sure the language is correct and leave the other two options as they are (Searchable Image and 600 dpi). Click Ok.



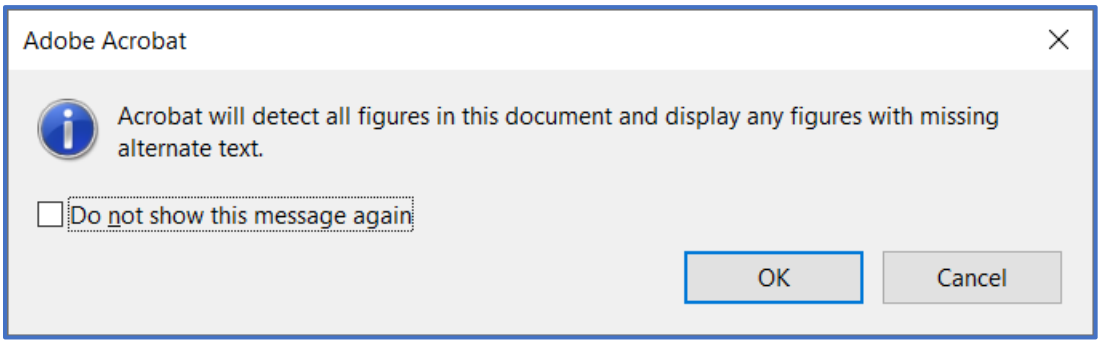
7. Next, Acrobat will ask if the document is intended to be used as a fillable form. If it is, you can select Yes, Detect Form Fields. If not, click No, Skip this Step.



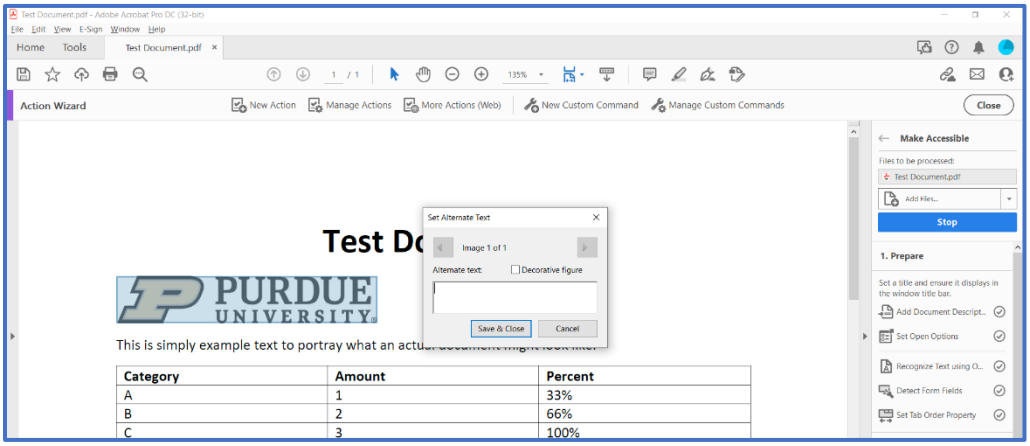
8. Select the Reading Language of the document and click Ok



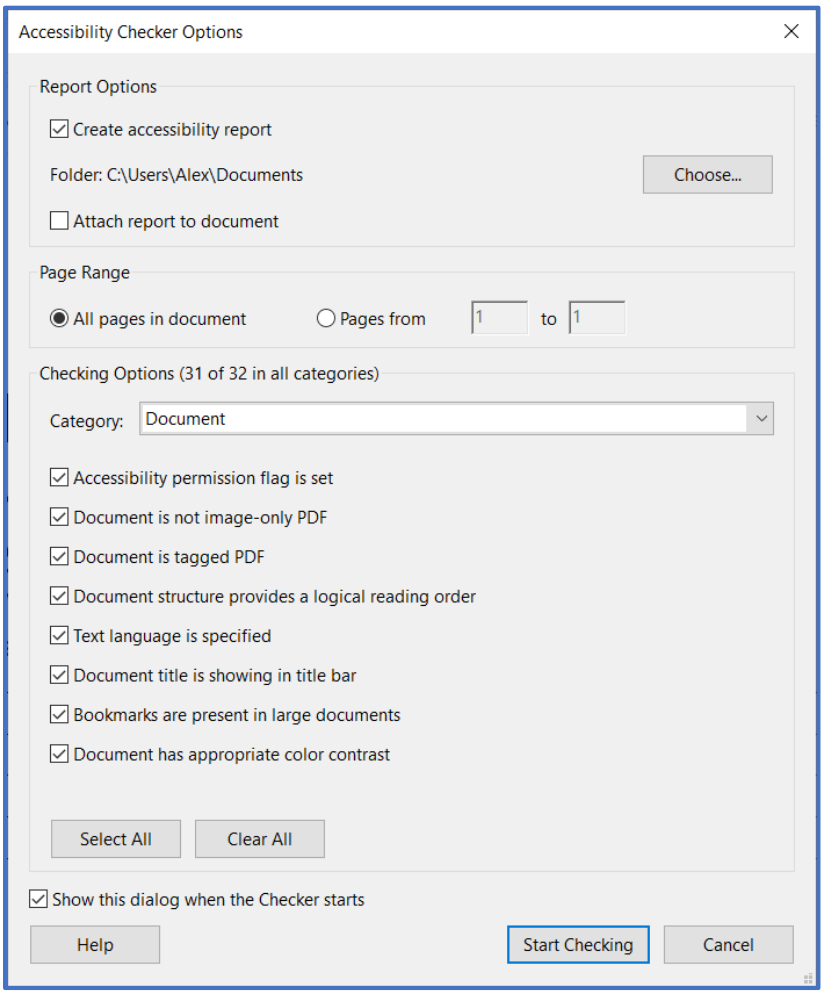
9. Next, Acrobat will detect any figures (images, etc.) in the document that do not have alternate text. Click Ok.



Acrobat will highlight any images that do not have alternate text. You will have the option to either add alternate text or to denote the object as a decorative figure.

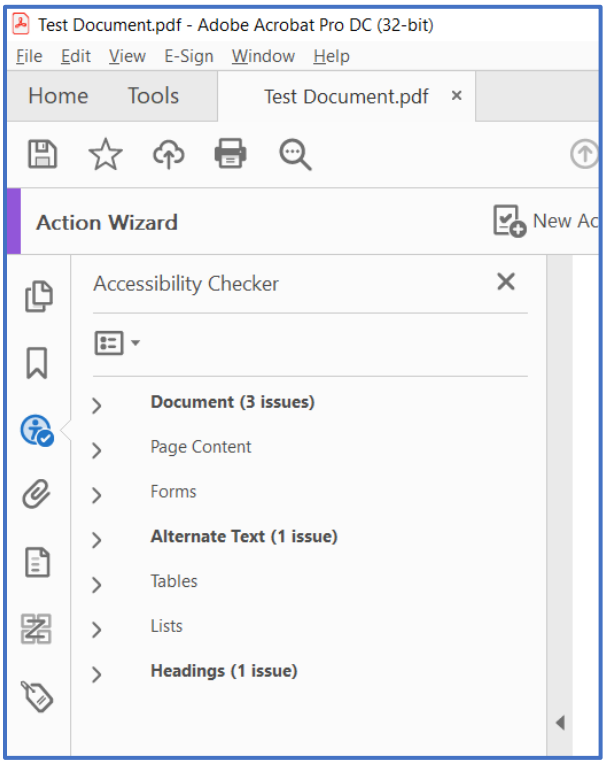


10. Acrobat will then open the Accessibility Checker Options dialog box.



Running the Accessibility Checker:

1. If the Accessibility Checker Options dialog box is not already open, click the Tools button in the top left corner of the screen and then click Accessibility Check in the menu on the right side of the screen.
2. The Accessibility Checker Options dialog wizard will open. The default options will suffice for most situations – click Start Checking.
3. A collapsible list will open on the left side of the screen outlining any errors that were found in the document



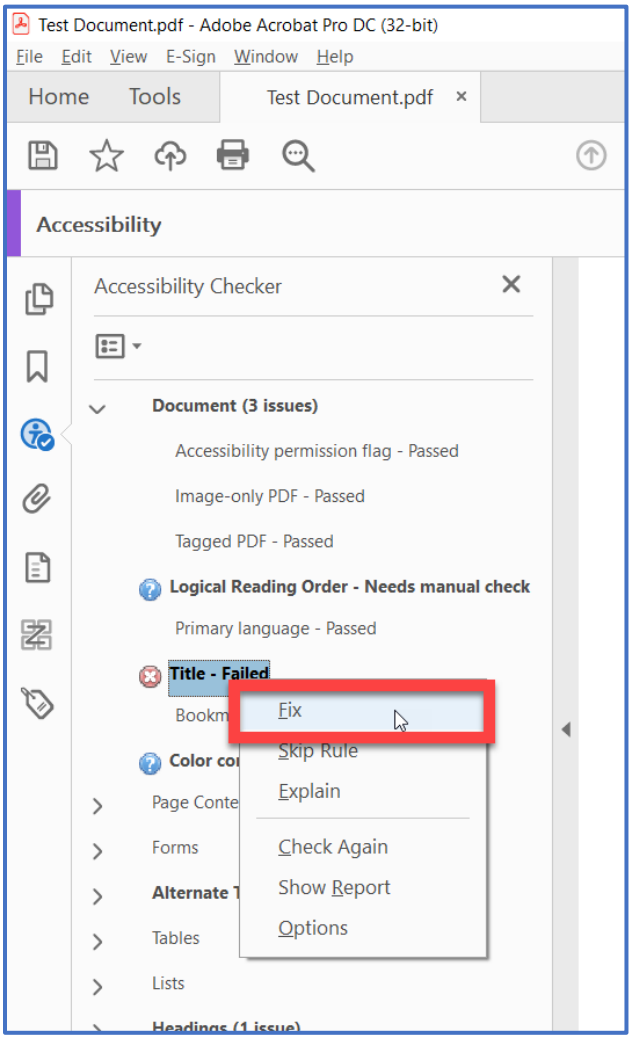
Correcting Issues Found in the Accessibility Check

The Accessibility Checker will indicate any accessibility errors that still exist in your document that you need to manually fix. There are seven sections to check: Document, Page Content, Forms, Alternate Text, Tables, Lists, and Headings.

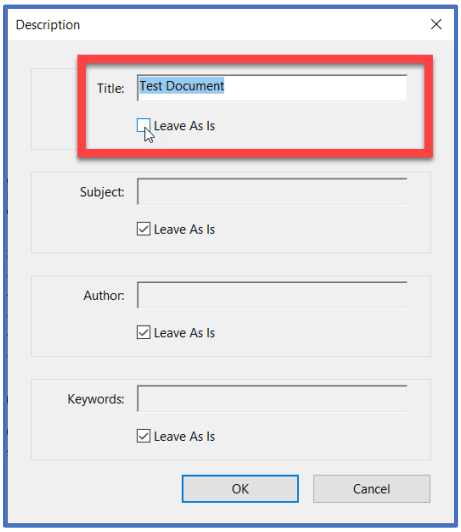
Document

The Document section will always contain two errors: Logical Reading Order and Color Contrast. These two errors will always need to be checked manually.

1. If there are any errors besides the two which must be checked manually, right click on the issue and click Fix.

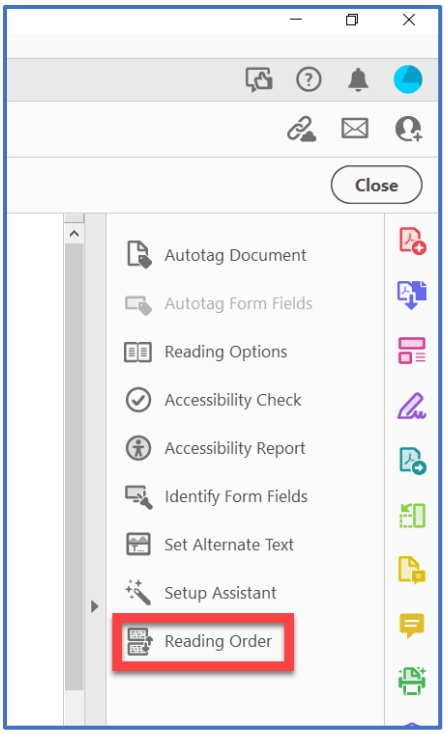


2. This will prompt the appropriate dialog box to open. In this case, since the title of the document had not been set properly, the Description dialog box will open, allowing you to fix this error. Uncheck the box next to Leave As Is and add a descriptive title.

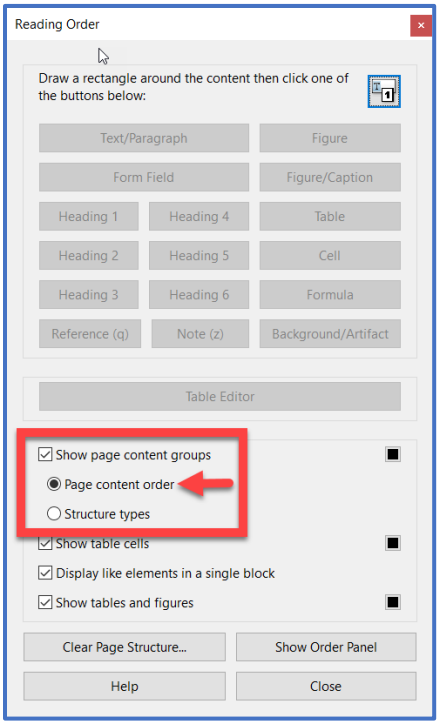


Logical Reading Order

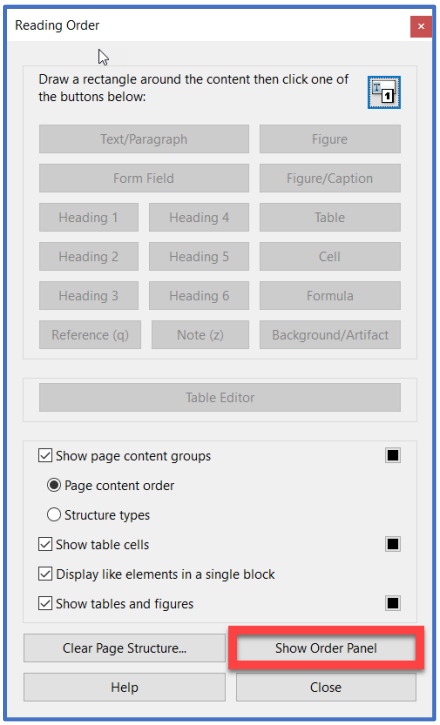
1. To check the Logical Reading Order, click Reading Order in the menu on the right side of the screen.



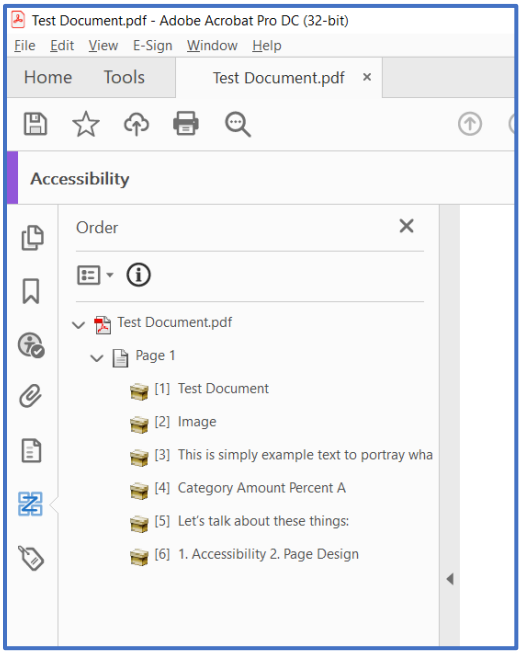
2. The Reading Order dialog box will open. Make sure that Page content order is selected under the Show page content groups checkbox.



3. Click Show Order Panel.



This will open a collapsible list on the left side of the screen that shows the order of the items in your document.



Keep in mind that items in your document should read left-to-right, top-to-bottom, with every item numbered. If an item is out of place, simply drag and drop it to the correct position in the Order Panel.

4. You can also use Acrobat's built-in screen reader, Read Out Loud
    a. From the menu bar at the top of the screen, click View, then click Read Out Loud, then click Activate Read Out Loud
    b. To start reading, click Read This Page Only or Read to End of Document
    c. To pause/stop reading, click Pause/Stop
    d. To deactivate Read Out Loud, click View then click Deactivate Read Out Loud
5. Once you have made sure the reading order is correct, right click on that issue and click Pass

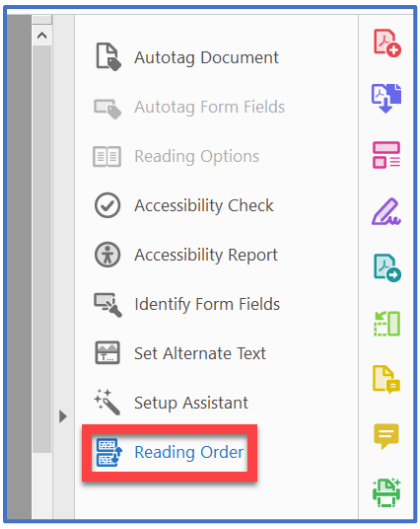
Color Contrast

For more information on Color Contrast, visit the Contrast Page on w3.org.

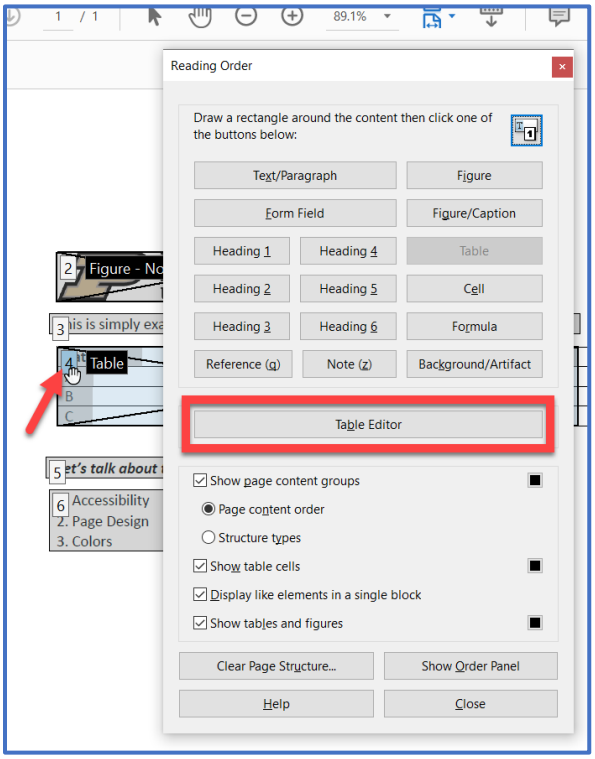
Tables

The Reading Order tool also allows you to check tables for proper tagging and, more specifically, for reading order.

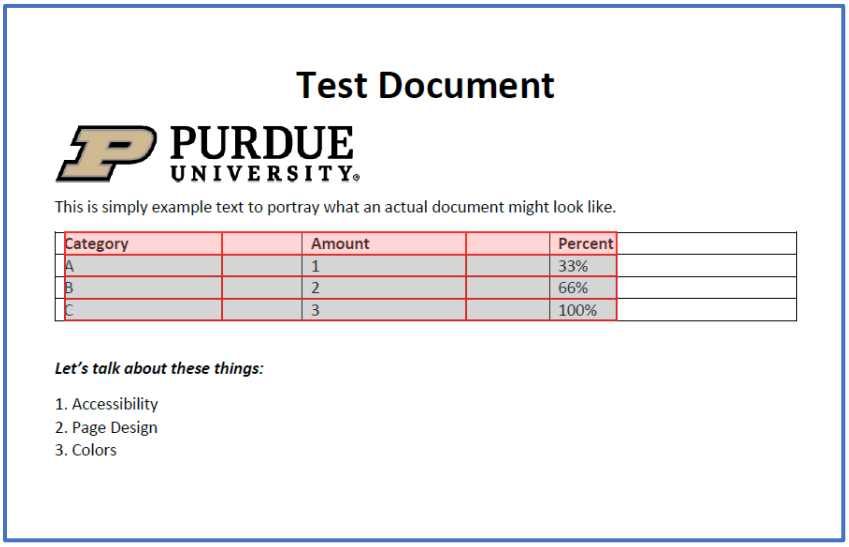
1. Click Reading Order in the menu on the right side of the screen



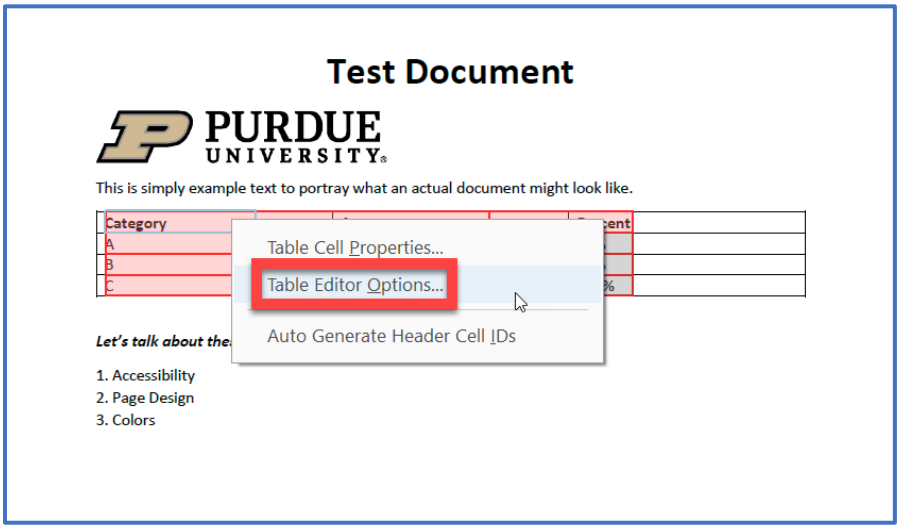
2. Click the number in the white box that is in the top left corner of the table then click Table Editor in the Reading Order dialog box.



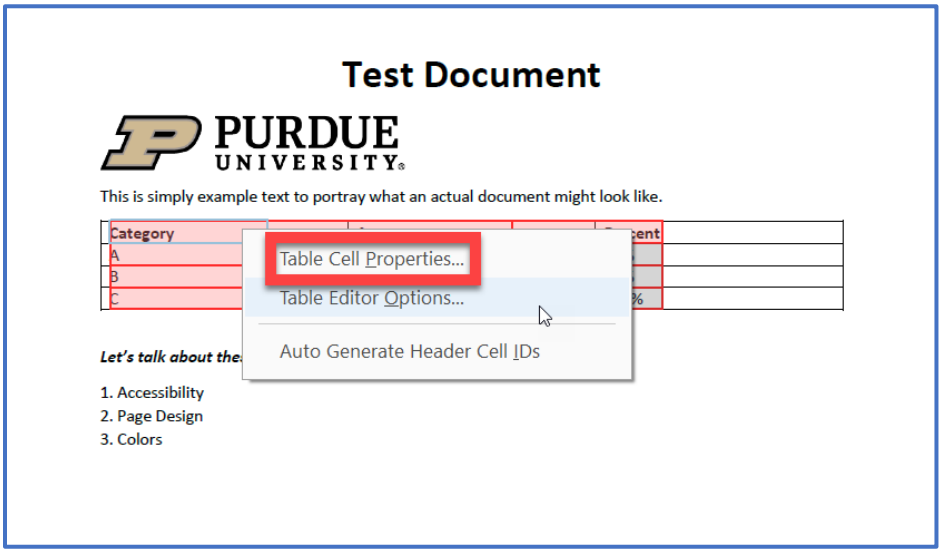
3. You will notice that Acrobat has highlighted each cell of the table. If the table was tagged correctly in your source document, you will see that header cells are red and data cells are gray.



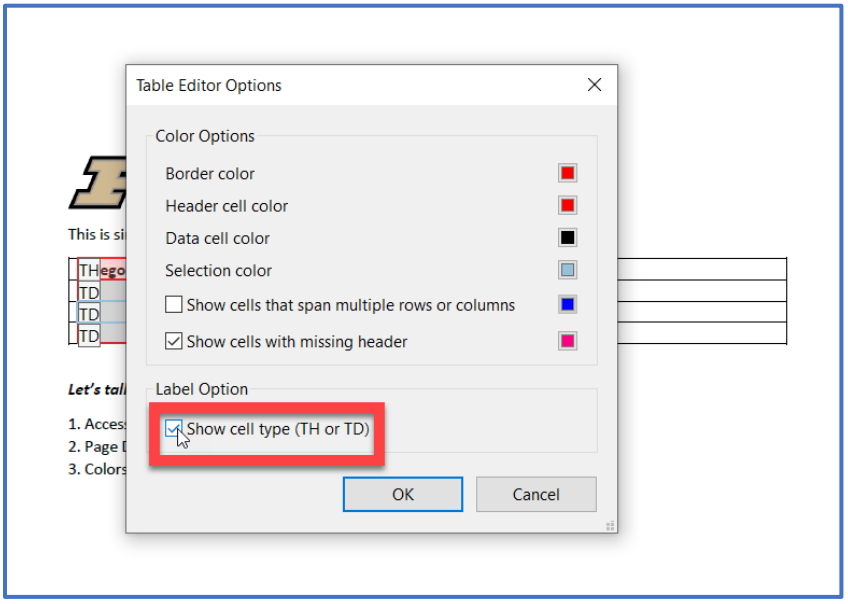
Red and gray are the default colors for cells in Acrobat. To change these, right click anywhere in the table and click Table Editor Options.



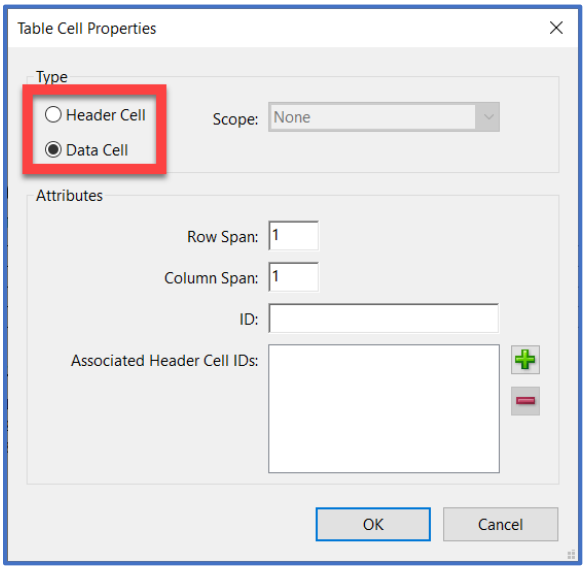
4. For an alternate view, right click anywhere in the table and click Table Editor Options.



Check the checkbox next to Show cell type (TH or TD). This will label each cell as either TH (table header) or TD (table data).



5. If a cell is the incorrect designation, right click on the cell and select Table Cell Properties. In the Table Cell Properties dialog box, select whether the cell is a Header Cell or a Data Cell and click OK.



Fixing Additional Errors

Additional errors may still exist in your document. If the Fix option is not listed in the menu after right clicking on an error, you may need to click Explain. This will open a web browser and navigate to an explanation of the corresponding issue on Adobe's webpage.