How to Make Accessible Presentations

Welcome to British Columbia Library Association's guide to making accessible presentations. I'm Stephanie and I'm an MLIS student at UBC's School of Information.

Land Acknowledgement

As a distributed organization, BCLA's work takes place on unceded lands belonging to the kʷikʷəƛ̓əm (Kwikwetlem), qiqéyt (Qayqayt), Stó:lō (Sto:lo), xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səl̓ilwəta?ɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations; and the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations of the lək̓ʷəŋən (Lekwungen) Peoples.

We want to start by acknowledging BCLA members are honoured to serve the diverse Indigenous Nations and communities throughout what is now known as British Columbia. As a distributed organization, BCLA's work takes place on unceded lands belonging to the kʷikʷəƛ̓əm (Kwikwetlem), qiqéyt (Qayqayt KA-KITE), Stó:lō (Sto:lo), xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səl̓ilwəta?ɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations; and the Songhees (SONG-EEZ) and Esquimalt Nations of the lək̓ʷəŋən (Lekwungen) Peoples.

Agenda

- Font and layout (with demo)
- Headers
- Lists
- Tables
- Hyperlinks (with demo)
- Animations and slide transitions
- Alternative (alt) text (with demo)
- Slide order (with demo)
- Accessibility checker

This video is designed to help you increase the accessibility of your presentations, using the two slideshow presentation programs: Microsoft PowerPoint and Google Slides. By making your presentations more accessible, you broaden your audience, allowing more people to participate and benefit from the information you're sharing regardless of visual, auditory, motor or cognitive disabilities.

We'll start by looking at how **formatting and layout** affects the accessibility of your slide deck. Use a pre-formatted slide template in whatever presentation software you are using. Search for "Accessible" in **Microsoft PowerPoint** templates to find slides that are already formatted with accessibility in mind. If your presentation program doesn't come with preformatted slides, use the following guidelines to make your presentation more accessible. Please note that for the demonstration portions of the video, we will be using the Mac version of PowerPoint, but all of the aspects we speak about are transferable to the Windows version.

Font and Layout

Keep text legible!

- use sans-serif fonts and dyslexic-friendly fonts (ex. Arial or Helvetica)
- font size at minimum 18 points
- keep use of italics, bold and all-caps to a minimum
- align text with the left margin
- maintain white space

Paying attention to your font will keep your text as legible as possible.

- **Sans-serif fonts** like Arial and Helvetica are easier to read for people with reading disabilities. Dyslexic-friendly fonts are also available.
- Keep text large enough so that everyone can read it. **18 points** is the minimum font size, and bigger is better!
- **Use italics, bold and all-caps sparingly**, as it makes the text harder to read.
- Ensure there is **sufficient white space** between letters to avoid their appearance from merging or distorting

Font and Layout

Keep text legible!

- use high contrast text colours
  - can use colour contrast checker Web Accessibility Color Contrast Checker: accessibleweb.com to test if text is clear
- consider how you are conveying information
- define the language of the text if it is in another language

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- Align your text with the **left** margin, which most people find clearer to read
- Avoid using a **text colour** that is similar to the slide background. The stronger the contrast, the more legible it will be. Use a colour contrast checker, like the one at Accessible Web.com [https://accessibleweb.com/color-contrast-checker/] to test whether your text will be clear.
- Consider how you are **conveying information**. Ensure that your meaning is communicated without relying on colour, highlighting, or bold text to get your point across, which might not be clear to people with colourblindness or using screen readers.
- If a segment of your text is in another language, define the language of that text in the formatting of your presentation.
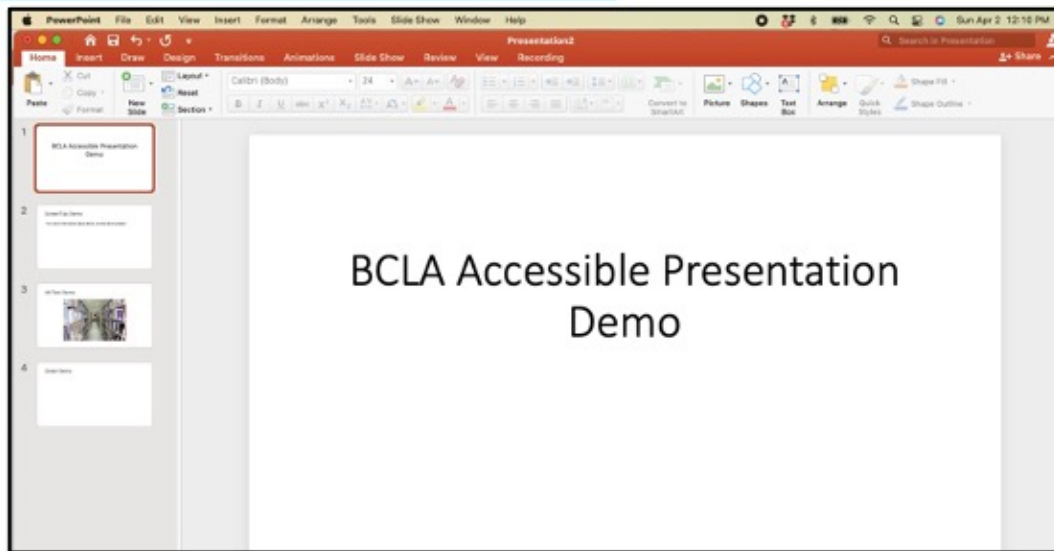
- For **PowerPoint,** on a Mac, you can go to the "tools" option on the menu bar and click "Language" and "Choose Language". On a Windows computer, you can find these options under the "File" menu.
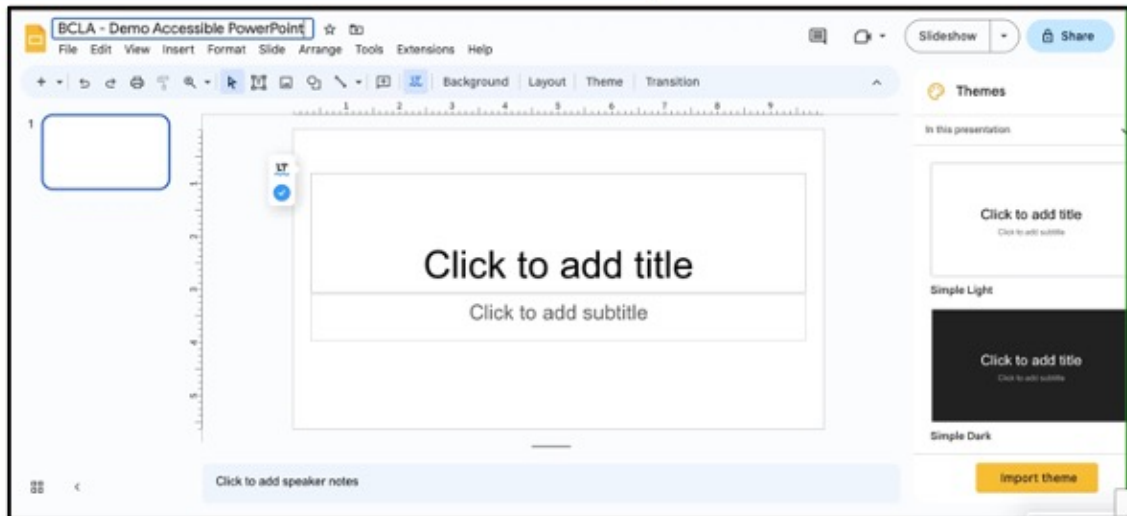
- For **Google Slides**, "File," "Language," "Choose language."

Font and Layout

General tips:

1. convey your information with as little text as possible
2. aim for some empty space
3. keep writing to the point

- In general, you want to limit your text as much as possible while still conveying your information. Cramming a lot of information into each slide will make your text unreadable. Aim for a fair amount of empty space, and keep your writing to the point.

Headers

- Headers help viewers to navigate presentation
- Each slide should have a unique title
- Unique titles are helpful for people with visual or reading disabilities to find slides

Headers on slides help people navigate your presentation more easily. Make sure each slide has a unique title, which helps people with visual or reading disabilities find the slides they need.

Lists

- Try to present information as lists as much as possible
- Lists create visual structure and break up text into smaller parts
- Use proper list formatting options

- bullet
- point
- lists

Another way of improving the readability of your presentations is to use lists as much as possible. Lists create visual structure and break up the text into smaller nuggets of information, which are easier for screen readers to navigate. When you make a list, ensure that you have used proper list formatting options within your presentation program, rather than manually creating a list.

Tables

- Tables are **not** recommended
- If you use tables:
  - Insert properly by selecting "insert" then "table"
  - Avoid blank cells or merged cells
  - Don't use fixed layout
  - Specify column header information

Tables, on the other hand, are not recommended. If you must use one, make sure it is inserted properly by selecting "insert" then "table." Avoid leaving blank cells or merging cells, and don't use a fixed layout. You should also ensure that you specify column header information.
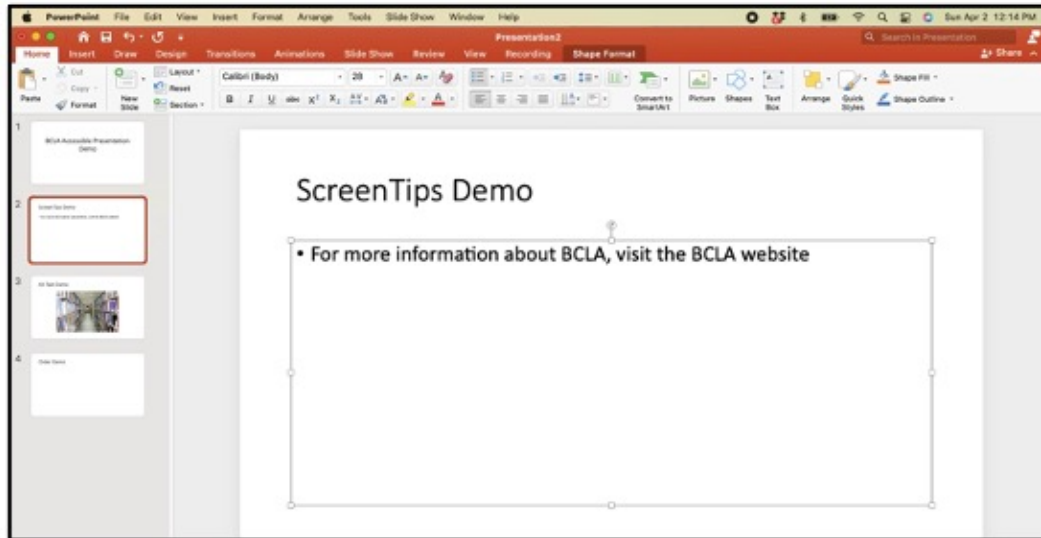
Hyperlinks

- Give information on where the link leads to

- Write complete title of destination page

- Avoid vague phrases (ex. "Click here")

- Take advantage of ScreenTips function on PowerPoint

When adding a hyperlink to your slides, make sure you give information about where the link takes them. Write the complete title of the destination page, rather than vague phrases like "click here." Additionally, take advantage of the ScreenTips function. ScreenTips are the text that appears when you hover your cursor over text or images that include a hyperlink.

On PowerPoint, you can edit these by selecting the text, shape or image you want to use as a hyperlink, right clicking the selection and click "Hyperlink" as done in the video. Here you can edit the link and ScreenTip.

In the video, we are adding "Link to" and the website title. To see your ScreenTip, go into presentation and hover over your link.

Animations and Slide Transitions

- Minimize use of animations
- Avoid using slide transitions
- Some motions can be distracting or make some people feel sick
- Avoid flashing lights that can cause seizures
- Consider whether the animations add anything to the presentation

Try to minimize **animations** in your presentation, or if you do use them, keep them short. Certain types of motion can make some people feel sick or can be distracting. Especially avoid flashing lights, which can cause seizures. **Slide transitions** are also unadvisable. Consider whether or not your animations actually add anything to the presentation before you use them.

Alternative (Alt) Text

- Add alternative or "alt" text for visuals

- Describes what is in the image and what it is conveying

- If no useful information, leave the alt text blank

- Try to avoid word art

- Provide descriptions in the alt text for visuals that need more description (ex. chart or graph)

Screen Readers May Read Out Ugly Filenames for Images Without Alt Text

For visuals, you'll want to add **alternative or "alt" text** that describes what is in the image. When writing your alt text, ask yourself what information is the image conveying? If it does not include any useful information, leave the alt text blank. Word art should be avoided, but if you have visuals with text in it, make sure that text is replicated in the alt text. For visuals that require more description, like a chart or graph, provide a brief description in the alt-text and then explain in more detail in the long description.
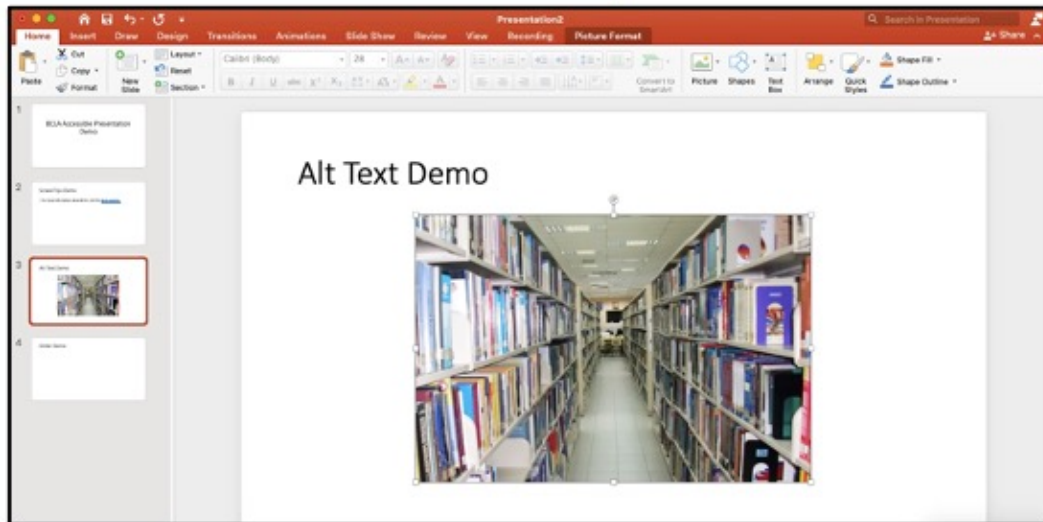
Alt text can be added in **PowerPoint** by right-clicking on the image and selecting "Edit Alt text." Be descriptive. When you exit out of the option, it automatically saves your description.
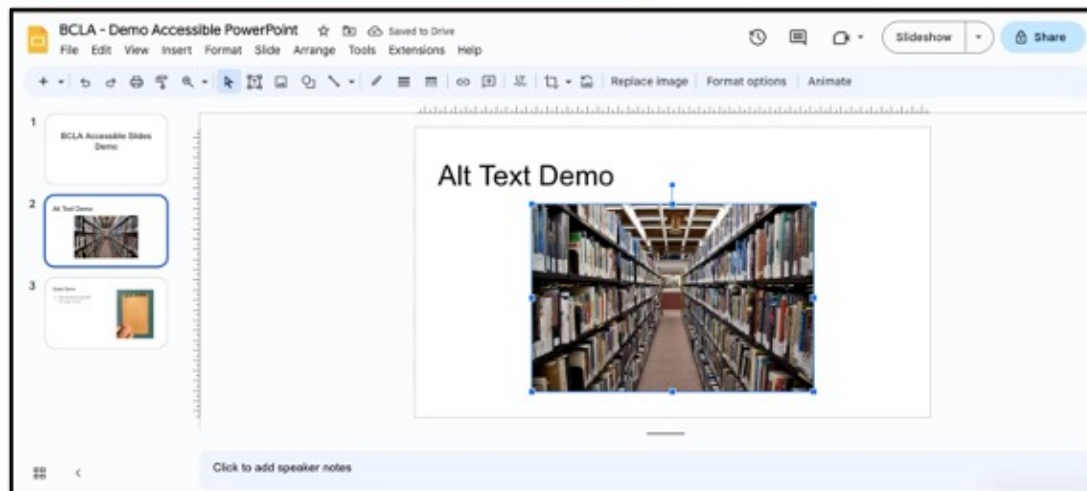
On **Google Slides**, right-click and select "alt text," then fill in the "description" field.
And as a note, the title field is for ScreenTips.

Slide Order

- Consider how screen readers will describe the content of slides
- Elements are read based on the order they were added to slide
- Important to order the content correctly as the order it is read might be different from how it appears on screen
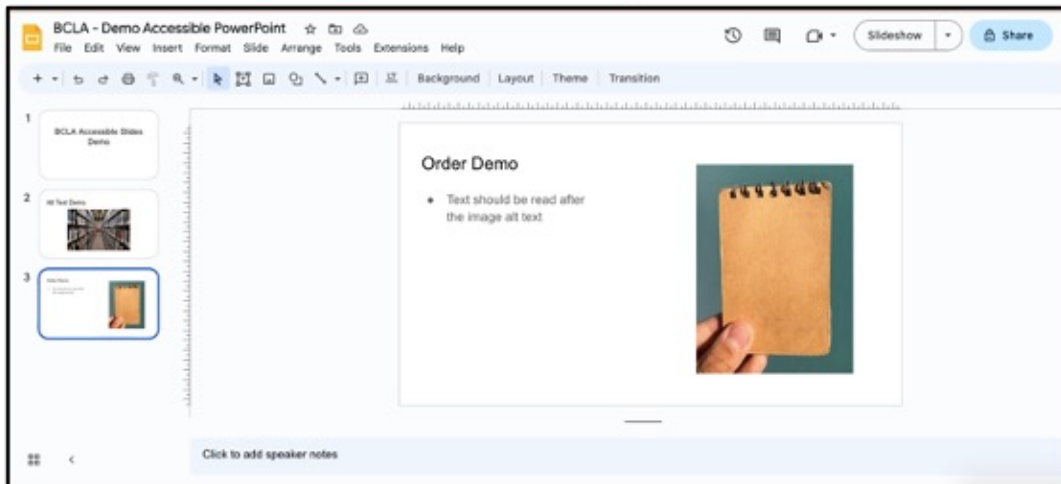
Finally, be conscious of how screen readers will describe the content on your slides. Elements will be read based on the **order** they were added to the slide, which might be different from the order in which they appear on screen.
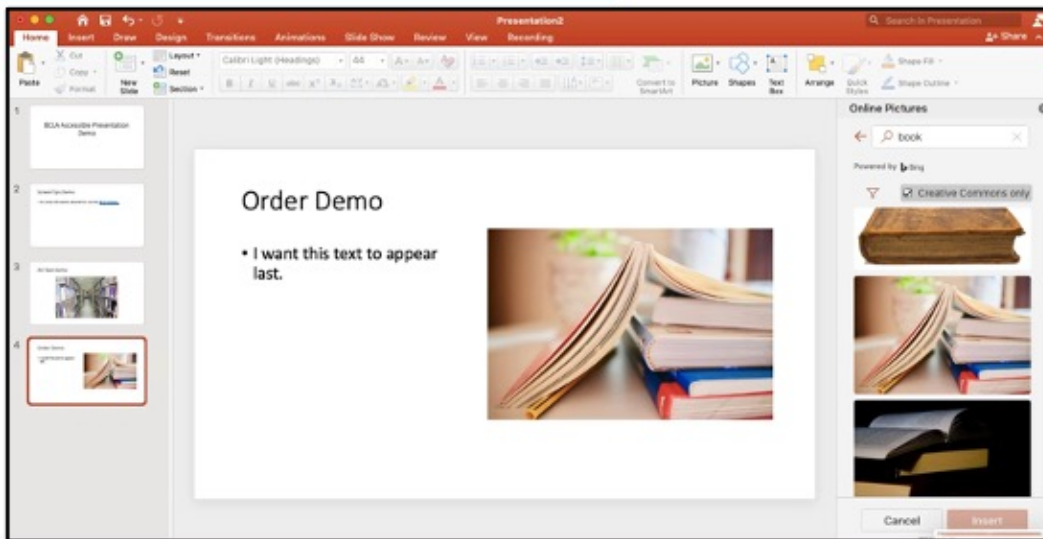
You can rearrange them manually on **PowerPoint** under "Home," "Drawing," "Arrange".

On **Google Slides** by right-clicking on each item and moving it with the "Order" button.

Accessibility Checker

- Use an accessibility checker to review presentation

- PowerPoint has a built in accessibility checker

- Google Slides has third party plug-ins (ex. GrackleDocs)

To review the accessibility of your presentation, use an **accessibility checker.** **PowerPoint** has one built in that runs automatically in the background and alerts you if it detects an issue. **Google Slides** does not, so you can use the third party plug-in, GrackleDocs, which will do an accessibility audit of your presentation.

More information

- Microsoft PowerPoint
  - [Accessibility Checker: Make your PowerPoint Presentations accessible to people with disabilities](#)
  - [Live Captioning Instructions](#)

We hope you found these guidelines helpful! For more information on making your presentations accessible check out these resources.

To find these Microsoft PowerPoint resources you can search the phrases you see and URLs will be available in our downloadable presentation.

More information

- Google Slides
  - [Make your document or presentation more accessible](#)
  - [Accessibility for Google Docs, Sheets, Slides, & Drawings](#)
  - [Live Captioning Instructions](#)

And here are some Google Slides options. Again, you can search the phrases you see and uRLs will be available in our downloadable presentation.

Thank you!

Thanks for watching and best of luck on making your presentations more inclusive!

Credits

Written and produced by Angelissa Mae Panganiban, Emma Metcalfe Hurst, Stephanie Usher, and Talia Greene for LIBR 535: Instructional Role of the Librarian. UBC School of Information (iSchool). Spring 2023.

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- Microsoft Support. (n.d.a). Make your PowerPoint presentations accessible to people with disabilities. Microsoft 365 Support. https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/make-your-powerpoint-presentations-accessible-to-people-with-disabilities-6f7772b2-2f33-4bd3-8ca7-dae3b2b3ef25

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