

Using Acrobat to create accessible PDFs

This guidance is suitable for staff who have an Adobe Acrobat Pro licence.

Before you proceed, check with the [Digital Team](#) to see if the PDF you are working with should be made into a web page instead.

It should be noted that it is easier and better practice to make a document as accessible as possible in Word BEFORE saving it as a PDF.

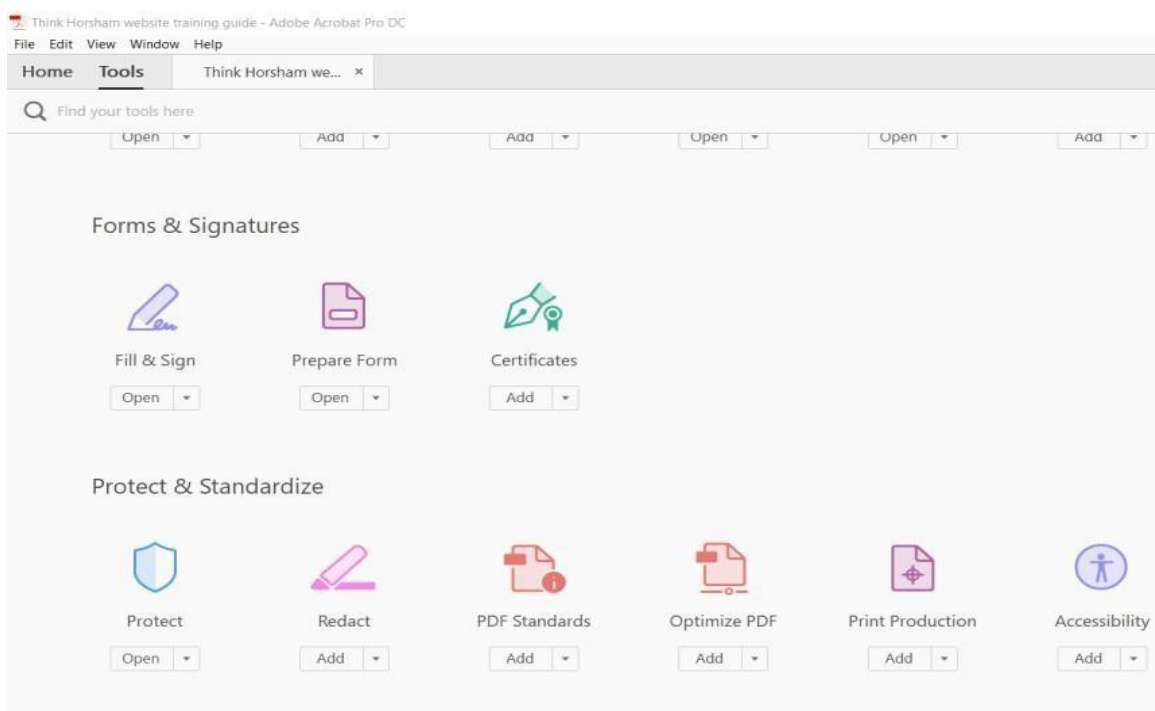
Use Acrobat to edit a PDF in the following cases:

- If you have been sent a PDF from a third party
- To retrospectively edit a PDF that has been added to the website to replace it with an accessible version.

You may still prefer to open a PDF in Microsoft Word as it is a more familiar program for most. The final edit and accessibility check should always be done in Adobe Acrobat Pro.

Run a full Accessibility check

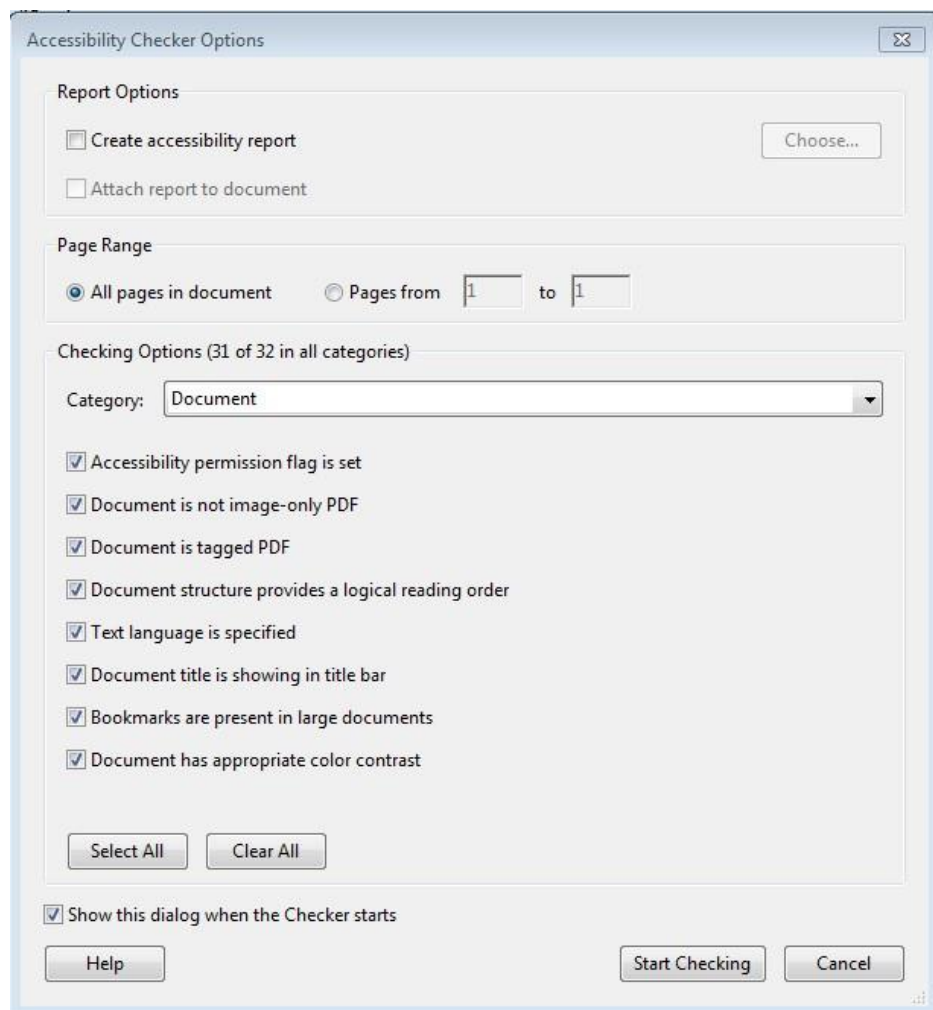
You'll need to add the Accessibility tool into Acrobat Pro's main menu before you can use it for the first time. Click Tools at the top, find the entry for Accessibility, then select the Add option underneath, as below. The tool will now appear in the right-hand toolbar when a document is opened.



Now open your PDF in Adobe Acrobat Pro. Select Accessibility in the right-hand menu.

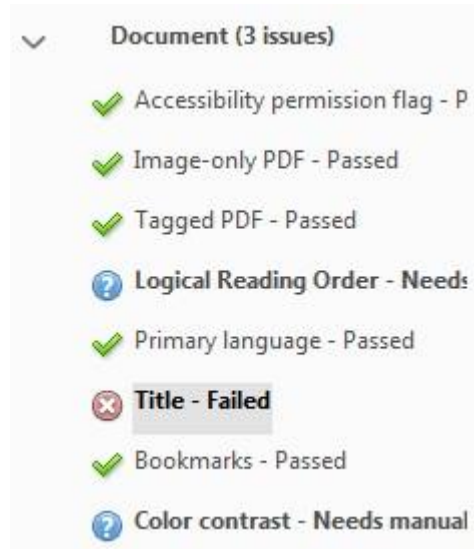


Select Full Check



Your list of errors will show on the left-hand side.

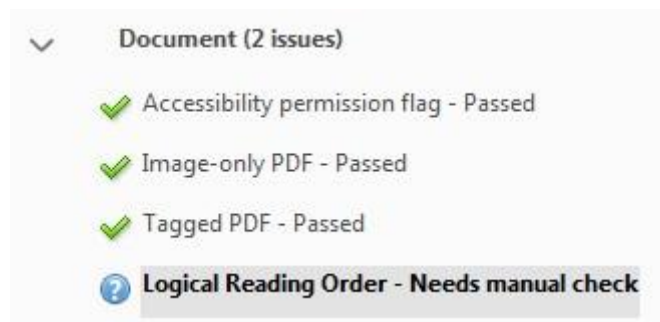
Click the triangle to expand each section and view the problems.



Which errors should I focus on?

Focus on any error that has a red cross next to it. Below are instructions to help you fix the most common errors.

Fix error – Logical Reading Order



This means the flow of text (the order a screen reader will read it) within the document needs checking.

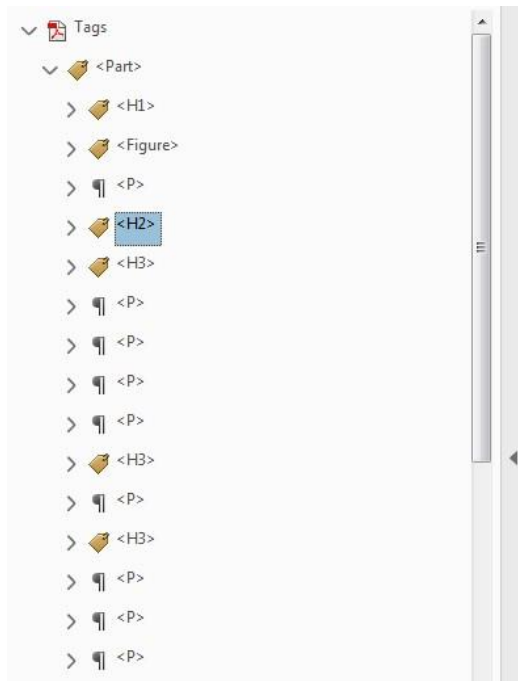
Fix using the tags panel.

To do this, open the Tags panel from the left-hand menu



Click on the top tag, then use the arrow keys to go through each tag. Check against the document that each tag follows the next in the correct reading order, i.e., top to bottom.

This tag is for the title (H2 (Heading 2) = Heading 2 style) Football



University of Ala



The University of Alabama is a schc
describes several of these traditior

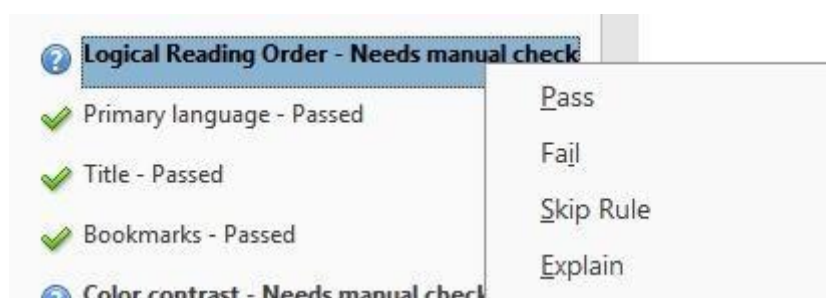
Football

You can move tags by clicking and dragging them up and down in the tag panel, which also alters the reading order.

Once you are happy with the order, go back to the Accessibility Check results.

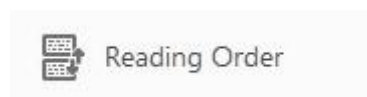


Right click Logical Reading Order in the list and select Pass.

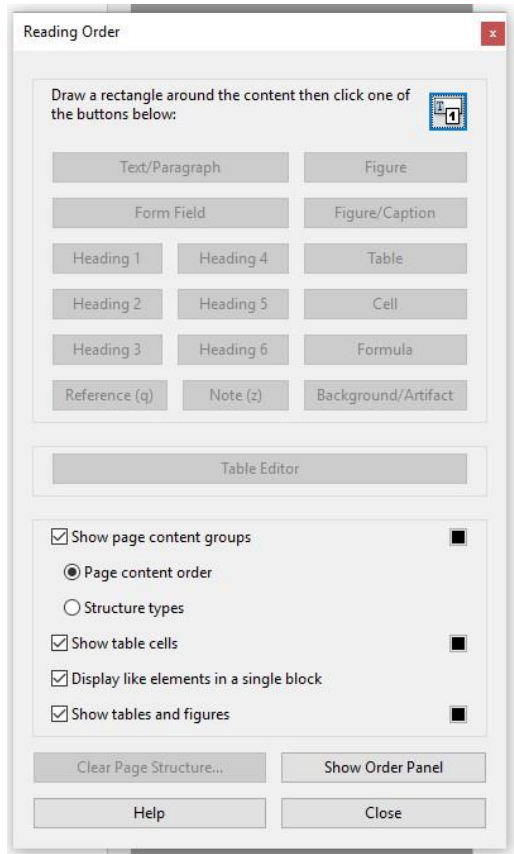


Fix reading order using the Reading Order tool

Use the Reading Order tool to do the check. Open it from the right-hand Accessibility menu as below.



The reading order of each page will be displayed, with area 1 being read first and so on, as below.

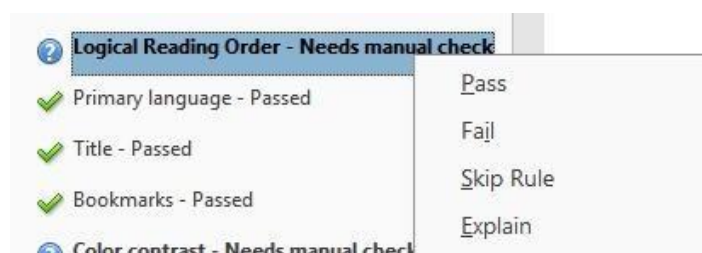


To change the reading order of a page, use your mouse to highlight the area, which is wrong, then using the Reading Order window select the type of text you'd like it to appear as.

Once you are happy with the order, go back to the Accessibility Check results



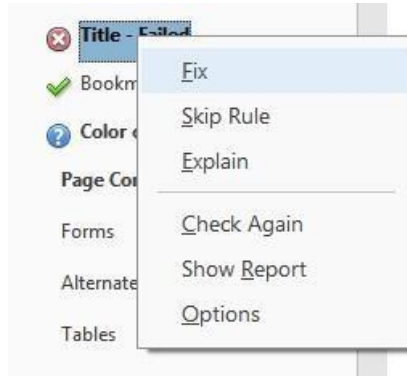
Right click Logical Reading Order in the list and select Pass.



Fix error: Title

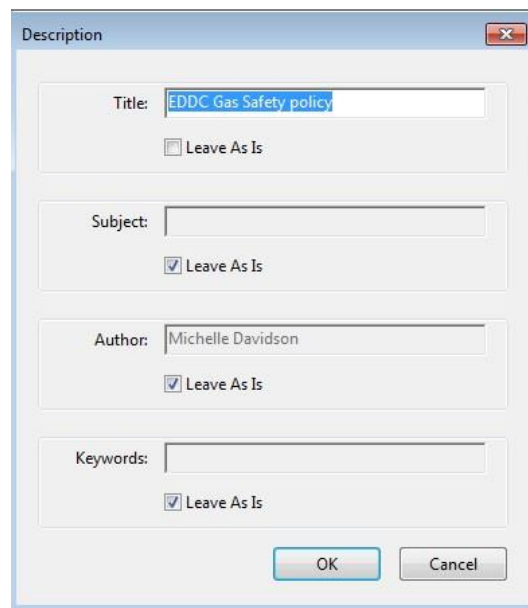
The Title is the most common and simplest error to fix. To fix the Title error:

- Right-click Title. Left click Fix



Sometimes this option picks up the title automatically, and a Pass message will be shown. Other times you'll need to type it in using the wizard, as below.

Untick the Title 'Leave as is' check box, and enter a title for the document, then click OK.



NOTE: if you would rather document authors aren't shown you can remove them in this screen as well without it affecting the accessibility of the document.

Fix error: Tab order or Tagged content

If you are presented with this error, Adobe Acrobat can usually re-tag your document.

- Right-click Tab order or Tagged content. Left click Fix
- A prompt box will show you whether the tag fix was successful or whether more work is required.

Fix error: No tags

Sometimes there are no tags in a document, particularly if it wasn't saved as a tagged document in Microsoft Word before saving as a PDF. This will cause multiple issues when the accessibility checker is run.

To view tags, run the accessibility checker, then click the Tags icon on the left-hand menu (bottom tool shown in blue below)



This document has not tags – the Tags heading is expanded but there is no content.

To add tags, click Auto tag Document in the right-hand Accessibility tools



Now re-run the Accessibility Check. There will be far less errors.

If you are still struggling to make a document accessible after it has been re-tagged, try:

- opening it again in Microsoft Word for editing,
- rerunning the accessibility checker and fixing any issues,
- saving the document and ensuring the option "Document structure tags for accessibility" is ticked, as described earlier in this guide.

Fix error: Primary language

The Primary language should always be set to English.

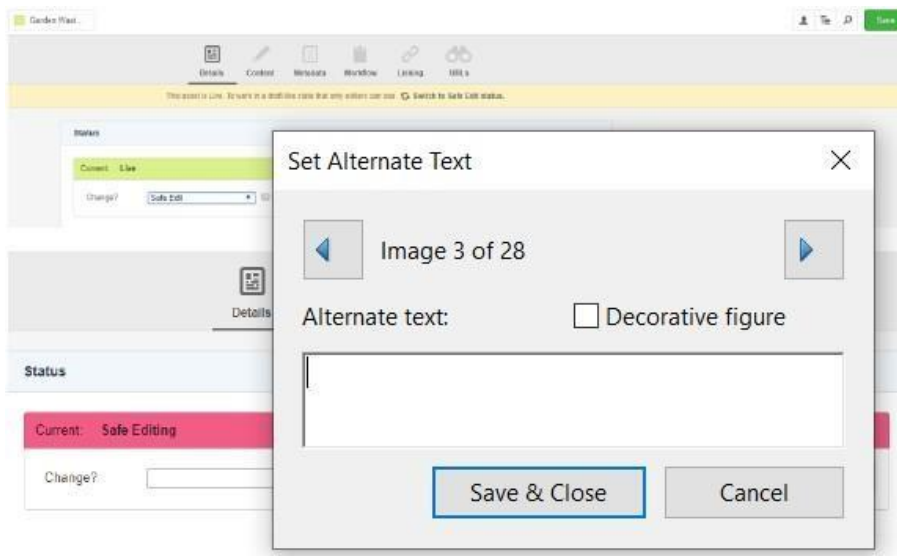
- Right-click Primary language. Left click Fix
- Set the language to English. Press OK.

Fix error: Alternate text

The Alternate text error will show for any image that does not have alternative text added.

To fix the Alternate text error:

- Right-click Figures alternate text. Left click Fix
- The first image in your document will be highlighted and you will see a box to enter your alt text for it. Enter alternative text to describe the image,
- If the image is to add decoration and the content is explained in the copy, select Mark as decorative and don't worry about adding alternative text
- Sometimes images are picked up which aren't images or aren't visible as part of the document. Mark these as Decorative figures as well.
- Click the 'next' button and repeat the process for all images you are presented with
- Click Save and Close when you are finished



Save your PDF once you have fixed your errors

Make sure you save your PDF again once you have fixed your errors.