

# ADA-Compliant PDF Creation Guide

## 1. Start With a Real Source File

Use built-in styles such as Headings, Lists, and Paragraphs.

Avoid screenshot-based PDFs.

## 2. Use Proper Headings and Structure Tags

Heading levels (H1, H2, H3) provide navigation for screen readers.

## 3. Tag Everything Correctly

Ensure headings, lists, tables, and images have proper tags.

Check the tag tree for correct structure.

## 4. Add Alt Text to Images

Describe meaningful images succinctly.

Mark decorative images as artifacts.

## 5. Verify Reading Order

Screen readers follow the reading order panel.

Ensure logical top-to-bottom flow.

## 6. Use Real Lists

Avoid typing dashes or asterisks manually.

Use true list formatting tools.

## **7. Build Accessible Tables**

Use table headers and avoid merged cells when possible.

## **8. Ensure Strong Color Contrast**

Minimum: 4.5:1 for normal text; 3:1 for large text.

## **9. Make Text Searchable**

Apply OCR to scanned PDFs.

## **10. Use Descriptive Links**

Links should explain their destination or action.

## **11. Choose Accessible Fonts**

Use clean fonts like Arial, Helvetica, Verdana, etc.

## **12. Set Document Language**

Screen readers rely on this for pronunciation.

## **13. Label Form Fields**

Every field needs a clear name, tooltip, and tab order.

## **14. Add Metadata**

Always set title, author, and subject.

## **15. Test with Accessibility Tools**

Use Acrobat's Accessibility Checker or a screen reader preview.

## **16. Offer Alternative Formats**

Provide HTML or text-based versions when possible.