Structure Section Headings

Headings offer structure and easy navigation to sections for users of assistive technology (AT). Be mindful to use headings sequentially.

1. In the Tags pane locate the structure tag (P, Span, etc.) holding the text that needs to structurally be a heading.
2. Activate the context menu (or right click) of the structure tag and select Properties.
3. In the Object Properties dialog, on the Tag tab select a suitable Heading Level from the Type drop down.

Augment Graphics with Descriptions

Visual elements are categorized as meaningful or decorative. Meaningful images add value and convey information in addition to the surrounding content. Meaningful graphics use the <Figure> structure tag and require concise textual descriptions. A meaningful image can be simple or complex. Determining simple or complex depends on how much information from the image needs to be conveyed. Complex images need additional descriptions placed in surrounding text or in appendices.

1. Select Reading Order from the Accessibility pane.
2. In the document area locate an image that requires alternate text.
3. Activate the context menu (or right click) on the image and select Edit Alternate Text.
4. In the Alternate Text dialog, add or edit the description. Then navigate to and activate OK.

Remove Repetitive or Decorative Content

Artifacts are non-distinct header and footer content, decorative images, drawing remnants, and sometimes blank characters that do not impact the comprehension of content.

1. Locate and select the content tag to be an artifact, not the structure tag (P, Figure, Span, etc.)
2. Activate the context menu (or right click) of the tag and select Change Tag to Artifact.
3. Navigate to and activate OK in the Create Artifact dialog.

Inject Hyperlinks

Link structure includes a Link tag with the content tag and a Link-OBJR tag nested beneath Link. New links can be created by navigating to the Edit PDF pane and selecting Link > Add / Edit Web or Document Link tool. Then in the document highlight the content to be linked and follow the Create Link wizard. Sometimes content is clickable but missing the necessary Link-OBJR tag. To add the required tag:

1. In the Tags pane, locate and select the content tag that is intended to be a link.
2. Activate the context menu (or right click) of the tag and select Find...
3. In the Find Element dialog, select Unmarked Links from the Find drop down and activate the Find button.
4. With the content highlighted in the document, navigate to and activate the Tag Element button followed by activating the Close button.
5. Confirm a Link-OBJR tag appears next to the content tag in the Tags pane.
Configure Lists and Table of Contents

Proper list structure conveys relationships and hierarchy. Bulleted or numbered lists must contain L and LI tags. The use of Lbl and LBody tags are optional. Begin each list with an L tag and nest an LI tag for each item. Table of Contents structure includes TOC, TOCI, Reference, and Link tags for linked TOCs. The item content with page number and Link-OBJR are placed as a child of the Link tag.

1. In the Tags pane, activate the context menu (or right click) near a tag where the new list or TOC should be placed and select New Tag.
2. In the New Tag dialog, from the Type drop down select List (L) or Table of Contents (TOC).
3. Activate the OK button.
4. Activate the context menu (or right click) of the newly created tag and select New Tag.
5. In the New Tag dialog, from the Type drop down select List Item (LI) or Table of Contents Item (TOCI).
6. If necessary, move the new LI or TOCI tag beneath the L or TOC (respectively) tag.
7. Repeat the steps to access the New Tag dialog and select Reference then Link to complete a TOC structure. Optional for lists: Add Label (Lbl) and List Item Body (LBody) tags.
8. Move the structure tags and the content tags as necessary to achieve the desired order of content.

Nest Sub-Items of Lists and Table of Contents

The correct arrangement of sub-items in the tag structure provides users with accurate relationship information. Sub-lists must begin with a new L or TOC tag as a sibling to the content tag to which the sub-item(s) relate. Use the steps in the Configure Lists and Table of Contents section to create the sub-list structure.

Illuminate with Color and Contrast

Sensible color arrays promote allure yet accessible content.
1. Color cannot be the only means of visually conveying information or prompting a response. Textured patterns (to represent data sets) or textual representation (i.e. an asterisk [*]) must be included to distinguish content.
2. Confirm enough contrast is provided between the foreground and background colors. A minimum contrast ratio of 4.5:1 is required. Activate the Edit PDF pane and highlight text in the document area. Then use the Font Color picker under Format to modify the foreground color.

Order Content Logically

Content is presented by the order existing within the Tags pane.
1. Open the Tags pane and activate the context menu (or right click) of any tag to ensure Highlight Content is checked. Content of the selected tag will be highlighted in the document area.
2. Use the arrow keys on the keyboard to navigate and verify content is in the visually implied and a logical order.
 Manage Data Tables

Table structure must include Table, TR, TH, and TD tags. TH denotes a row or column header. TD represents data cells. Use of table structure is reserved for data tables, not for layout. Avoidance of blank cells, especially table header cells, is equally important for accessibility. Simple and complex data tables elicit the effort their names suggest. Complex data tables require more attention to meet compliance.

 Inspect a Simple Table

A data table is labeled as simple when a data cell relates to only one row and/or column header.

Example Simple Data Table

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Header Cell 1</td>
<td>Header Cell 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Cell 1</td>
<td>Data Cell 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Cell 3</td>
<td>Data Cell 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

 RemEDIATE a Complex Table

Data cells in a complex table can be related to two or more row and/or column headers.

Example Complex Data Table: Multiple Column Headers

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category Sub-Header Cell 1</td>
<td>Category Sub-Header Cell 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Cell 1</td>
<td>Data Cell 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Cell 3</td>
<td>Data Cell 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

 Complex tables require IDs on the headers. The data cells then must list the associated headers.

1. Select Reading Order from the Accessibility pane.
2. Activate the context menu (or right click) over a table cell in the document area and select Table Editor.
3. Activate the context menu (or right click) of an intended header cell and select Table Cell Properties.
4. In the Table Cell Properties dialog enter content in the ID field. Then navigate to and activate the OK button.
5. Repeat steps 3 & 4 for all table header cells.
6. For each individual data cell, select Table Cell Properties from the context menu (or right click).
7. In the Table Cell Properties dialog activate the Add (+) button for Associated Header Cell IDs.
8. Add the cell’s associated headers in order from bottom to top of which the headers should be encountered. The bottom listed header will be the first item read.
9. Navigate to and activate OK.

 Enable Fillable Form Fields

Form elements begin with a <Form> tag that contains a Field Name – OBJR tag. The <Form> tag needs to be a peer structurally to the associated content tag.
→ Offer Descriptive Tooltips on Form Fields
Tooltips indicate to users what information is expected in the field. Tooltips need to comprise a meaningful description along with any constraint, formatting or group information (e.g., “required”, “mm/dd/yyyy”, “Billing” versus “Shipping”).
1. Open the Prepare Forms pane. When Form field auto detection is ON form fields will automatically be added. Activate Start when ready.
2. In the document area activate the context menu (or right click) of a form element (e.g., text field) and select Properties.
3. In Properties on the General tab enter a concise description in the Tooltip field, including considerations for constraints.
4. Optional: Additional choices from the General, Options, Format or Calculate tabs may be useful.
5. Navigate to and activate Close.
6. Repeat steps 2-5 for each form element.

→ Assemble Radio Buttons into Groups
Radio buttons must be grouped to associate the related choices.
1. Open the Prepare Forms pane.
2. In the document area activate the context menu (or right click) of a form element (e.g., text field) and select Properties.
3. In Properties on the General tab enter a concise description in the Name and Tooltip fields that can relate the choices (e.g., “Question 1” or “Gender”).
4. Navigate to and activate the Options tab.
5. In the Radio Button Choice field enter the unique choice for the radio button (e.g., “a”) or “Female”).
6. Navigate to and activate Close.
7. Repeat steps 2-6 for each radio button. Note: Each radio button of a group must have the same Name.

→ Prepare the Form for Use
Verification is necessary to ensure the form properly functions.
Organize the Tab Order
1. Within the Prepare Forms pane, activate the Tab Order menu from the Fields area of the pane.
2. Confirm Order Tabs by Structure and Show Tab Numbers are checked.
3. Re-arrange the objects in the Fields area as necessary to set the navigation order of the form.
Populate Fields with Test Data
1. From the Prepare Forms pane activate Preview.
2. Enter data in the fields, confirm any restrictions are enforced, and activate Edit upon finishing.
3. Open the More menu and select Clear Form.
Add Form Structure to the Tags Pane
1. Open the Tags pane and activate the Options menu to verify Tag Annotations is checked.
2. Review the tags to determine if <Form> and Field Name – OBJR tags are present for each field.
3. If <Form> is missing activate the context menu (or right click) of a tag and select New Tag. In the dialog select Form from the Type drop down and activate OK.
4. If a Field Name – OBJR tag is missing activate the context menu (or right click) of a tag and select Find…
   a. From the Find drop down choose Unmarked Annotations and activate Find.
   b. Once the content is highlighted in the document, navigate to and activate Tag Element followed by Close.
5. Repeat steps 3 or 4 as necessary to add all crucial tags.
6. Shift and place the tags in a structural and logical order.
➔ Label the Document


1. Navigate to File > Properties.
2. Locate the Title field on the Description tab and enter a descriptive purpose for the document.
3. Optional: Insert the name of an organization or office in the Author field.
4. Navigate to and activate the Initial View tab.
5. Locate the Window Options > Show drop down and select Document Title.
6. Navigate to and activate the Advanced tab.
7. Within Reading Options set the primary language of the document using the Language drop down.
8. Navigate to and activate OK.

➔ Perform a High-Level Accessibility Check

While a manual inspection is the only method to review the content for 100% of potential issues, running the Full Check accessibility checker can identify many potential issues.

1. Open the Accessibility pane and select Full Check.
2. Review the selected Accessibility Checker Options and then activate Start Checking.
3. Consider the results in the Accessibility Report pane.
4. Activate the context menu (or right click) of an issue to Explain or Check Again among other options. Modifications will likely need to occur in the Tags pane. In a few instances the checker assists by offering the option to Fix the issue.

➔ Take Additional Measures

1. Adding bookmarks to lengthy documents can aid navigation. Open the Bookmarks pane and confirm bookmarks are present. Insert bookmarks by activating the Options menu and selecting New Bookmarks from Structure... Typically heading structure (i.e., H1-H6) is used. Bookmarks must be organized and properly nested.
2. When watermarks cannot be avoided, confirm the contents are repeated in the document body and sufficient contrast exists against the document text.
3. A few steps are involved to prepare a scanned document and convert it to screen-readable text.
   a. Open Tools > Enhance Scans.
   b. Locate the Enhance menu and activated Scanned Document. Ensure Recognize Text is checked and activate Enhance. This can be run multiple times to improve the quality of the scanned content.
   c. Locate the Recognize Text menu and activate In This Document. Activate Recognize Text. Upon completion of the recognition process, select Recognize Text > Correct Recognized Text. Use the provided toolbar to make corrections and activate Accept for each item.
   d. Open Tools and select Accessibility > Autotag Document. Once tags have been added to the Tags pane, review all content and tags to confirm compliance.

Content in this document is applicable to Adobe Acrobat 2015 through 2020. Newer versions may contain additional features or shortcuts. Instructions were written for the broader audience.