# Accessible PDF Document

For an individual with disabilities, much of the success in using a PDF document depends on how it was created. When authoring PDF documents, it's important to follow a few basic steps to ensure your documents are readable.

## Creating a PDF using Microsoft Word 2016

The first step in creating an accessible PDF from a Word document is to make sure the original document is accessible.

Once you have your accessible Word document, you will want to export it to a PDF in a way that preserves the accessibility features of the document. These features include the heading structure, alternate text for images, and the markup that identifies lists, tables, document language, and any other content relating to the document's accessibility.

To export your Word document to a PDF:

1. In Word, go to File > Info > Check for Issues > Check for Accessibility.
2. In Word, go to File > Export, and select “Create PDF/XPS Document".
3. Save your document.

## Making an existing PDF accessible

Using Adobe Acrobat Pro, you can take the following steps to improve the accessibility of an existing document:

* **If the text in your PDF is an image and not selectable text, convert it to text.** Select Tools > Text Recognition > In This File. This is the most important step in making your document readable by assistive technology.
* **Add tags to indicate heading structure.** Select Tools > Accessibility > Add Tags to Document. This is important for navigating long and complex documents, such as textbooks.
* **Add alternate text to images.** Select Tools > Accessibility > Set Alternate Text. Users who cannot see images must rely on you, the author, to provide alternate text to describe the content of an image. This alternate text should be succinct, convey the important information, and not overburden the reader.
* **Set reading order**. Select Tools > Accessibility > Touch Up Reading Order. Reading order is important, as it is the order in which a screen reader will read the content to the user.
* **Set language.** Select File > Properties > Advanced > Reading Options. This setting helps screen readers switch to the correct language.