CREATING ACCESSIBLE EXCEL DOCUMENTS

A list of "Do and Don't" when creating Excel documents. This is not an exhaustive list, but the most common mistakes that create barriers.

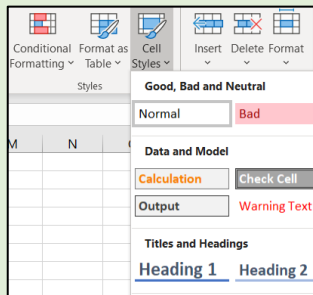| DO ✔	DON'T 🛑
Do place the Title in Cell A1 of the Sheet. Content should begin in Cell A2.	Don't forget to include the title or place content in Cell A1.
Do position data along the top, the left edge of the sheet.	Don't place data anywhere on the sheet.
Do ensure that content reads properly from top to bottom and left to right.	Don't arrange content with a reading order that is not left to right, top to bottom.
Do use Serif fonts (e.g., Arial, Calibri, Verdana) with a minimum 12-point size.	Don't use Sans-Serif fonts or sizes smaller than 12 points.
Do give names to sheets that are brief and unique.	Don't keep default sheet names (i.e., sheet 1, sheet 2).
Do delete unused sheets.	Don't leave unused sheets.
Do ensure sufficient color contrast ratio. If unsure, use a color contrast checker from [WebAIM](#).	Don't use insufficient color contrast.
Do provide alternative text, or Alt Text, for all images or mark them as decorative. Provide a concise description for images and consider the purpose and importance—limit the description to under 200 characters. Do not include hyperlinks in descriptions.	Don't use images with embedded text. Screen readers cannot recognize that text. Don't use the image name as Alt Text. Don't leave Alt Text blank. Don't use "Image of..." or "Photo of..." to begin the image description.
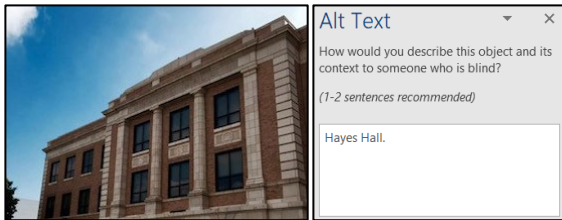
Hayes Hall on a clear day

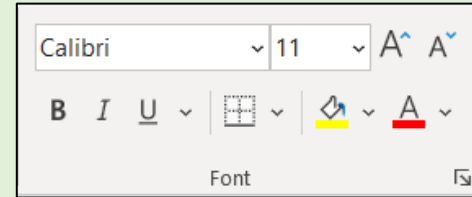| DO ✔	DON'T 🛑
Do use Captions for Images/figures. Make Captions and Alt Text different.	Don't duplicate Alt Text as Caption or vice-versa, or leave blank.
Do always save the worksheet with the cursor in Cell A1 of Sheet 1.	Don't place the cursor anywhere in the worksheet when saving.
Do use pre-defined cell styles and input headings.	Don't use direct styling methods.
Do place each item (e.g., dataset, table, graphic) on its own sheet. Divide complex datasets into smaller, more manageable units on separate sheets. Avoid nested datasets and tables.	Don't use one sheet to store all of your items (e.g., datasets, tables, or graphics).
Do designate headers for datasets and tables.	Don't merge cells.
Do use **Define Name** for Rows and Columns for datasets and tables (right-click on table row > Define Name... in the pop-up menu). Give name and scope.	
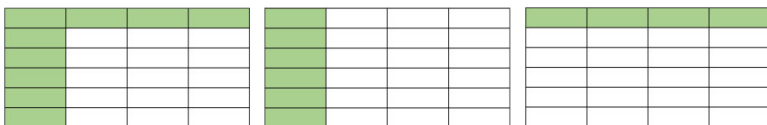
If column and row headers are present, enter Title as Name.
If only row headers are present, enter RowTitle as Name.
If only column headers are present, enter ColumnTitle as Name.

DO ✔	DON'T 🛑
Do format datasets containing formulas as tables (Home > Format as Table).	Don't leave formatting off.
Do format data cells so all text is visible (i.e., no ######).	Don't format cells so that some of the content is not visible.
Do avoid merged or split cells.	Don't merge cells excessively.
Do avoid blank rows and columns.	Don't use blank rows and columns to create spacing for your data.
Do avoid blank cells. Use other means of conveying information such as n/a, minus sign, 0, no data, empty cell, etc.	Don't use blank cells to convey information.

Weekday	Quantity
Monday	100987
Tuesday	34989
Wednesday	54678
Thursday	n/a
Friday	238723