Creating Accessible PDFs in Adobe Acrobat DC

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A Note About Creating Accessible PDFs

Creating PDFs that are fully accessible can be a nuanced process. The steps in this guide should be sufficient for basic documents, but your results may vary. Should you encounter difficulty, please email accessibility@csusb.edu or call (909) 537-5079, Option 4.

Step 1: Create an Accessible Document

Create a document in Microsoft Word following best practices for accessibility. See "Authoring Accessible Word Documents" for more information.
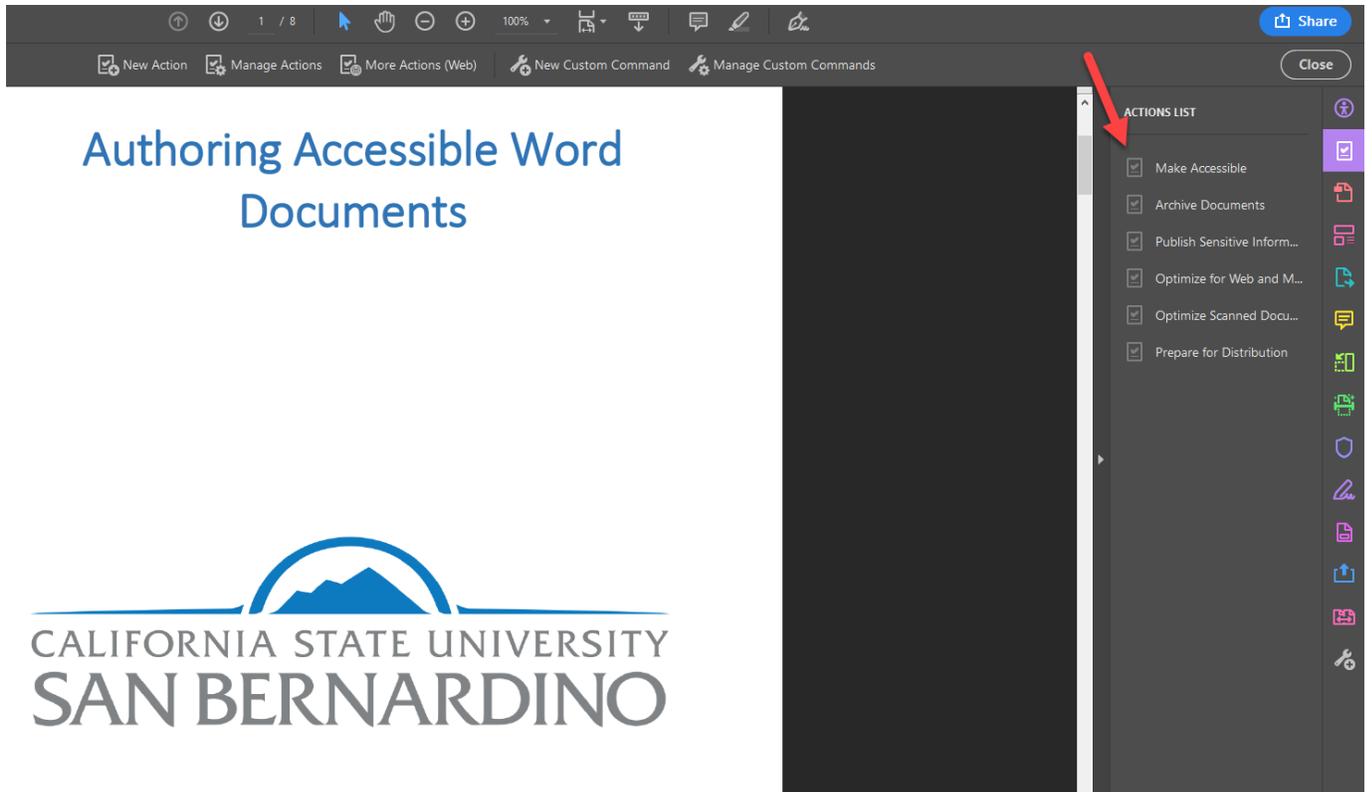
Step 2: Open the Adobe Acrobat DC Action Wizard

Open Adobe Acrobat DC (available to all faculty and staff at no cost). Navigate to the "Tools" tab and select "Action Wizard".
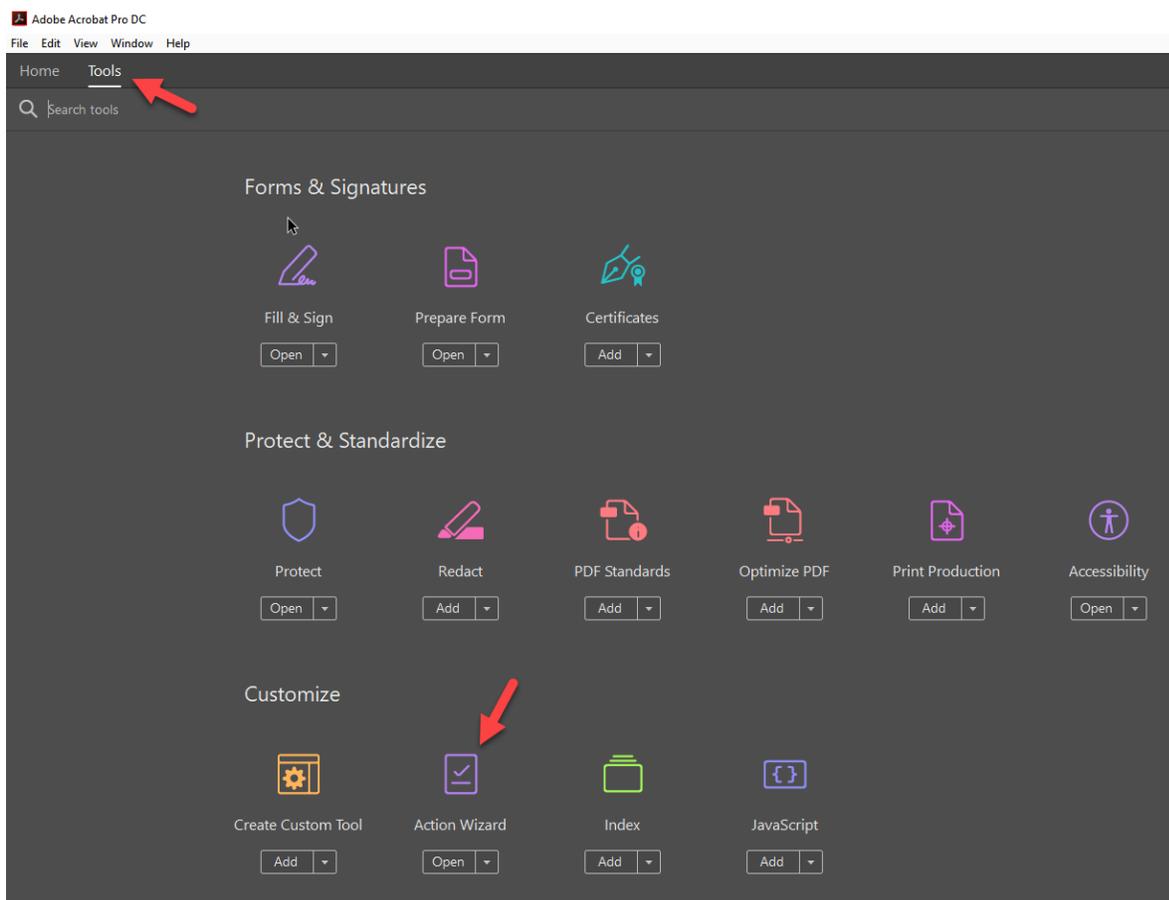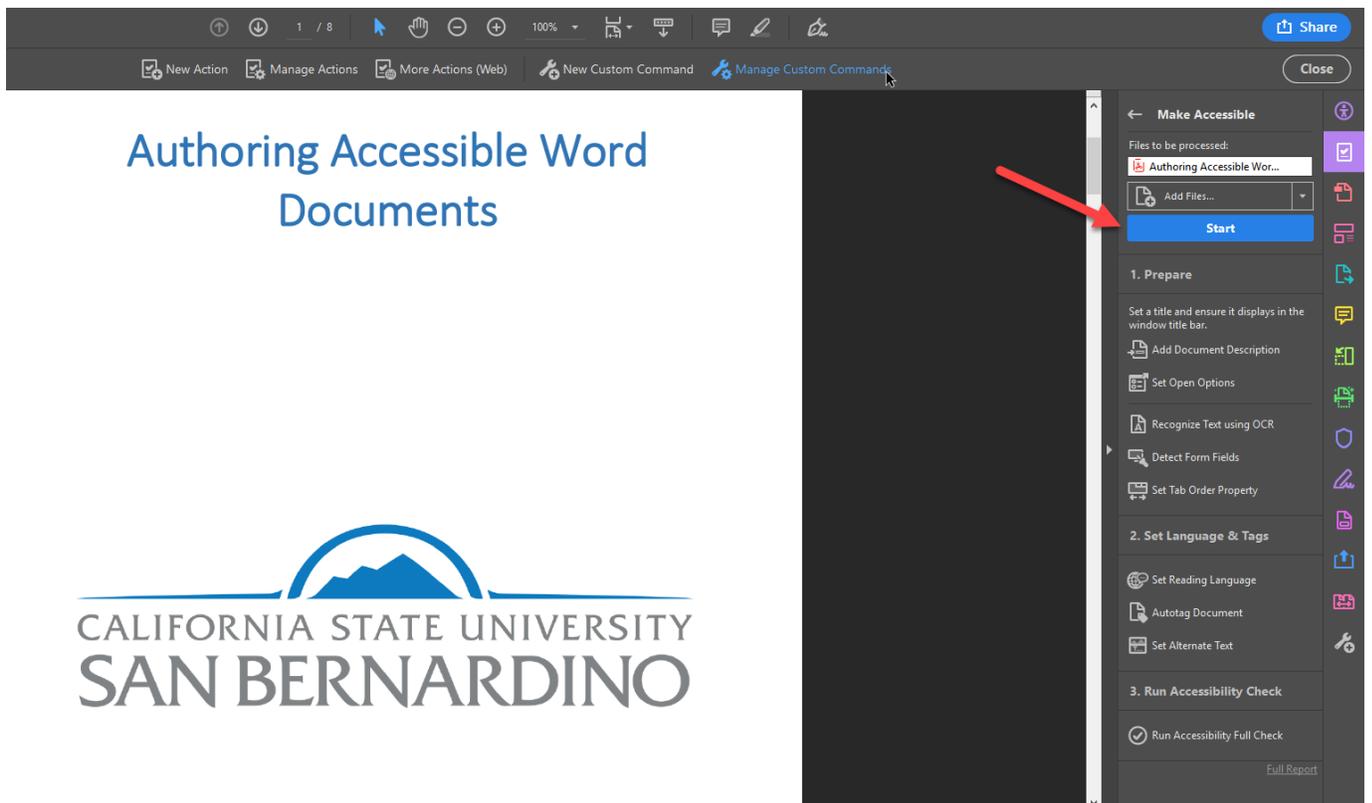

Step 3: Running the Action Wizard
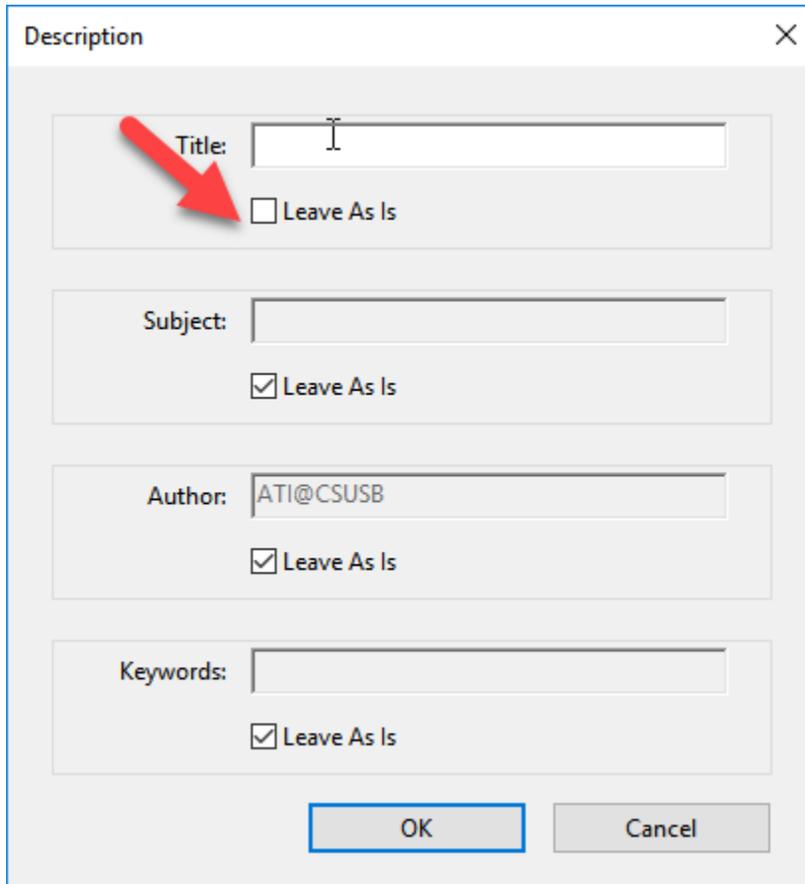
From the "Actions" list, select "Make Accessible"

Select "Start"

Step 4: Description

The "Description" box appears. If the document does not have a title, or the title is incorrect, uncheck "Leave As Is" and add the appropriate title. The choose "OK".
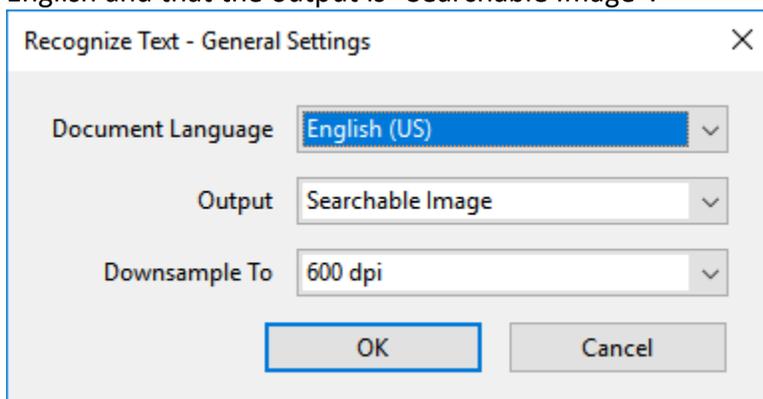

Step 5: Recognize Text

The "Recognize Text" dialogue box appears. Ensure that the document's language is set as English and that the output is "Searchable Image".
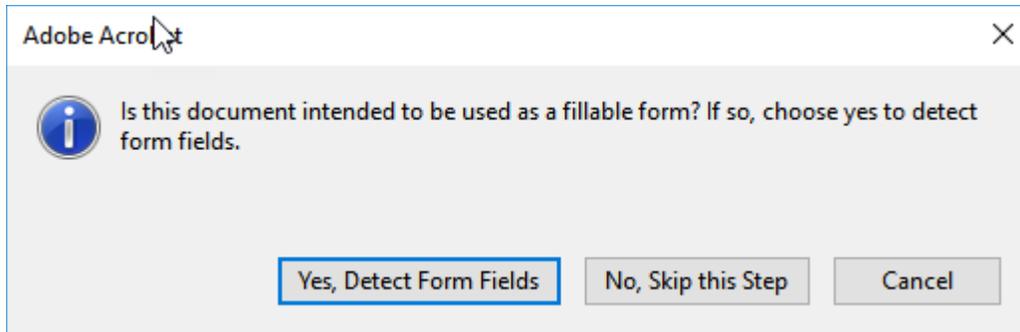
Step 6: Form Fields

If the document is to be used as a form, select "Yes, Detect Form Fields". Otherwise, select "No, Skip this Step"

Adobe Acrobat ✕

Is this document intended to be used as a fillable form? If so, choose yes to detect form fields.

Yes, Detect Form Fields | No, Skip this Step | Cancel

Step 7: Set Reading Language

Set reading language to "English"

Set Reading Language ✕

Language: English ∨

OK | Cancel
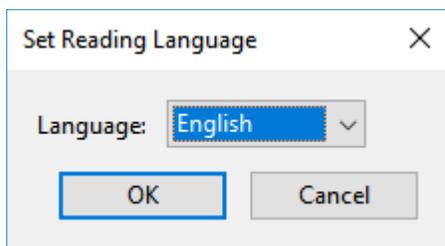
Step 8: Alternative Text

Acrobat will then take you through the process of adding alternative text.

Adobe Acrobat ✕

Acrobat will detect all figures in this document and display any figures with missing alternate text.

☐ Do not show this message again

OK | Cancel
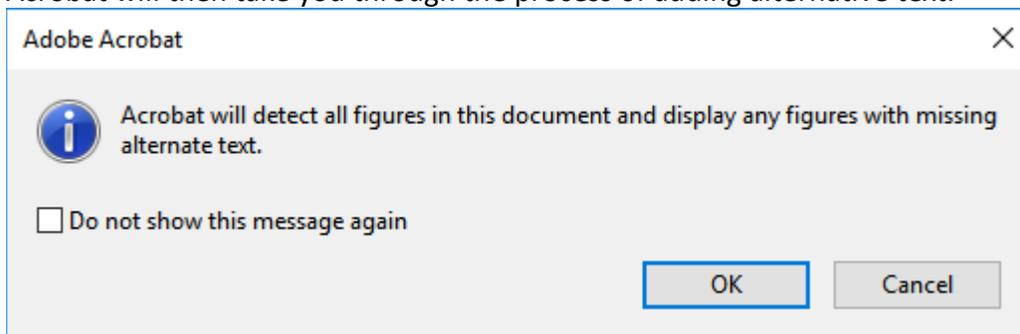
Each image will be individually selected so alternative text can be added. Insert applicable text. If the image has no meaning, select the "Decorative Figure" box.

Step 9: Navigating Between Alternate Text Descriptions

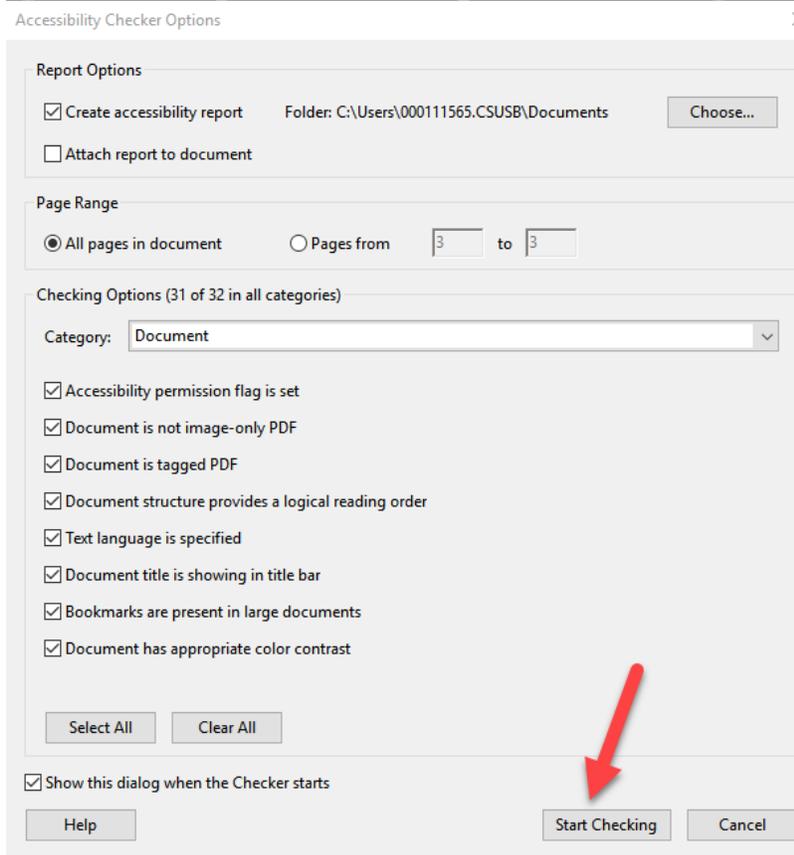IMPORTANT: Use the **arrow buttons** to navigate between images. Do not select "Save & Close".
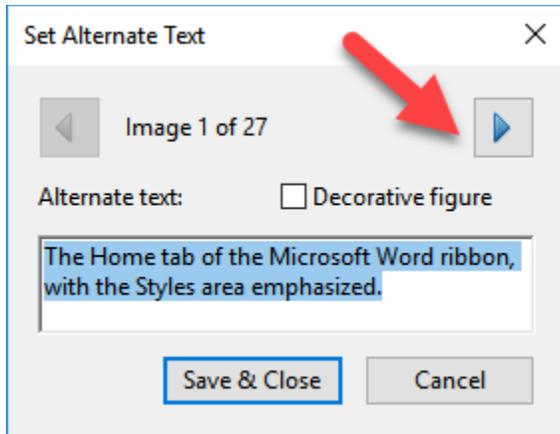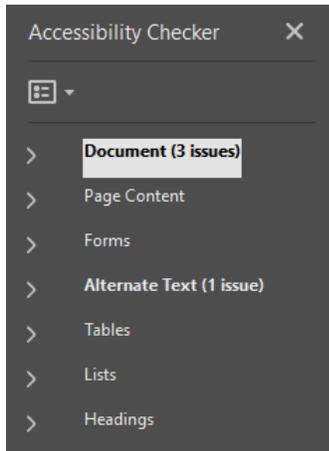

Step 10: Accessibility Checker

When all images have alternative text, select "Save & Close". The Accessibility Checker Options box will appear. Use the default settings and choose "Start Checking".
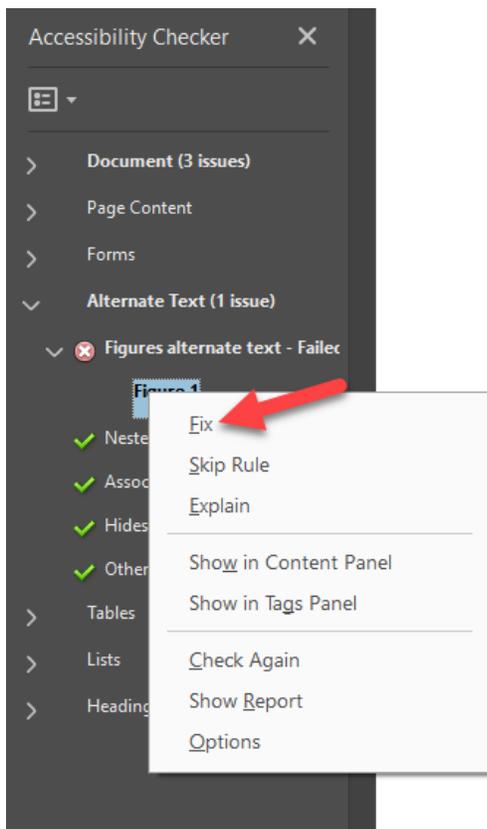
Step 11: Understanding Your Results

The results from the Accessibility Checker will be displayed in the left-hand navigation.

Use the drop-down arrows to expand any sections with issues noted, then right-click on any subcategory to fix any issues. The wizard will re-open and walk you through repair steps.

Once the issue has been resolved, the checkpoint will automatically update.
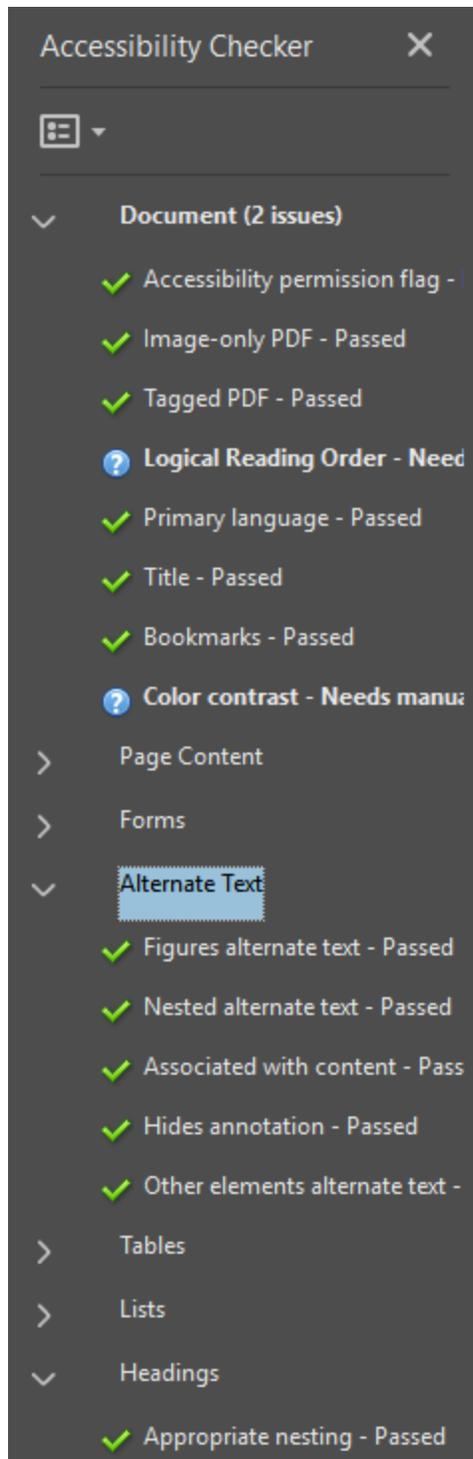
Two items will always be flagged as possible accessibility barriers, regardless of how accessible your documents are: Logical Reading Order and Color Contrast. This is due to the software's inability to check for these items. Email accessibility@csusb.edu to have these components checked for you.
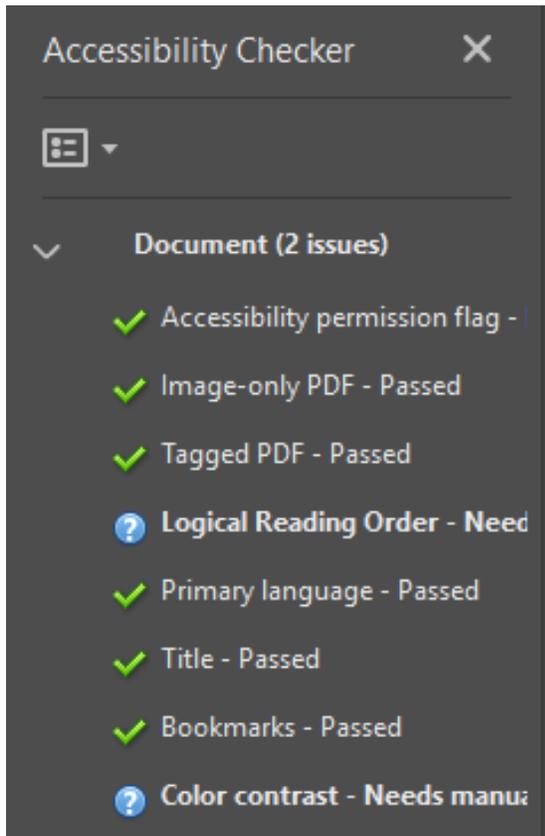
Step 12: Save and Close

Your document should now be accessible. Save the updated file.

Please contact us should you have questions or desire additional training.

The Accessible Technology Initiative at CSUSB

The Accessible Technology Initiative reflects the California State University's commitment to provide access to information resources and technologies to individuals with disabilities. This commitment is articulated in Executive Order 926 (EO 926), the CSU Board of Trustees Policy on Disability Support and Accommodations. The initiative will facilitate improvements in the following three priorities:

1. Web accessibility
2. Instructional materials
3. Procurement of Electronic & Information Technology (E&IT)

For more information on the Accessible Technology Initiative at CSUSB email accessibility@csusb.edu or call 909.537.5079