

LAUSD Job Aid Microsoft Outlook

Accessibility in Outlook is crucial because it ensures that all users, including those with disabilities, can access, perceive, and interact with email communication effectively. By making emails accessible, you help create an inclusive environment and remove barriers for individuals with visual and auditory disabilities, so that they can participate.

Make Outlook more Accessible

In Outlook you can use the Accessibility Checker or add notifications by changing your Accessibility settings. Review your settings and ensure that you have the best options selected for email accessibility.

Here are the steps to review or change your accessibility notifications.

Step 1: Go to **File** tab.

Step 2: Select the **Options** button.

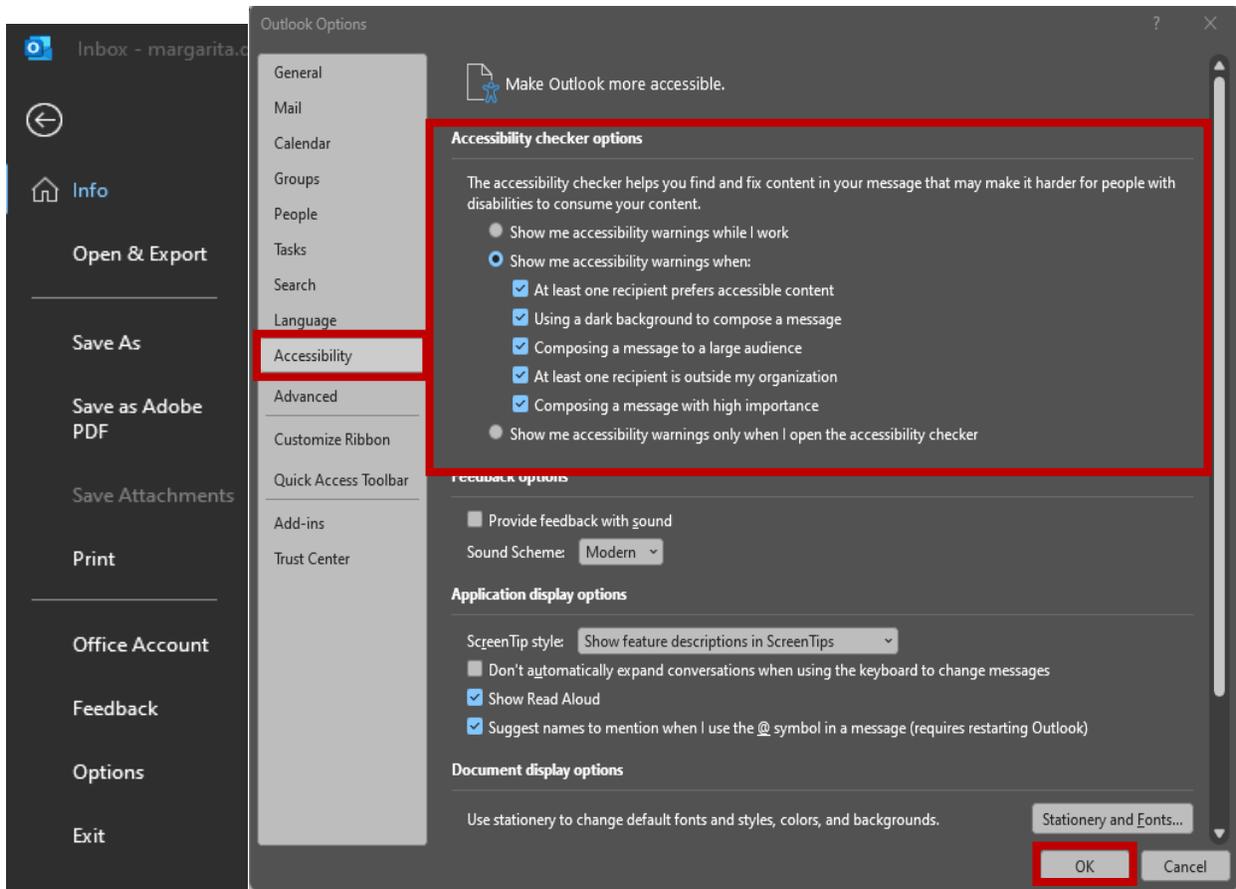
Step 3: Once the **Outlook Options** window opens, then select **Accessibility**.

Step 4: There you will see the following options.

- Show me accessibility warnings while I work
- Show me accessibility warnings when:
 - At least one recipient prefers accessible content
 - Using a dark background to compose a message
 - Composing a message to a large audience
 - At least one recipient is outside my organization
 - Composing a message with high importance
- Show me accessibility warnings only when I open the accessibility checker

Step 5: Make changes to best fit the needs of your office and communication needs.

Step 6: **Save** your setting changes.

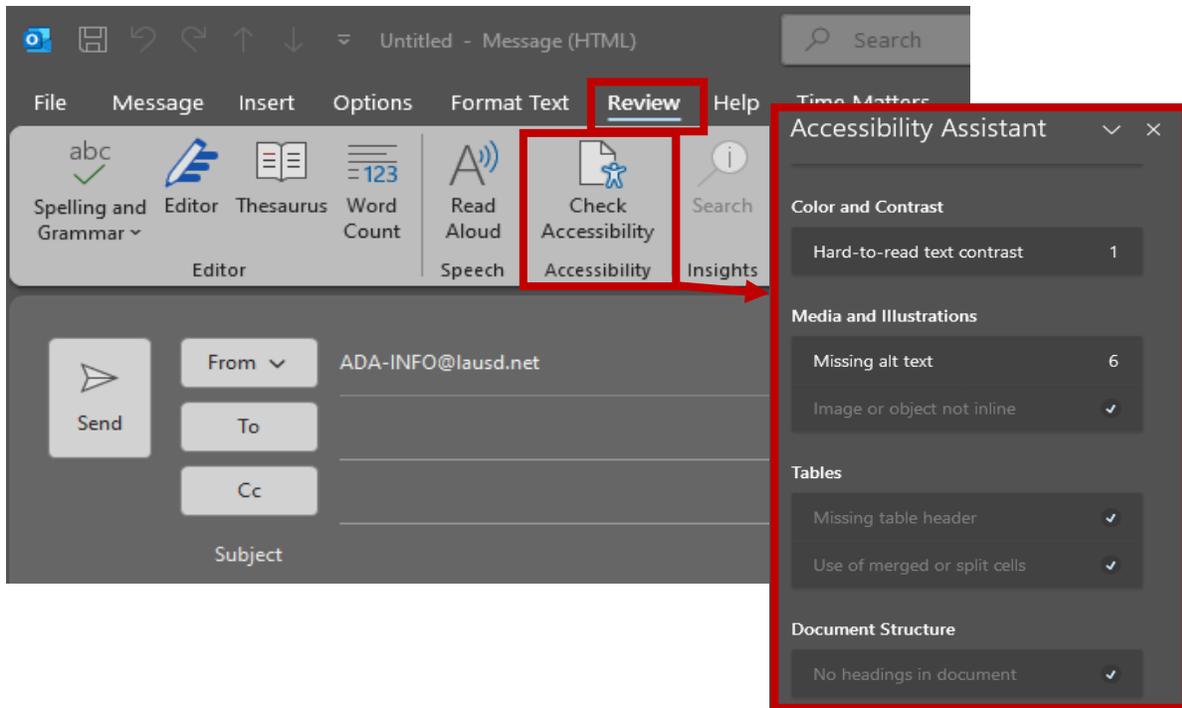


To manually test accessibility by using the built in Accessibility Checker:

Step 1. Select *the Review* tab.

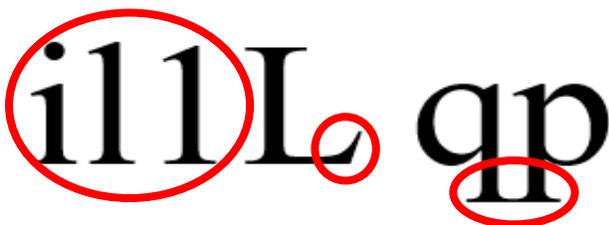
Step 2. Then select **Check Accessibility**.

Step 3. Once selected the **Accessibility Assistant** pane will open and guide you through any accessibility errors that need to be addressed and suggest possible solutions.



Fonts and Colors

Choose simple fonts such as Arial, Calibri or Verdana in addition to the [District's branding fonts](#) Larseit, Poppins, and Lato. These fonts are easier to read for individuals with vision impairments. Do not use decorative fonts with scripts or decorative styles as these are harder to read. Typography can be tested by checking height, similarities decorative elements with lower case "i", lower case "l", the number "1" upper case "L". Another test is comparing lower case "q" and lower case "p" to determine how close the characters align. Below you will see examples of what to avoid with font choice. Ensure your font size is 12 points or larger. Avoid the use of all capital letters, excessive italics or underline.



Font: Times New Roman

While the use of colors in our communications may not seem too important to some, there are approximately 12 million Americans that are color-blind. Please ensure your communication has high contrast between text and background colors. Avoid solely relying on color to convey information and ensure that there is a readable marker for color-blind users. It is recommended that you maintain a consistent color scheme through your email.

Take a look at the different ways color is used to convey meaning in the message and the limitations that can be created when there aren't additional indicators. The examples below depict an email that reads "Hello ACU Team, the following projects will be distributed to the following team members: Ken, Stacy, and Mary." Followed by a table with 9 school names, Location Code, Region and Board District headings. The table has a total of nine rows, and the distribution of work is done by changing the color of the text on the row to match the text color of the team member in the sentence above. Ken is identified with red; Stacy's name in purple, and Mary's name in blue, incorrectly leaving information solely depending on color. Followed by the same email example and table in grayscale which removes the colors on the table, so the projects cannot be distinguished whom they are assigned.

Hello ACU Team,

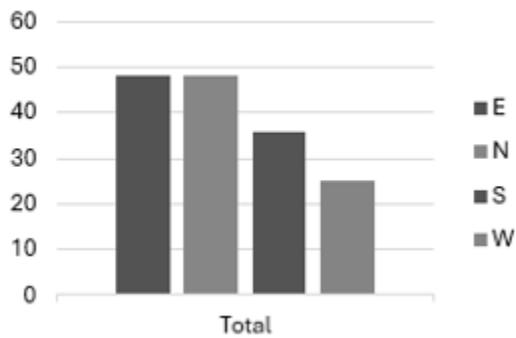
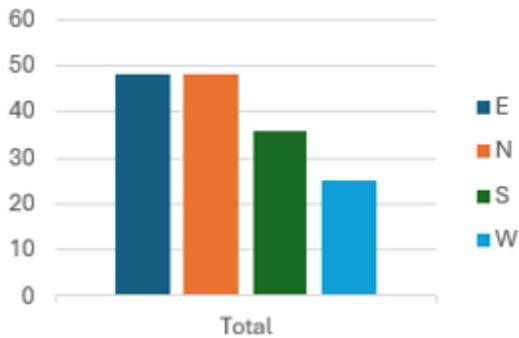
The following projects will be distributed to the following team members:
Ken, Stacy, and Mary.

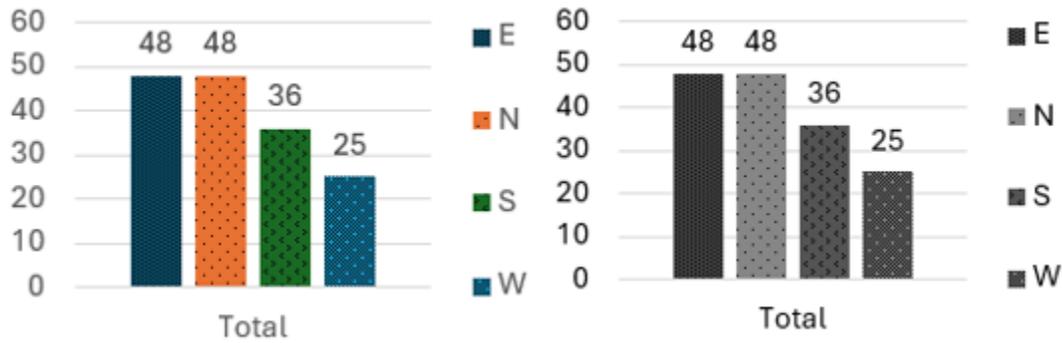
Board District	Region	Loc Code	School Name
1	S	7137	32nd St USC MAE Mag
7	E	7722	Angelou Community SH
7	S	8852	Angel's Gate HS
6	N	8609	Arleta SH
2	E	4322	Arroyo Seco Mus/S Mag
1	S	8028	Audubon MS
4	W	8038	Bancroft MS
7	S	8529	Banning SH
5	E	8536	Bell SH

Hello ACU Team,

The following projects will be distributed to the following team members:
 Ken, Stacy, and Mary.

Board District	Region	Loc Code	School Name
1	S	7137	32nd St USC MAE Mag
7	E	7722	Angelou Community SH
7	S	8852	Angel's Gate HS
6	N	8609	Arleta SH
2	E	4322	Arroyo Seco Mus/S Mag
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Test color contrast by visiting [WebAIM Color Contrast Checker](https://webaim.org/standards/contrast-checker/) and identifying the two-color fields, Foreground Color (text) and Background Color. A color contrast ratio of 4.5:1 is recommended for regular text.

Manually enter Hex values or use the color picker by clicking the Color Picker box next to each field and use the dropper. Test results will show if the contrast passed or failed.

Contrast Checker

[Home](#) > [Resources](#) > Contrast Checker

The interface shows two color selection panels. The 'Foreground' panel has a hex value of #002575, an alpha value of 1, and a lightness slider. The 'Background' panel has a hex value of #FFFFFF and a lightness slider. Below these panels, a green-bordered box displays the 'Contrast Ratio' as 13.8:1, with a 'permalink' link underneath.

Normal Text

WCAG AA: **Pass**
WCAG AAA: **Pass**

The five boxing wizards jump quickly.

Large Text

WCAG AA: **Pass**
WCAG AAA: **Pass**

The five boxing wizards jump quickly.

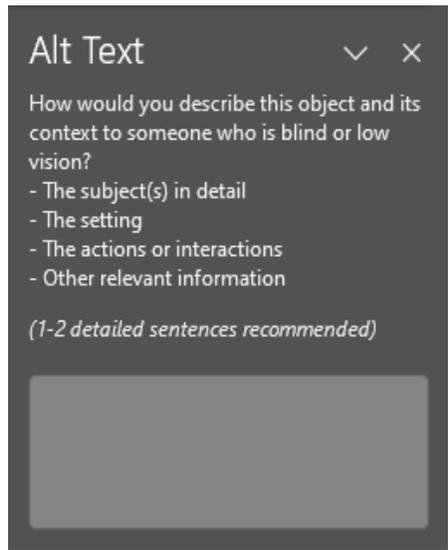
Graphical Objects and User Interface Components

WCAG AA: **Pass**

Text Input ✓

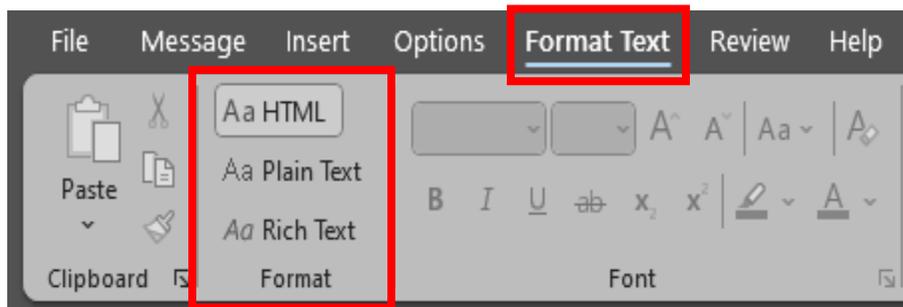
Add Alternative Text (Alt Text) to Images

Alt Text is the description of the visual components to the images used to convey information to people with vision disabilities. To add alt text right-click on the image in your email and select **“Edit Alt Text”**. The alt text window will appear where you can then enter your detailed description.



Enter a brief yet detailed description of the image to ensure screen reader users understand the content of the image. If you are taking a snip of information intended to be used, please describe the snipped image in greater detail. This also applies to embedded documents such as flyers, where content must be provided. Note that without alt text, a screen reader would skip any image.

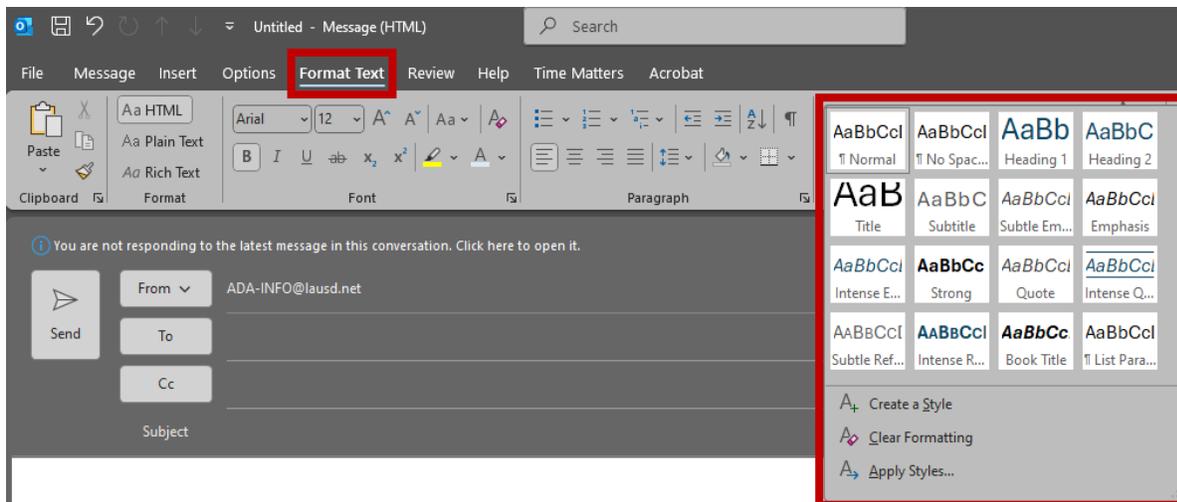
Please note that email format may also prevent email content from being displayed to its intended audience. For example, an “image only” email with an embedded flyer image with no alt text sent to a recipient who only receives “Plain Text” correspondence, would not receive the information because no alt text is provided for the image or within the body of the email.



However, if the embedded flyer image has alt text, the plain text email recipient would have the alt text description available and would still receive the intended message. We recommend writing the text in the body of the email along with providing alt text. This way everyone can access your message.

Use Built-in Styles

Use built-in headings and styles to structure your email content. This helps screen readers navigate through email more effectively. For example, use “**Heading 1**” for main headings and “**Heading 2**” for subheadings.



Accessible Hyperlinks

Use descriptive text for hyperlinks. Instead of “click here,” use something like “Visit our website for more information.” This provides context for screen reader users to predict where the hyperlink will redirect users.

Email Signature

Conclude your email with an accessible signature. Apply the previously mentioned best practices for text, color, and hyperlink rules to the signature. To ensure complete accessibility, make sure to add the alt text to any images that are part of your signature. This includes logos, watermarks, image icons and decorative features.

Step 1: Open a new email.

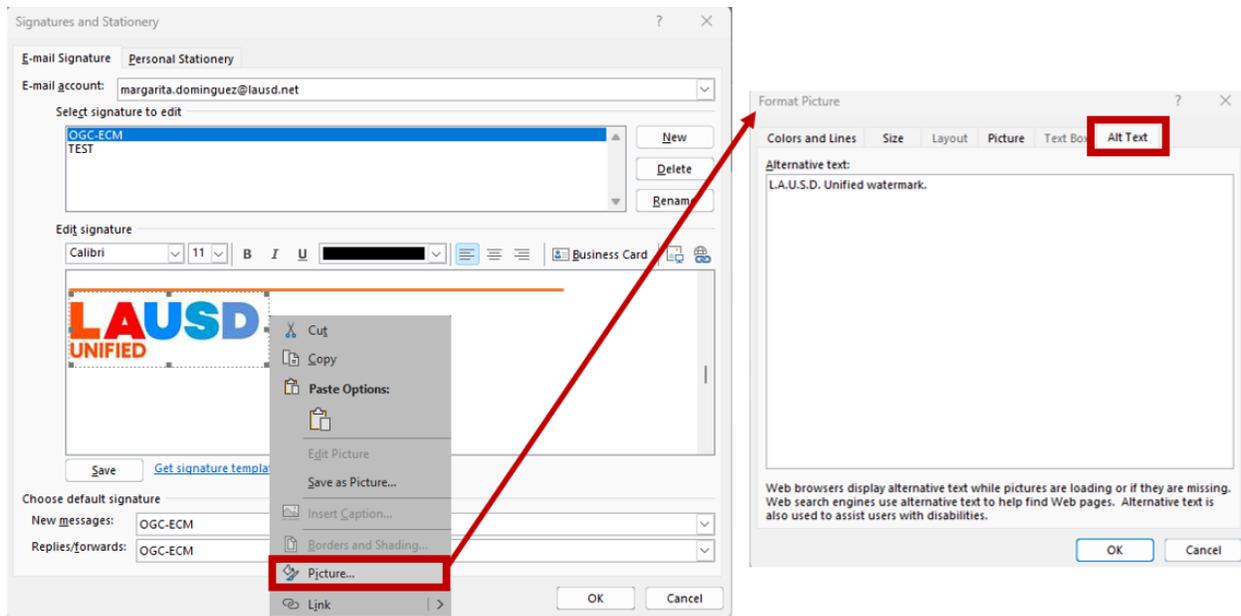
Step 2: In the **Insert** tab, click on signature.

Step 3: The **Signature and Stationery** will open, and you can edit existing or create a new signature.

Step 4: Complete your contact information and if using any image for your signature, right click on the image and select **Picture**.

Step 5: In the **Format Picture** screen, click on the **Alt Text** tab and enter your image description.

Step 6: **Save** your signature.



Note: For decorative elements in your signature, use [empty quotation marks \(" "\) as Alt Text](#). This helps screen readers recognize that these elements are not meant to be read as images.

Avoid Using Tables

Tables should be avoided, if possible, when presenting data. Tables can create difficulties for screen readers and when using magnifier due to the linear format tables read and it also results in having to scroll horizontally.

If you must use tables, here are a few guidelines to consider for accessibility

- Avoid using fixed-width tables.
- Ensure tables display correctly on all devices, including phones and tablets.
- Edit hyperlink texts in your table so they are meaningful and do not break mid-sentence.
- Verify that the email is readable with magnifier. Send a draft to yourself and check it on a mobile device to ensure it doesn't require horizontal scrolling.

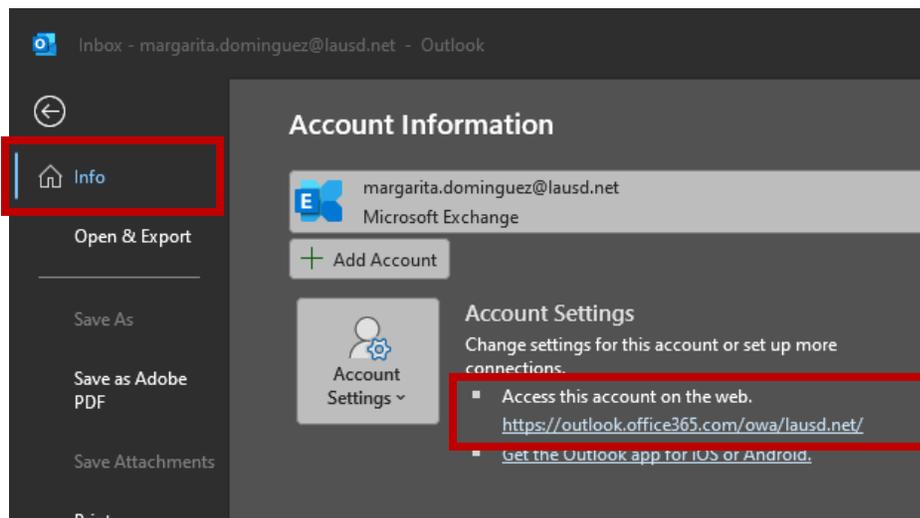
Requesting Accessible Email

Notify senders that you require accessible emails by changing your Outlook settings.

Step 1: Open Outlook and select **File**.

Step 2: Click on the **Info**.

Step 3: Under the **Account Settings** section click on the hyperlink **“Access this account on the web”**.

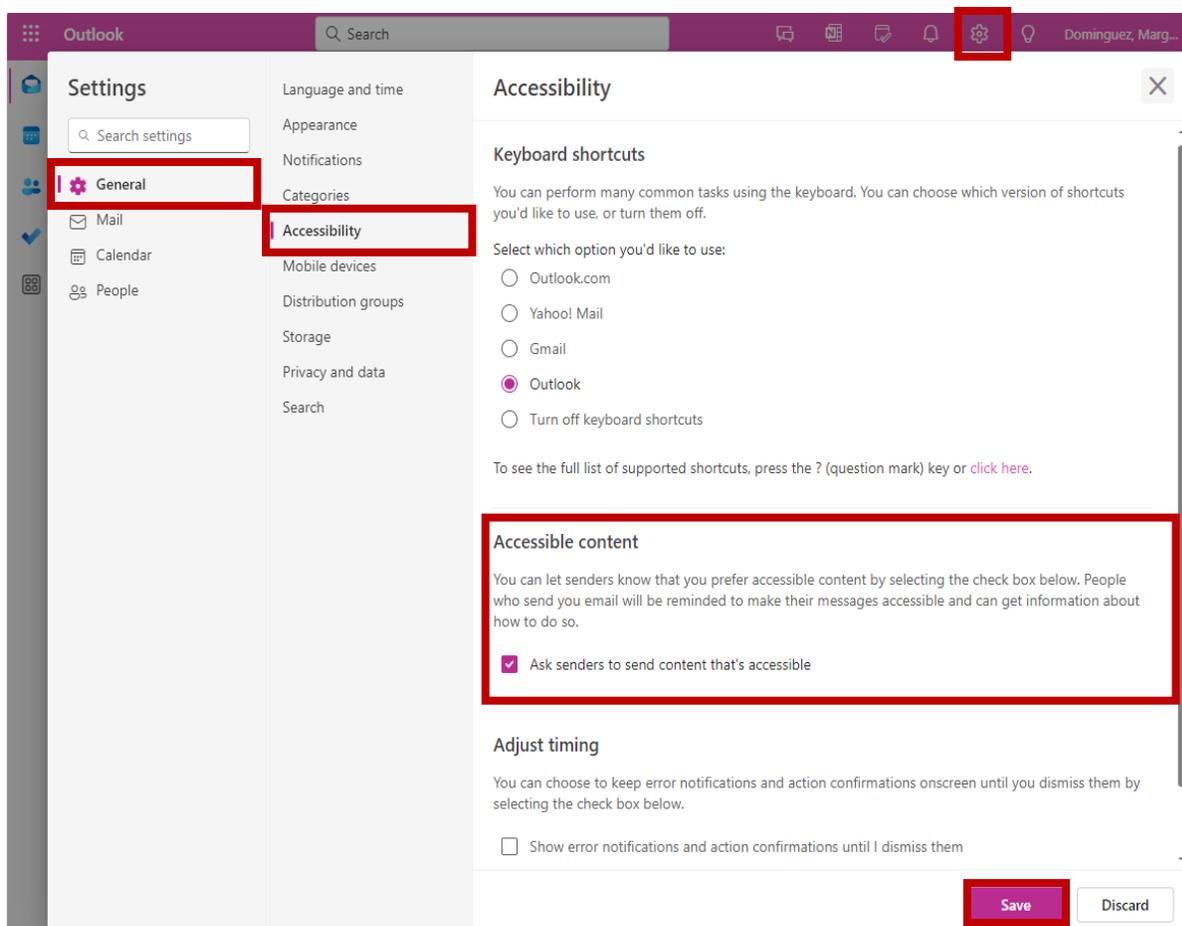


Step 4: The web Outlook window will open, and you will need to click on the **Settings** icon from the top right corner.

Step 5: Under **General** click on **Accessibility** tab.

Step 6: Within the Accessible content section, check the **“Ask senders to send content that’s accessible”** box. This will remind people to send accessible information and give them information on how to make it accessible.

Step 7: **Save** your setting changes.



Resources

For more information and support on ensuring your email communication is accessible, visit the [Microsoft Accessibility tools for Outlook](#) resource page.

Remember, creating accessible content benefits everyone! Make sure you apply these best practices to your Outlook email communication. If you have additional questions or need ADA Technical Support, please contact the Office of ADA Compliance by email at ADA-info@lausd.net.