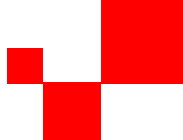


Accessible Excel

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Why make Excel Files Accessible?

- An inaccessible spreadsheet can be completely invisible to a screen reader user.
- Screen readers and assistive technologies help users with disabilities navigate spreadsheets but only if built correctly.

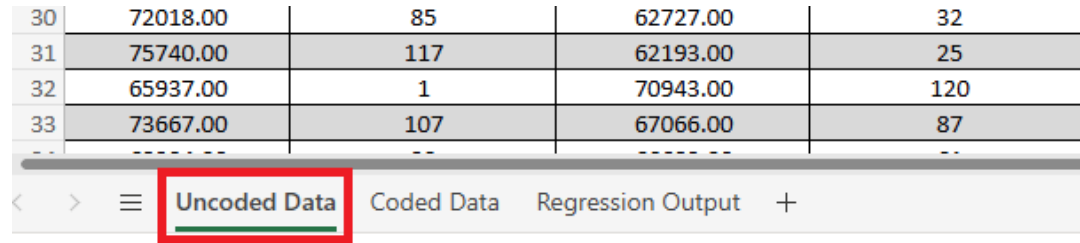
Key areas covered in this session:

- Worksheet setup (tab names, help text, descriptions)
- Tables: structure, headers, naming, alt text
- Charts and images: descriptions and alt text
- Hyperlinks: descriptive text and ScreenTips
- Final checks: Accessibility Checker, spell check, cleanup

Step 1: Worksheet Setup

• Name the Worksheet

- Double-click the tab and type a descriptive name.
- Spaces are OK — avoid backslashes or brackets.

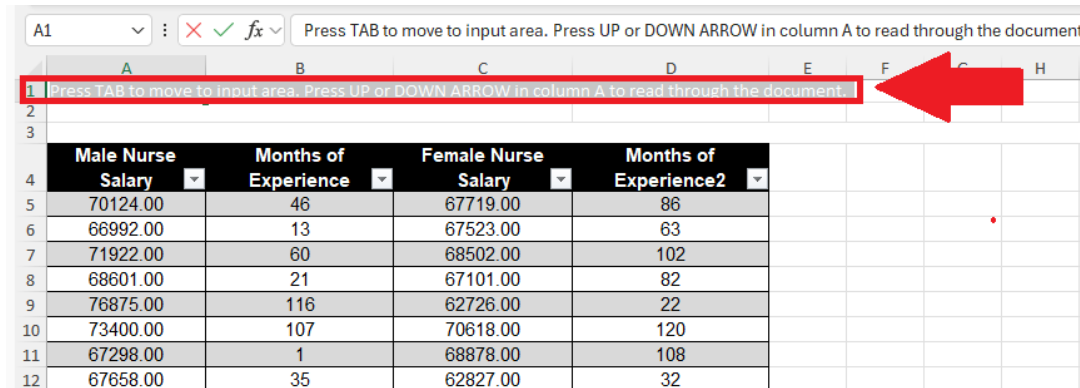


A screenshot of the Excel worksheet tab bar. The tabs are labeled 'Uncoded Data', 'Coded Data', and 'Regression Output'. The 'Uncoded Data' tab is selected and highlighted with a red box.

30	72018.00	85	62727.00	32
31	75740.00	117	62193.00	25
32	65937.00	1	70943.00	120
33	73667.00	107	67066.00	87

• Add Help Text in Cell A1

- Type: “Press TAB to move to input area. Press UP or DOWN ARROW in column A to read through the document.”
- Change text color to match background. Sighted users won’t see it; screen readers will read it.



A screenshot of the Excel worksheet showing the help text in cell A1. The text is highlighted with a red box, and a red arrow points to it from the right. The text reads: "Press TAB to move to input area. Press UP or DOWN ARROW in column A to read through the document." Below the text is a table with four columns: Male Nurse Salary, Months of Experience, Female Nurse Salary, and Months of Experience2.

	Male Nurse Salary	Months of Experience	Female Nurse Salary	Months of Experience2
5	70124.00	46	67719.00	86
6	66992.00	13	67523.00	63
7	71922.00	60	68502.00	102
8	68601.00	21	67101.00	82
9	76875.00	116	62726.00	22
10	73400.00	107	70618.00	120
11	67298.00	1	68878.00	108
12	67658.00	35	62827.00	32

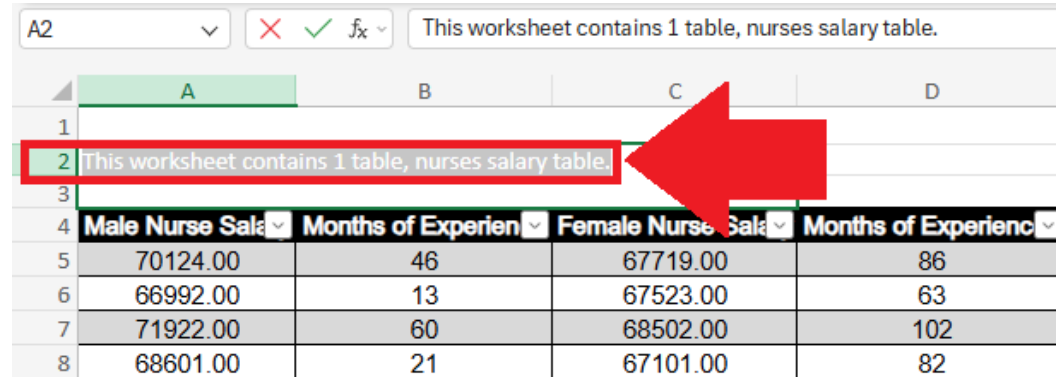
Step 1 Cont.: Worksheet Description

- **Add a Worksheet Description in Cell A2**

- Insert a row below A1 and write a description of the worksheet in cell A2.
- Include: how many tables and/or charts are in the worksheet, and their names.

Example:

“This worksheet contains 1 table, nurses salary table.”



The screenshot shows an Excel worksheet with a table and a description in cell A2. A red box highlights cell A2, which contains the text "This worksheet contains 1 table, nurses salary table." A red arrow points from the table to cell A2. The table has 4 columns: "Male Nurse Salary", "Months of Experience", "Female Nurse Salary", and "Months of Experience". The data rows are 5, 6, 7, and 8.

	A	B	C	D
1				
2	This worksheet contains 1 table, nurses salary table.			
3				
4	Male Nurse Salary	Months of Experience	Female Nurse Salary	Months of Experience
5	70124.00	46	67719.00	86
6	66992.00	13	67523.00	63
7	71922.00	60	68502.00	102
8	68601.00	21	67101.00	82

- **Add a Table Description Row**

- The following table is nurses salary table. It has 4 columns. The first column is male nurse salary. The second column is associated months of experience. The third column is female nurse salary. The forth column is associated months of experience. The range is from A4 to D124.
- | Male Nurse Salary | Months of Experience | Female Nurse Salary | Months of Experience |
|-------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 70124.00 | 46 | 67719.00 | 86 |
| 66992.00 | 13 | 67523.00 | 63 |
| 71922.00 | 60 | 68502.00 | 102 |
| 68601.00 | 21 | 67101.00 | 82 |

Step 2 Cont.: Table Structure and Headers

- **Add Row and Column Headers**

- Ensure first row contains column headers. Screen readers rely on these.
- If missing: right-click first row → Insert → type header names.

1

2

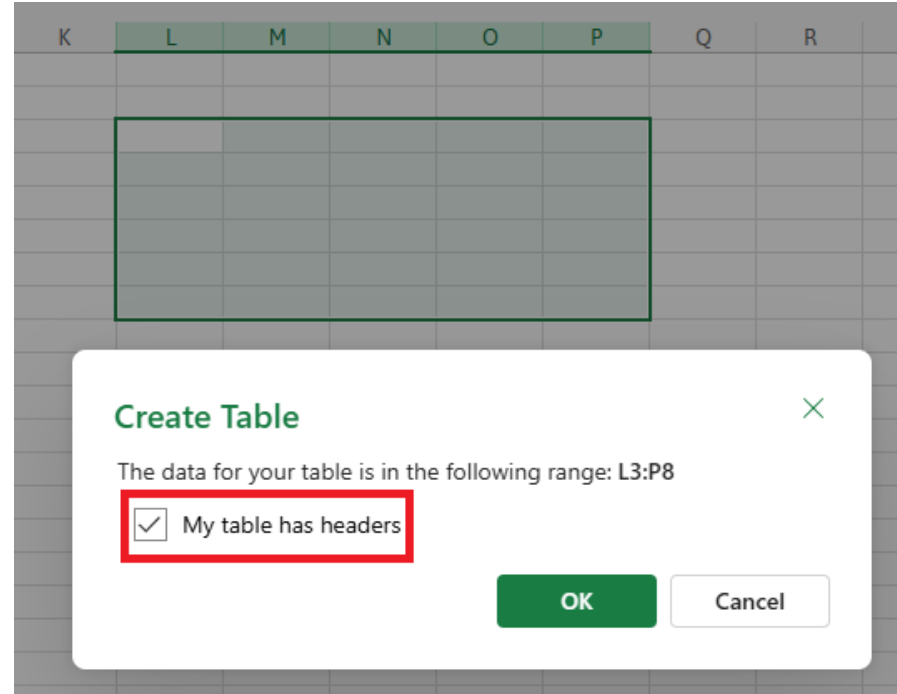
3

4

Male Nurse Salary	Months of Experience	Female Nurse Salary	Months of Experience2
70124.00	46	67719.00	86
66992.00	13	67523.00	63
71922.00	60	68502.00	102
68601.00	21	67101.00	82
76875.00	116	62726.00	22
73400.00	107	70618.00	120
67298.00	1	68878.00	108
67658.00	35	62827.00	32

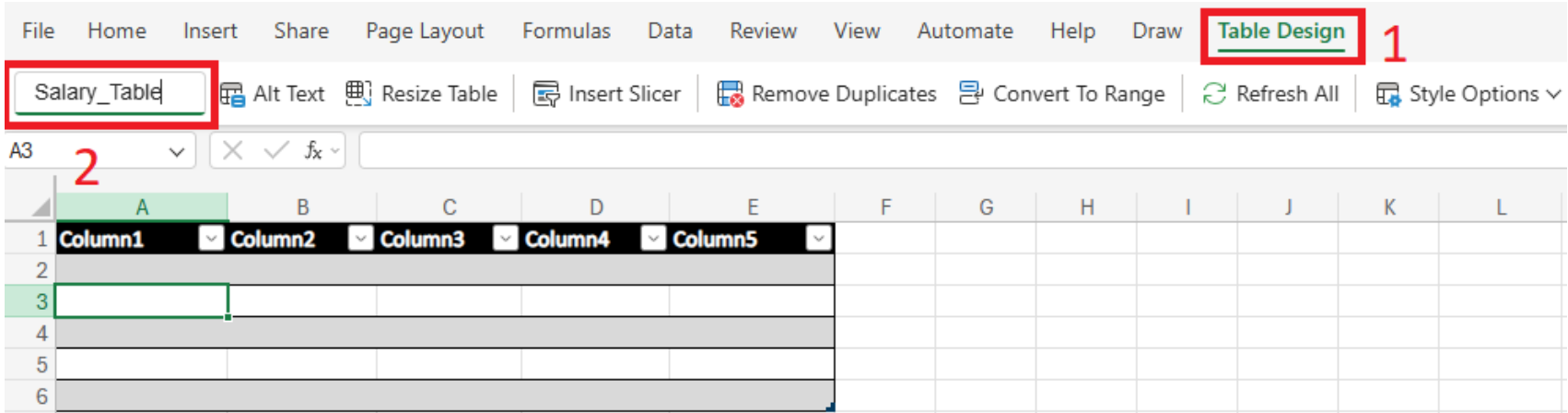
Step 2 Cont.: Format and Name the Table

- **Create a Formal Excel Table**
 - Select the range (or click any cell) → Insert tab → Tables → Table.
 - Check “My table has headers” and confirm the range.



- **Name the Table**

- Click the Table Design tab → type a valid name (no spaces; start with letter or underscore).
- Example for multiple sheets: Salary_Table_in_Histogram



Step 2 Cont.: Style, Alt Text, and Borders

- **Set a Consistent Table Style**
 - Select any cell → Table tab → Quick Style dropdown → choose a high-contrast style.
 - Apply the same style to all tables in the workbook.

The screenshot shows the Microsoft Excel interface with the **Table Design** tab selected. The **Quick Style** dropdown menu is open, displaying various table styles categorized under **Light** and **Medium**. A red box labeled '1' highlights the **Table Design** tab, and a red box labeled '2' highlights the **Quick Style** dropdown arrow. A red box labeled '3' highlights a specific table style (Table Style Medium 1) in the **Medium** category.

The background shows a worksheet with the following data:

Regression Statistic	value
Multiple R	0.96950491
R Square	0.93993977
Adjusted R Square	0.93943293
Standard Error	867.947699
Observations	240

ANOVA	item	df	SS	MS	F	Significance
Regression	2	2794142062	1397071031	1854.51938	1.8305E-145	
Residual	237	178539970.3	753333.208			
Total	239	2972682032				

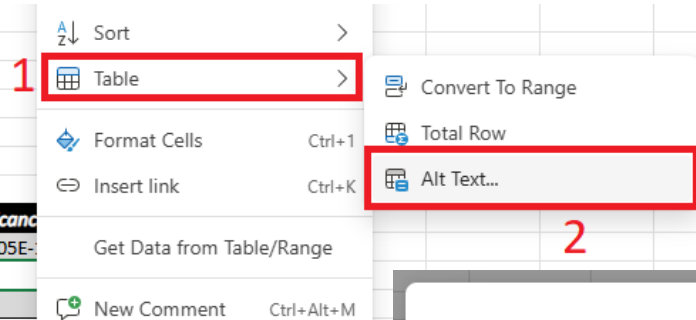
item	Coefficient	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value	Lower 95%	Upper 95%	Lower 95.0%	Upper 95.0%
Intercept	60978.8066	140.8832801	432.832104	0	60701.26315	61256.35	60701.26315	61256.35004
Months of Experience	82.183172	1.702265823	48.2786947	1.285E-124	78.82966743	85.5366765	78.82966743	85.53667651
Gender	4845.36963	112.9477132	42.8992273	1.055E-113	4622.859919	5067.87933	4622.859919	5067.879333

Step 2 Cont.: Style, Alt Text, and Borders

- **Add Alt Text and Borders**

- Right-click table → Table → Alt Text → add a title and description.

6	R Square	0.93993977				
7	Adjusted R Square	0.93943293				
8	Standard Error	867.947699				
9	Observations	240				
10						
11						
12	ANOVA					
13	item	df	SS	MS	F	Significance
14	Regression	2	2794142062	1397071031	1854.51938	1.8305E-
15	Residual	237	178539970.3	753333.208		
16	Total	239	2972682032			



Alternative Text

Title

ANOVA table

Description

This table is ANOVA table. It has 6 columns. The first column i...

OK Cancel

Step 2 Cont.: Style, Alt Text, and Borders

- **Add Alt Text and Borders**

- Apply All Borders. Avoid merged or empty cells in data areas.
- For empty cells, type “No data” and match text color to background.

<i>Significance</i>
1.8305E-145
No data

Step 2 Cont.: Style, Alt Text, and Borders

- **Add Alt Text and Borders**

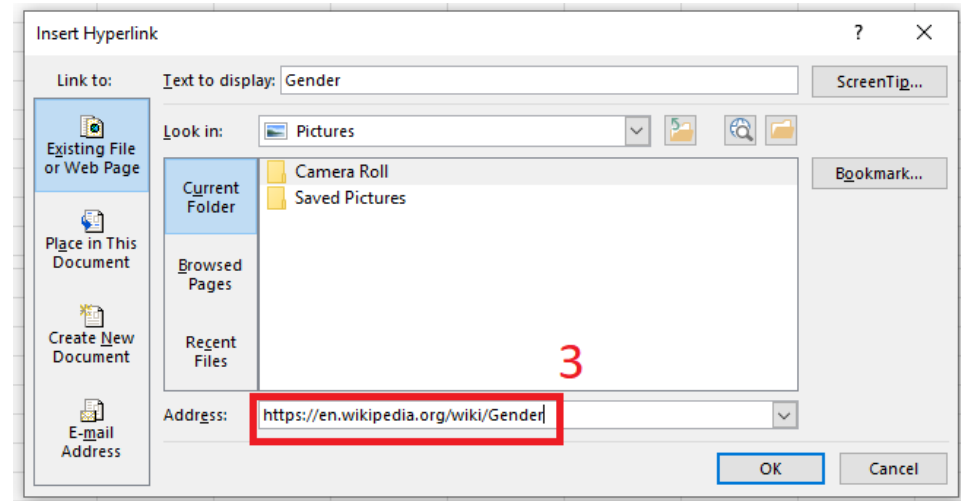
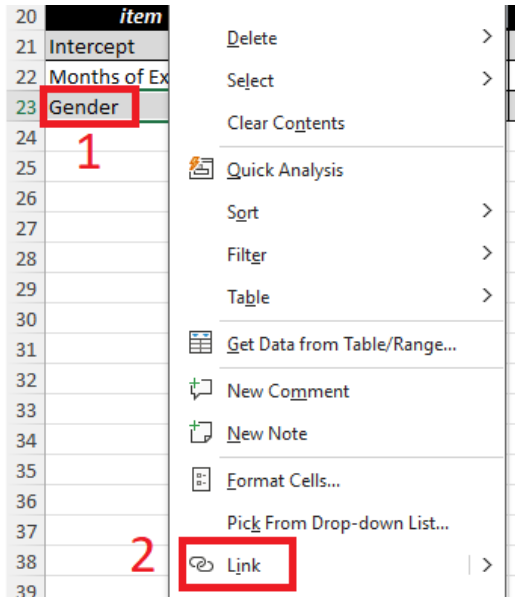
- Add “End of [TableName] table” in the row immediately after the last data row.

4	<i>Regression Statist</i> ▼	<i>value</i> ▼
5	Multiple R	0.96950491
6	R Square	0.93993977
7	Adjusted R Square	0.93943293
8	Standard Error	867.947699
9	Observations	240
10	End of summary output table	
11		

Step 3: Accessible Hyperlinks

- **Insert Hyperlink**

- Right-click the cell → Link → Paste the link in Address
- Avoid “click here”. Use descriptive anchor text or full URL (include https://).



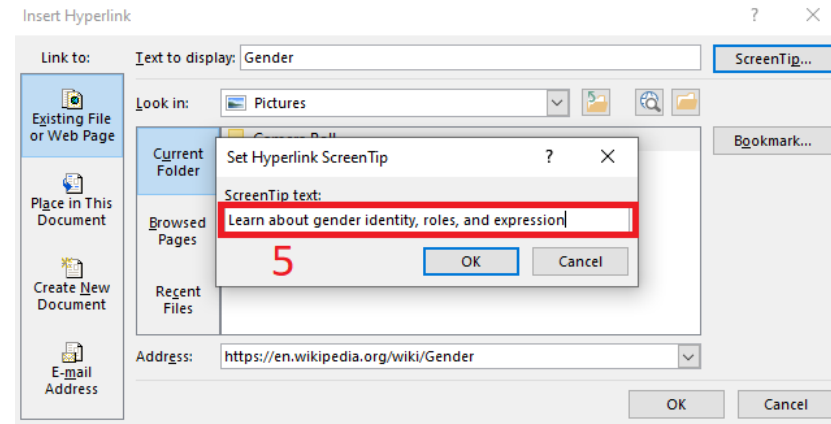
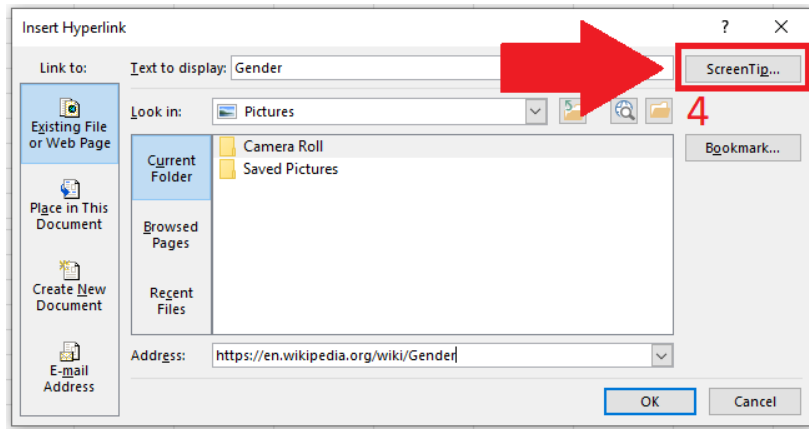
Step 3 Cont.: Accessible Hyperlinks

- **Add a ScreenTip**

- Type a meaningful explanation of where the link goes — screen readers read this.
- Right-click the cell → Edit Hyperlink → ScreenTip button (top right).

- **Verify All Links**

- Test every link before publishing. Broken links confuse assistive technology users.



Step 4: Charts and Images

- **Chart Description (Cell A2)**

- Before inserting a chart, write a description in column A in the same row region.
- Change text color to match background — hidden from sighted users, readable by screen readers.

A2 ✖ ✓ f_x This worksheet contains 3 tables and 1 chart. The first table is summary output of regression. The second one is ANOVA table. The third one is t test table. The chart is generated from the summary output of regression table.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
1																
2	This worksheet contains 3 tables and 1 chart. The first table is summary output of regression. The second one is ANOVA table. The third one is t test table. The chart is generated from the summary output of regression table.															
3																
4																
5																
6																
7																
8																
9																
10																

Regression Statistics	value
Multiple R	0.96950491
R Square	0.93993977
Adjusted R Square	0.93943293
Standard Error	867.947699
Observations	240

Step 4: Charts and Images

- **Move Chart Into Cell and Add Alt Text**
 - Resize the row → merge cells across worksheet column width → drag chart into the cell.



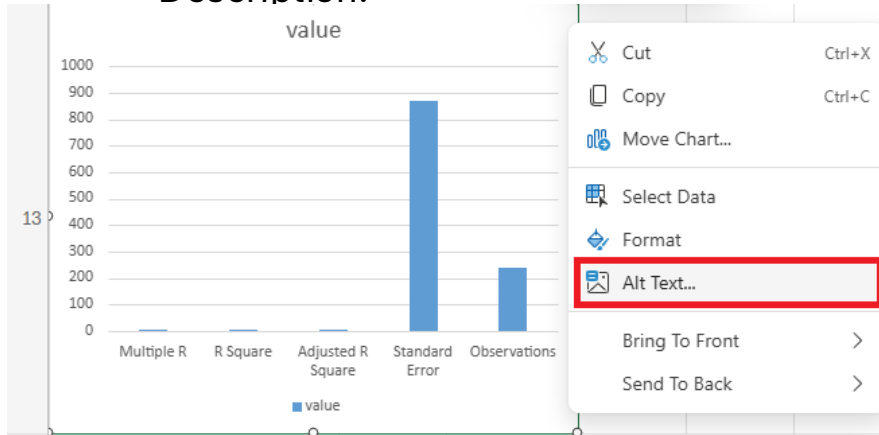
Step 4: Charts and Images

- **Add Alt Text to the Chart**

- After generating the chart, right-click chart → Alt Text → Add title and Description.
- **Recommendation:** Some screen readers might not be able to read the lengthy Alt Text, so we add the full information on both the cell level and the Alt Text for the chart itself.

- **Images**

- Same process: Write a cell description in A2 + right-click image → Alt Text → Add title and Description.



Alternative Text ✕

Title

Regression Statistics Summary Chart

Description

Bar chart displaying regression statistics. Standard Error is the highest value at about 867, followed by Observations at 240. Multiple R, R Square, and Adjusted R Square are all close to 1 and appear much smaller in comparison.

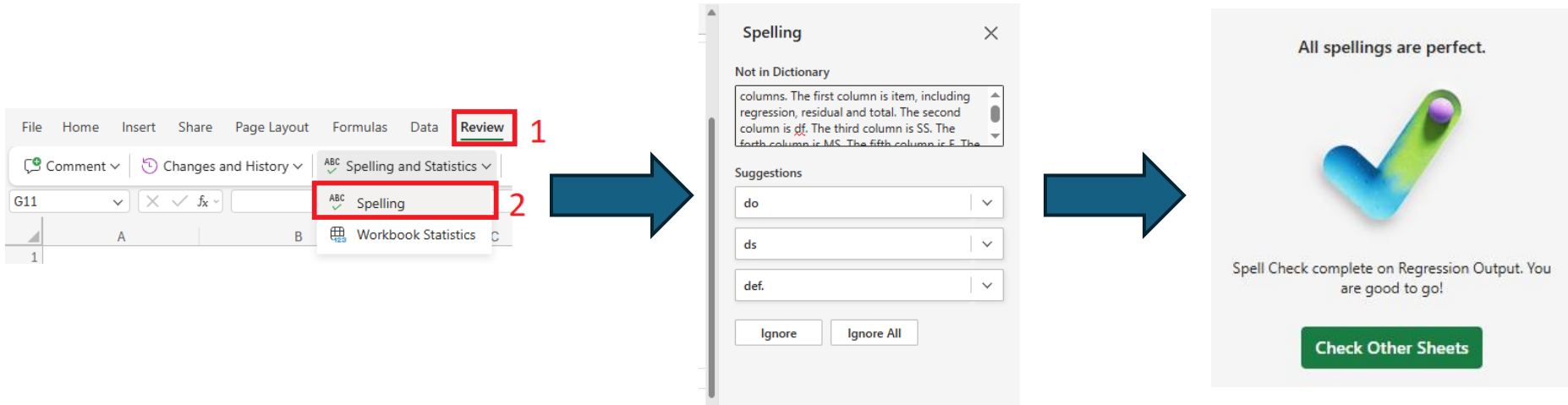
OK

Cancel

Step 5: Closing Tasks and Spell Check

- **Closing Tasks**

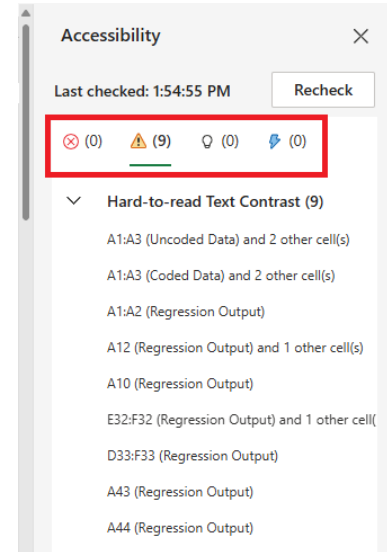
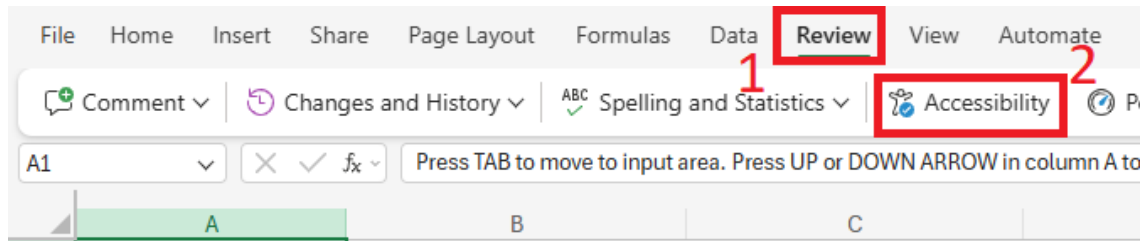
- Type “End of Worksheet” in the row after the last table and match text color to the background
- Hide extra rows and columns. Delete unused worksheets.
- Run Spell Check: Review tab → Proofing → Spelling (one sheet at a time; set zoom to 100%).

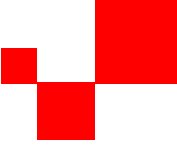


Step 5: Excel Accessibility Checker

- **Run the Accessibility Checker**

- Go to Review → Check Accessibility.
- Review Warnings and Tips.
- Fix them if necessary, except for the color contrasts in the cell descriptions, as they are critical for screen readers.
- Recheck until all necessary errors are resolved before publishing.

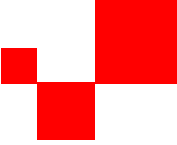




Digital Accessibility at Illinois Tech

For more information please visit:

<https://www.iit.edu/cli/digital-accessibility>



Thank you!

Q&A