

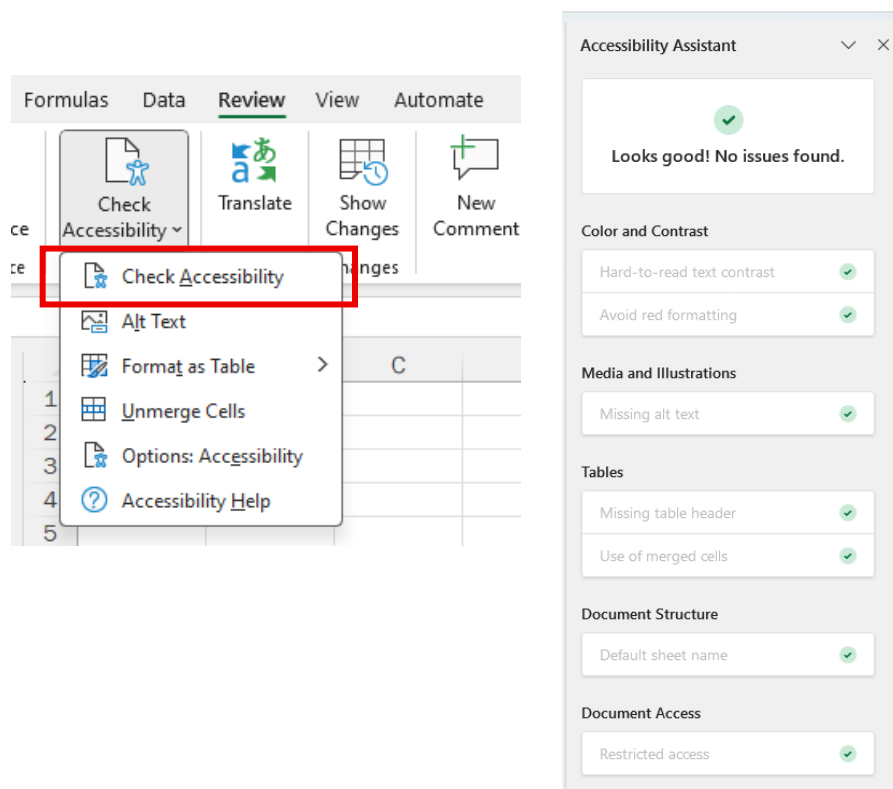
Purpose

Microsoft Excel is a versatile spreadsheet program used for organizing, analyzing, and visualizing data. Ensuring that your spreadsheets are accessible to all users, including those who rely on screen readers or other assistive technology. Below are some best practices to improve usability and accessibility of spreadsheets.

Tips for Making Excel Spreadsheets Accessible

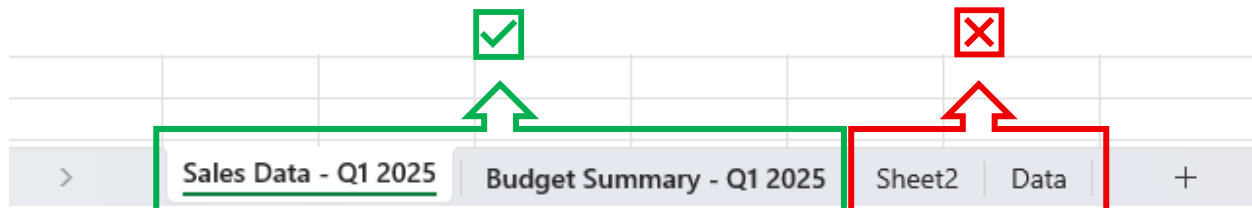
Use the accessibility checker

- This built-in tool will show you any accessibility issues in your document and give suggestions on how to correct them.
- ***Disclaimer:** Although good practice, it should not be assumed that the tool guarantees 100% accessibility compliance with WCAG 2.1, level AA.
- **To use the accessibility checker tool:**
 1. Go to “Review” tab -> “Check Accessibility”
 2. A sidebar titled “Accessibility Assistant” will pop up on the right-hand side of the document and prompt any issues found to be fixed.



Give all sheet tabs unique names

- Sheet names should be descriptive and consistent to help users quickly understand the content of each sheet.
- Avoid using special characters like “ /, \, ?”. You can use hyphens or underscores if a sheet name is longer.
- Remove any blank sheets.
- For example, instead of naming your sheet “Data,” use “Sales Data – Q1 2025.”



Enter title in first row and column

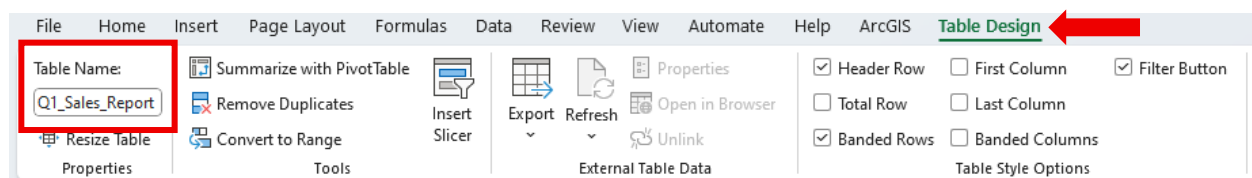
- Cell A1 is where a screen reader starts reading any spreadsheet so the title of the table should be in cell A1.
- If the sheet is long and complex, add an overview or instructions on how to navigate the spreadsheet in cell A1. The text color can match the background color to be hidden but still available to be read by screen readers.

Create an accessible table

- Use a simple table structure to make sure screen reader users can navigate the data easily.
 - Avoid blank cells, columns, and rows, splitting or merging cells, and nested tables.
 - If you cannot avoid blank cells, write “Intentionally left blank” or “no data” in the cell.
 - Where feasible, provide a synopsis of what information is being shared within the table.
1. Go to the “Insert” tab -> “Table.”

- **Name a table:**

1. Place the cursor anywhere in the table.
2. Go to “Table Design” tab -> “Table Name” -> replace the default name “Table 1” with a descriptive name (must start with a letter, use underscores instead of spaces).



- **Select table style:**

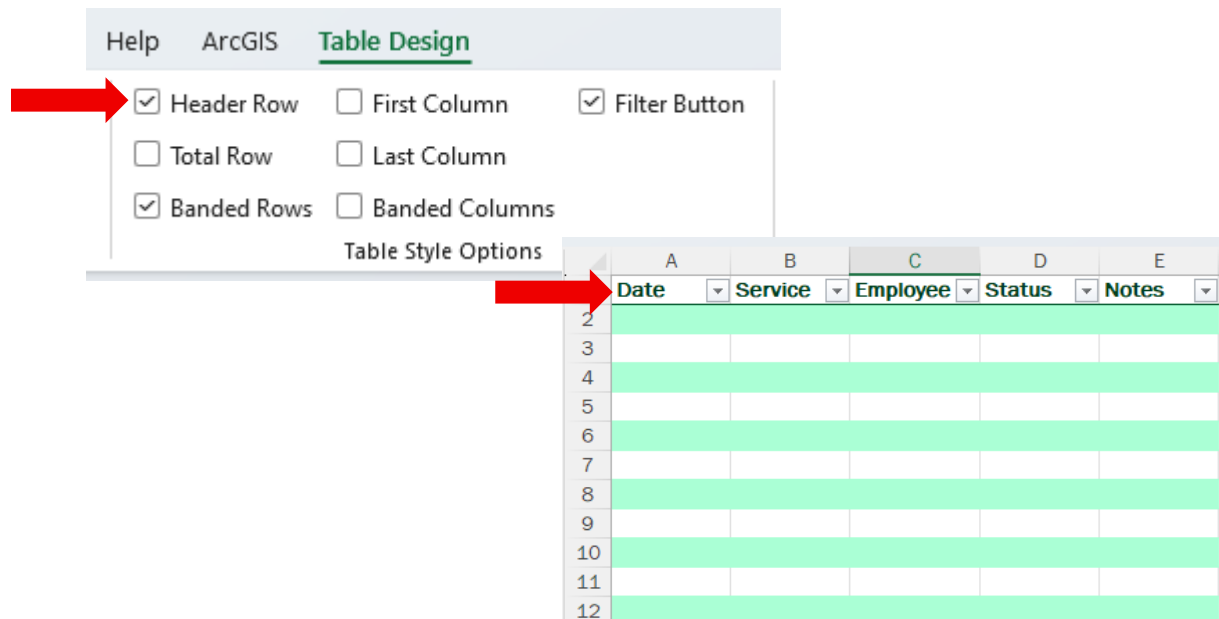
1. Go to “Table Design” tab -> “Table Styles” -> select a style with strong color contrast such as alternating between white and a dark color.

2. Use the drop-down arrow to see more table styles or create a new one.



- **Use row and column headings:**

1. Go to “Table Design” tab -> “Table Style Options”
2. Select the “Header Row” checkbox -> Type in the column headings.



Use color carefully

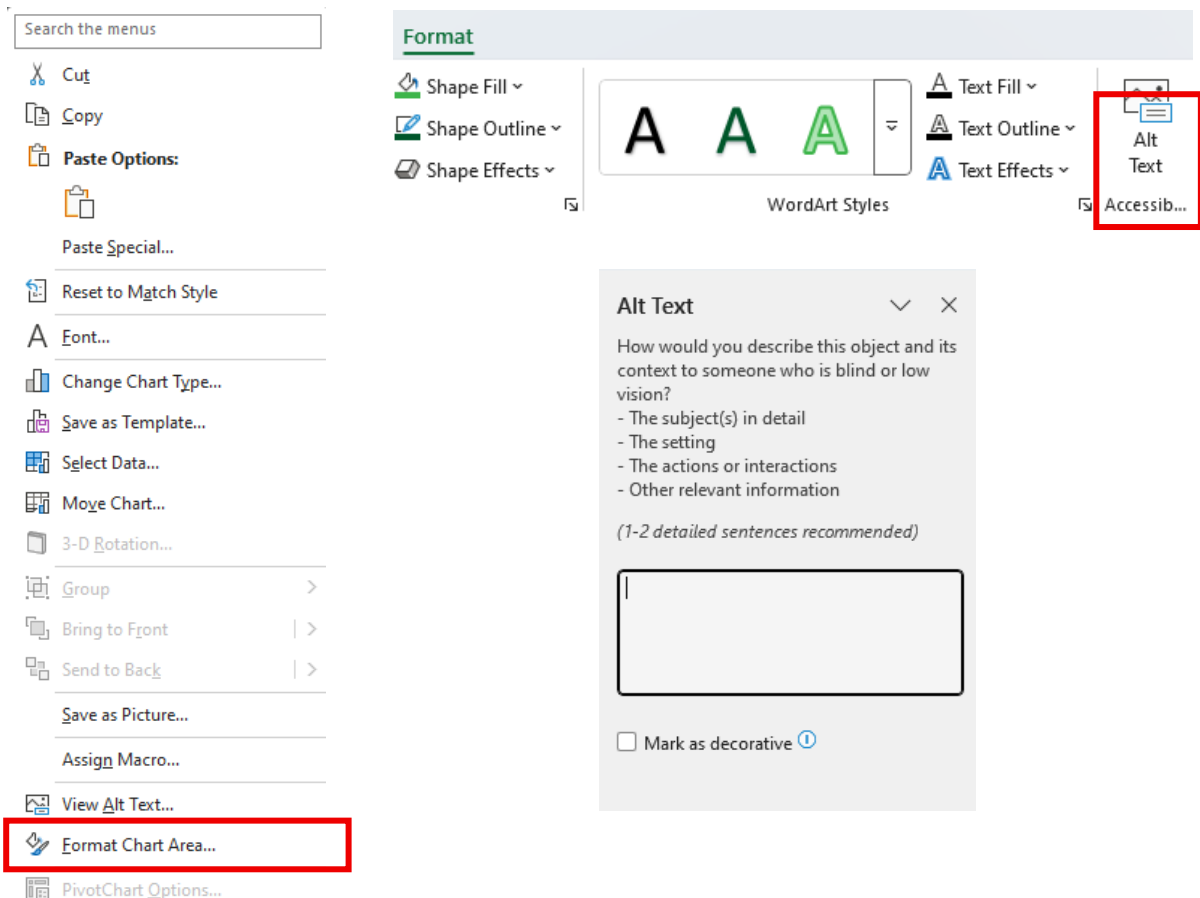
- High contrast color schemes and texture variations in spreadsheets make it easier for people with low vision and colorblindness to see and use the content.
- Use high contrast color schemes for background and text. You can test your color schemes by printing in black & white.

Name your hyperlinks appropriately

- Your link should contain descriptive, concise text that reflects the link destination.
- Avoid names like “Click here,” “Learn more,” or “See this page.”
- If you are linking to a webpage or document, use the webpage or document’s title as the hyperlink name.
- Use only necessary words to keep the hyperlink name short and easy to read.
- Example: Instead of using “Click here to view the full annual report,” use “View full annual report.”
- Avoid using URLs as the link text as they can be long and confusing to read, especially for screen readers.

Add alt text

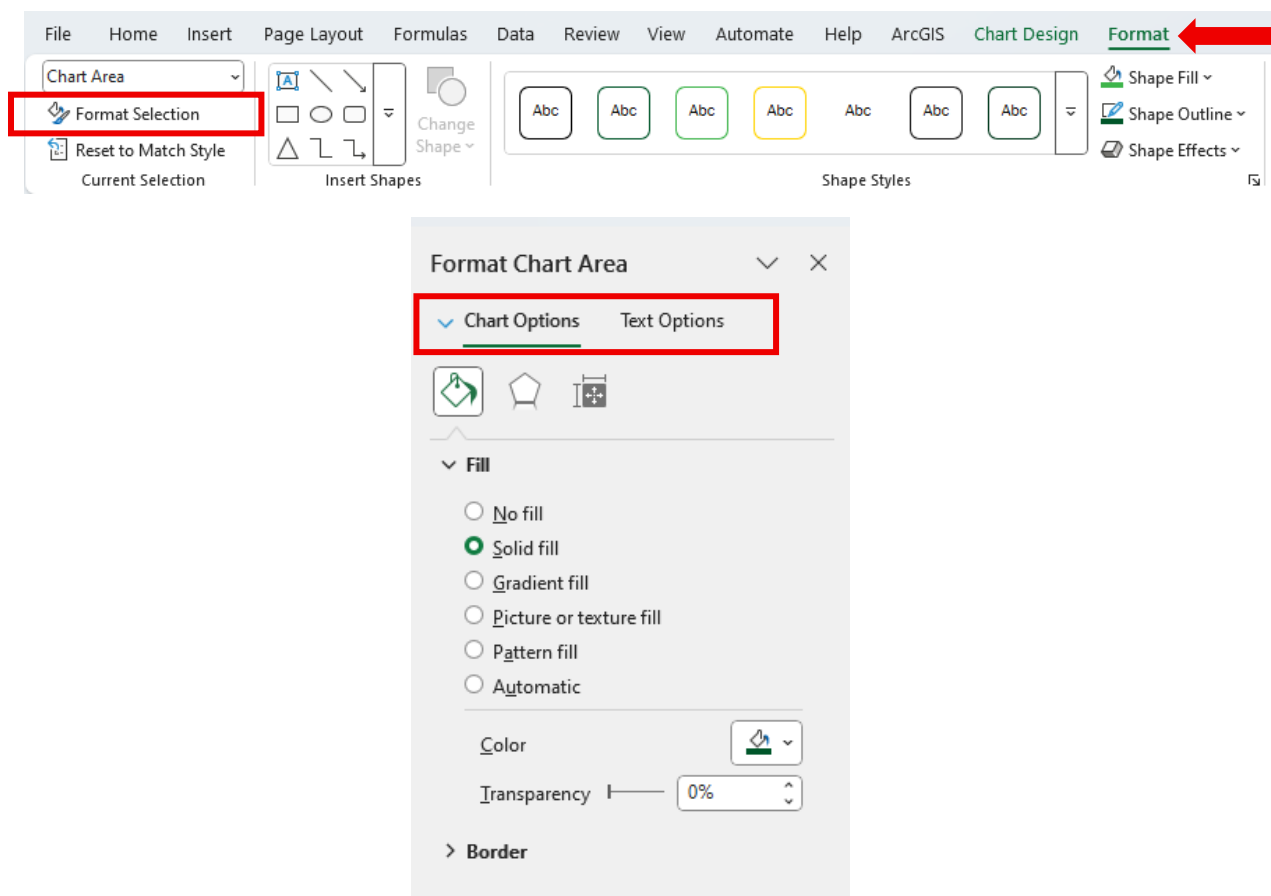
- Add clear, concise descriptions to all images, charts, shapes, embedded objects and SmartArt graphics.
- Assistive Technology will read “image” or “graphic” without alt-text.
- For a logo, simply use the description “Company Name Icon” or “Company Name Logo” with your company name.
- **To verify alt text is added to an object:**
 1. Right-click on the object and select “View Alt Text.”
 2. Another way to check is to click on the object -> “Format” -> “Alt Text.”
 3. If your object is purely decorative and does not convey useful information, select the “Mark as Decorative” checkbox.



Create an accessible chart

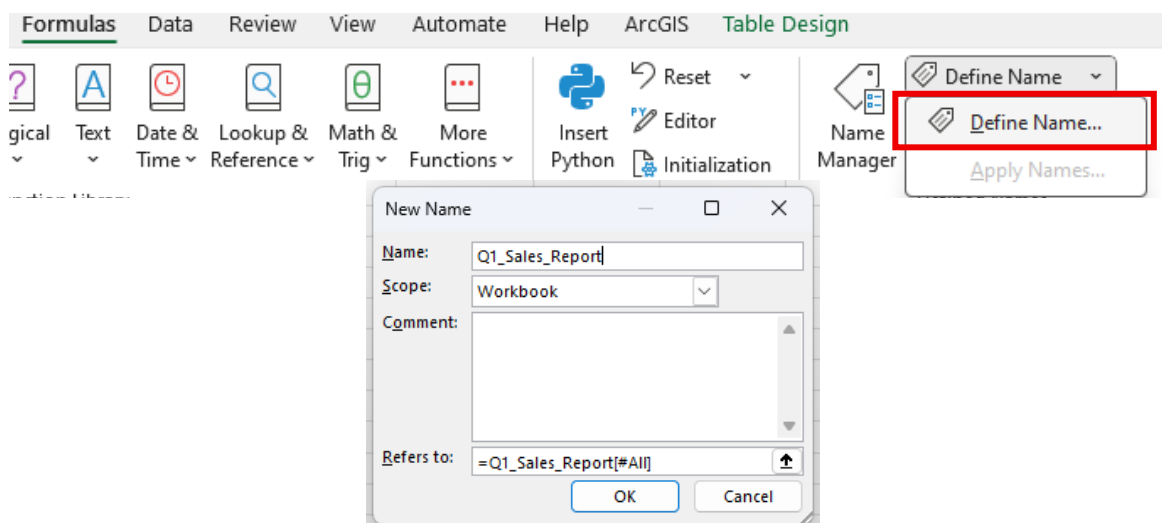
- Add clear, descriptive labels for the chart title, axis titles, and data.
- Use formatting for all labels so they are accessible.

1. Click anywhere on your chart -> “Format” -> “Format Selection” -> go through the chart and text formatting options to select high-contrast colors and larger fonts if needed.



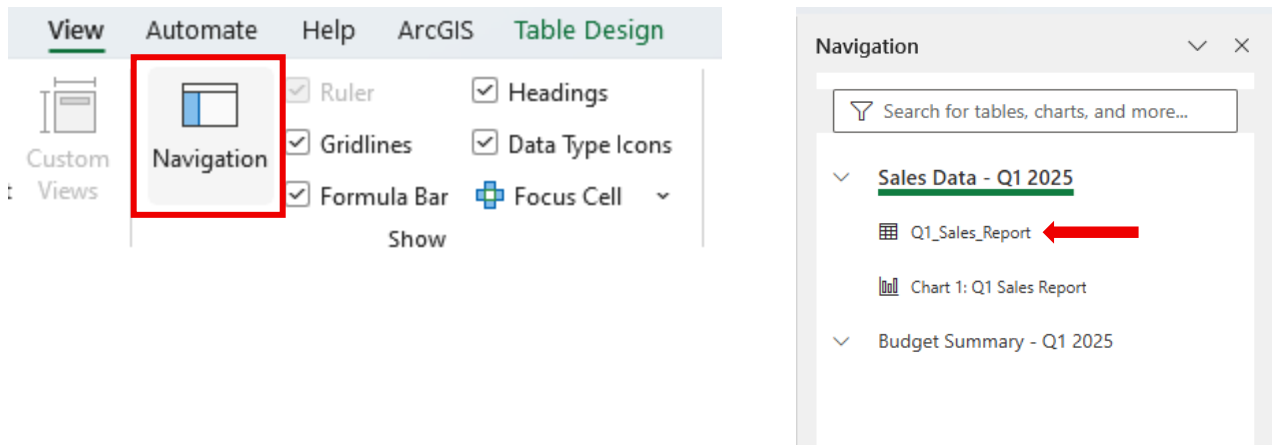
Name cells and ranges

- Using names for cells and ranges gives screen reader users an overview of the purpose of cells and ranges in the spreadsheet.
 - Screen reader users can select a name and be taken directly to that cell or range.
1. Select the cell or range of cells -> “Formulas” -> “Define Name.”



- **Navigate the spreadsheet using names:**

1. Go to “View” -> “Navigation” -> see list of all named elements on each sheet in the workbook -> click on desired name and it will take you there.

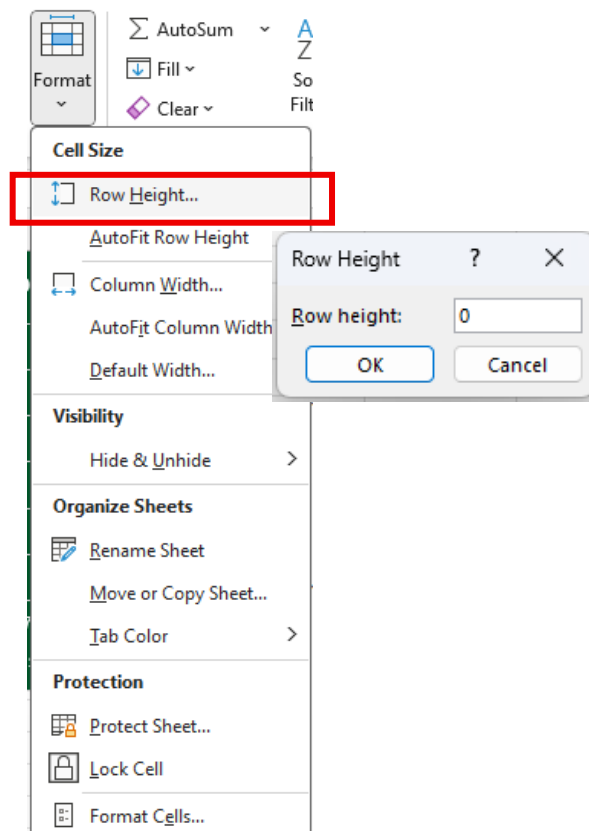


Mark end of worksheet

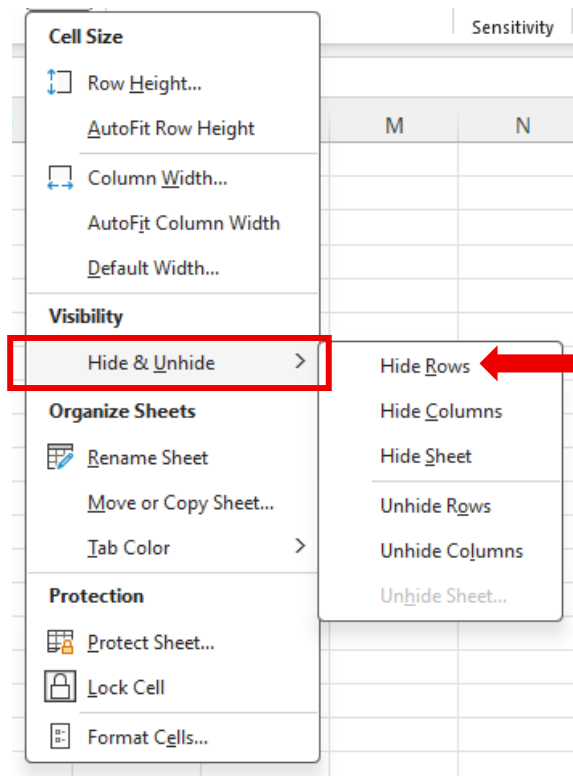
- Type “End of Worksheet” in the row immediately below your last row of data.
- If you want to visually hide it, you can set the row height to 0 and make the font color the same as the background.

- **Set row height or hide row:**

1. Select the row
2. Go to “Home” -> “Format” -> “Row Height” -> Set to 0.



3. To hide the row, you can select “Hide & Unhide” from the “Format” drop-down menu.



Fill in document properties

1. Go to “File” -> “Info” -> “Properties” -> “Advanced Properties.”
2. Enter information for title, subject, and author, click “OK.”

