

Adobe Reader vs Preview

There are several makes of a PDF reader in the App Store. Some are free with in-app purchases and some are totally not free. Adobe Reader (free) is not the same thing as Adobe Acrobat Pro (\$19.99/mo). Acrobat Pro has many features that are not available in Adobe Reader. If you start with Adobe Reader, then you will eventually discover it doesn't do some of the things you would like to do and you think it is worth shelling out for Acrobat Pro.

What you can do with Adobe Reader:

- Export a PDF: Word, PPT, Excel, JPEG, RTF
- Add comments
- Request e-signatures
- Fill & Sign
- Add a stamp
- Use a certificate
- Send for comments

What else you can do with Adobe Acrobat Pro:

- Edit a PDF
- Create a PDF
- Combine files
- Organize pages
- Scan & OCR
- Protect a PDF
- Redact a PDF
- Compress a PDF
- Prepare a form:
- Convert to PDF
- Use print production
- Measure objects
- Compare files
- Add rich media
- Use guided actions
- Prepare for accessibility
- Apply PDF standards
- Add search index
- Use JavaScript
- Create custom tool

Now lets look at what can be done with Apple Preview. To fully understand this, you need to know that Preview is two apps in one: 1) An image viewer, and 2) A PDF viewer.. In a nutshell, Preview can do the following (as described in Take Control of Preview by TakeControl Books):

- Take screenshots and import photos directly from a camera
- Quickly cull unwanted images from a large collection
- Play slideshows of party photos
- Crop, resize, and edit images for use on your website
- Convert images to many different formats
- Scan paper documents with a scanner
- Annotate PDFs with highlights, notes, and shapes
- Fill out and sign PDF-based forms digitally, rather than going to the trouble of printing and signing manually
- Rearrange and delete PDF pages, and merge PDFs
- Examine image metadata
- Identify photos with Visual Lookup

Preview can do all of the following:

- View, print, and share PDFs and images
- Add to and rearrange pages in a PDF
- Rotate and flip any page in a PDF
- Add bookmarks to a PDF
- Fill out forms in a PDF and add signatures to a PDF or image
- Add text, shapes to a PDF or image
- Add objects to a PDF or image (in this sense, an object is an image)
- Annotate a PDF or image (two ways)
- Resize, rotate and flip an image
- Remove background from an image
- Select a color in an image and convert it to transparency
- Adjust color and size of an image
- Select and copy text from an image or PDF
- Select text from a PDF or image and have it read out loud
- Check grammar and spelling
- Export a PDF or image to PDF, HEIC, JPEG, JPEG-2000, OpenEXR, PNG, or TIFF

Compare that list with the list for Acrobat Reader. The differences are obvious.

Preview can also measure the size of any object in a PDF when it is selected and opened in a new Preview window (as long as the PDF is shown as actual size). Even then, simply selecting the object will show its size in pixels. (An object is selected by using the mouse with Command-Shift-Control-4.)

When viewing an image, the Markup Toolbar has icons for Adjust Color and Image Description. When viewing a PDF, the Markup Toolbar has icons for Notes and Text Selection.

What Preview cannot do are the following (which can be done in Nitro PDF or Acrobat Pro):

- Editing of text or deleting images

- Editing marks using formal editor's marks
- Automatic page numbering
- Table of contents creation
- Interactive PDF form creation
- PDF to Microsoft Office formats conversion
- Support PDF/A and PDF/X

Demonstrations to include:

- filling out a form
- adding a signature to a form
- adding objects to a form
- printing a form as a PDF (to embed added objects)
- creating a PDF with Pages
- converting text to speech
- selecting text in a PDF or image
- Selecting images in a PDF using screenshot
- rearranging, deleting, adding pages in a PDF
- measuring an object (image) in a PDF
- adjusting color in an image
- displaying multiple images

How to capture text from a PDF in which Text Selection does not work:

1. Increase the size of the viewed PDF to make the text larger. (Cmd-+)
2. Take a Screenshot to capture a section of text on a page. (File->Take a Screenshot->From Selection)
3. Paste captured image into a new Preview page (Cmd-N)
4. Text can now be selected from the new image. Copy and paste into a new document.

Shortcuts.app has an "Extract Text from Image" action.

For a detailed description of what Preview can do, get the TakeControl book:

<https://www.takecontrolbooks.com/preview/>

Use the coupon code CPN90219MUG to get the book at a discount.

Apple Support Preview User Guide:

<https://support.apple.com/guide/preview/welcome/mac>

MacRumors:

<https://www.macrumors.com/how-to/get-the-most-from-the-macos-preview-app/>