

Heading Styles

Create a uniform heading structure through use of styles in Word. This allows screen readers to navigate a document and improves accessiblity for everyone.

- 1. Start a new line to create a heading, or select text to change to a heading.
- 2. Open the *Home* tab, and choose the appropriate heading in the *Styles* panel.
- 3. Headings 1, 2, or 3 can also be assigned using *Ctrl* + *Alt* + *1*, *2*, or *3*, respectively.

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Alternative Text

Images can be given appropriate alternative text in Word. Alt text is read by a screen reader in a Word file and should remain intact when exporting to HTML or PDF.

Format Picture

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> Text Box

▲ Alt Text

Title

Description

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ALTERNATIVE TEXT HERE

- Right-click on the image and select *Format Picture*. A dialog will appear.
- Select the Layout & Properties icon and choose Alt Text.
- 3. Enter appropriate alt text only in the *Description* field (not the *Title* field).

See <u>webaim.org/techniques/alttext</u> for more information.

Columns

Always use true columns. Don't create columns with Tab.

- 1. Select the *Layout* tab on the ribbon.
- 2. Select *Columns* in the *Page Setup* group.
- 3. Choose the number of columns.

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Lists

Use *true numbered and bulleted lists* to emphasize a point or a sequence of steps.

- 1. Select the *Home* tab on the ribbon.
- 2. Choose the *Numbered List* or *Bulleted List* option from the *Paragraph* group.



Hyperlinks

Word *automatically creates a hyperlink* when a user pastes a full URL onto a page. These may not make sense to screen reader users, so make sure the link text is unique.

- Select a hyperlink, right click, and select *Hyperlink* or hit *Ctrl + k*.
- 2. Change the text in the *Text to Display* field to a more meaningful description.

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Data Tables

Accessible tables need a *clear table structure* and *table headers* to help guide a screen reader user.

 Select the *Insert* tab on the ribbon, then select *Table > Insert Table*.



2. To add table headers to the first row, select

Table Tools > Layout on the ribbon, then choose the *Repeat Header Rows* option in the *Data* section.

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Options in the *Design* tab may be used to change appearance but will not provide the necessary accessibility information.

Accessibility Checker

Word includes an accessibility resource that *identifies accessibility issues*.

- Select File > Info > Check for Issues > Check Accessibility.
- 2. The checker presents accessibility errors, warnings, and tips for making repairs.

Select specific issues to see *Additional Information* at the bottom of the task pane.

Other Principles

- Ensure that font size is sufficient, around *12 points*.
- Provide sufficient *contrast*.
- Don't use color as *the only way* to convey meaning.
- Provide a *table of contents* for long documents.
- Use *simple* language.



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