# MS Word Document Accessibility

## Components to Making Your Document Accessible

### Use Document Styles

* Use heading and paragraph styles to structure the document.
* Headings must be used to note structure of the document.
* Headings go in order of Heading 1 for Title, Heading 2 for sections, Heading 3 for subsections and so forth. You can only have one Heading 1 but you can have multiples of succeeding headings.
* If you build your document from scratch using styles, you can modify all sections using the modify function. Right click on the style choice and select modify. You can change all sections for that style in one action.

### Add Alt text to Images and Objects

* This includes pictures, clip art, charts, shapes, SmartArt graphics and embedded objects.
* Use clear, concise terms. For example, “Person in wheelchair on ramp” may suffice rather than “Smiling woman in wheelchair posing on ramp.”
* Use Short Titles in Headings
* Keep headings short (fewer than 20 words or one line long). This makes it easy for readers to quickly navigate your document.

### Name Your Hyperlinks Appropriately

* Your url or website link should contain meaningful text that reflects the link destination or subject, rather than simply saying “click here.”
* Add your URL address. High light the address. Select insert hyperlink (Found in the insert tab). Paste the url address in the address box. Create meaningful text for this address in the “Text to Display box” and then hit OK.

### Use Bullets and Numbers on the Home Tab

* If you are creating points or lists in your content, use the Bullets and numbers styles in the Paragraph sections on the Home Tab.

### Use Simple Table Structure

* Avoid using nested tables, merged or split cells, or blank cells for formatting.
* Highlight the first row of your table, and right click to access table properties.
* Next, highlight the first row of your table, and right click to access table properties.
* Select the row tab, and in the actions there's two choices.
  + The first one is always automatically checked. You want to uncheck it and select the second option so that this row is always read as a header. Finally, in the Alt Text Tab, add Alt text that describes your table.

### Avoid Using Repeated Blank Characters

* Extra spaces, tabs and empty paragraphs can cause people using screen readers to repeatedly hear the word “blank.” Instead, use styles with formatting and indenting to create white space.

### Avoid Using Floating Objects

* Place objects in-line with text for easy navigation.
* Right click on the image and select “In line with text”.

### Avoid Watermarks

* Watermarks and other background images may be hidden or confusing to people with vision or cognitive disabilities. Instead of using a watermark to identify a document as a “draft” or “confidential,” include the text in the document title or heading.

### Fill In Document Properties

* In advanced document properties, enter title, subject, and author under the file tab, Info section.

### Use the Accessibility Checker

* This built-in tool will tell you about some possible accessibility issues in your document and give suggestions on how to correct them.
* However, if warnings and suggestions conflict with accessibility instructions that you have applied, you can ignore the checker suggestions.

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