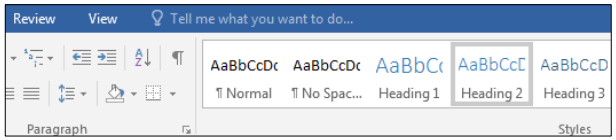
CREATING ACCESSIBLE MICROSOFT WORD 2016 DOCUMENTS (WINDOWS)

GOALS WebAIM web accessibility in mind

Heading Styles

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

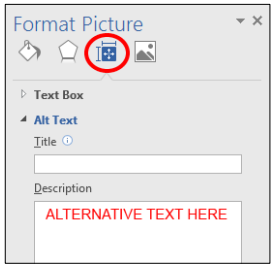
1. Start a new line to create a heading, or select text to change to a heading.
2. Open the ***Home*** tab, and choose the appropriate heading in the ***Styles*** panel.
3. Headings 1, 2, or 3 can also be assigned using ***Ctrl + Alt + 1***, ***2***, or ***3***, respectively.



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.

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

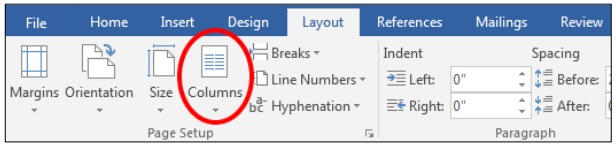


See webaim.org/techniques/alttext for more information.

Columns

Always use true columns. Don't create columns with ***Tab***. Select the ***Layout*** tab on the ribbon.

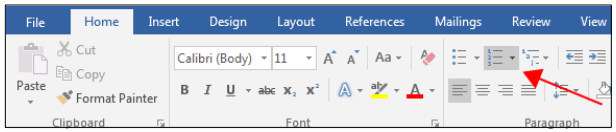
1. Select ***Columns*** in the ***Page Setup*** group.
2. Choose the number of columns.



Lists

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

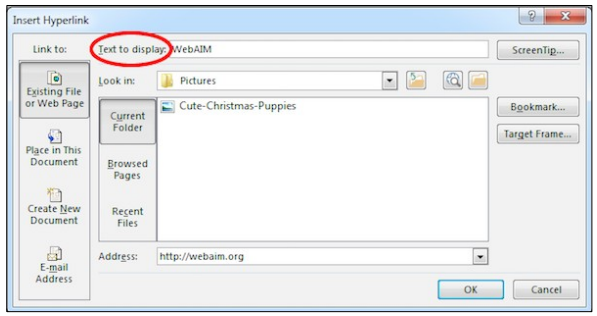
1. Select the Home tab on the ribbon.
2. Choose the Numbered List or Bulleted List option from the Paragraph group.



Hyperlinks

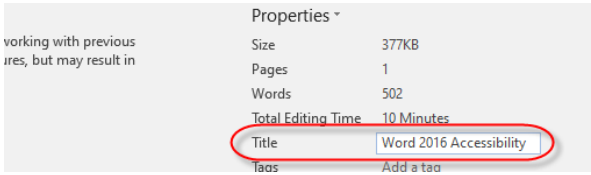
Word ***automatically creates a hyperlink*** when a user pastes a full URL onto a page. These may not make sense to screen reader users, so make sure the link text is unique.

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



Document Properties

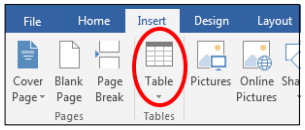
1. *File>Info>Properties*
2. Add descriptive title for document
3. Review Author to see if it needs to be deleted.



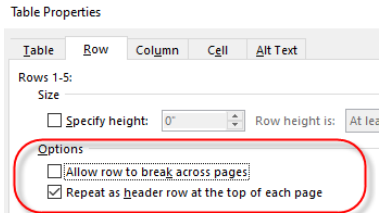
Data Tables

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

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



2. To add table headers to the frst row, select ***Table Tools > Layout*** on the ribbon, then choose the ***Repeat Header Rows*** option in the ***Data*** section.

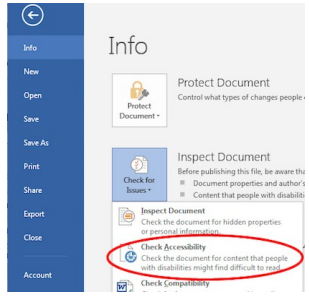


Options in the ***Design*** tab may be used to change appearance but will not provide the necessary accessibility information.

Accessibility Checker

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

1. Select ***File > Info > Check for Issues > Check Accessibility***.
2. Te 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.

For a digital version, see ncdae.org/resources/cheatsheets