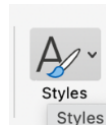


Top Ten Items to Improve Word Accessibility

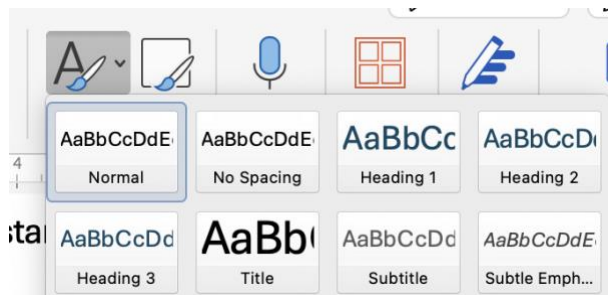
Headings

Add headings using heading options in Word, to provide [heading style information](#) that the screen reader can understand. To add headings to your document:

1. Make sure the **Home** menu is selected and click on the Styles button.



2. Click on the heading you would like to use to communicate your document structure (Heading 1, Heading 2, or Heading 3).



3. Once the heading level is selected, choose the desired font and font size.

“NOTE: There should be no less than one heading per 2 pages (per built-in MS Office accessibility check guidelines). Additionally, using **Headings** in a document allows you to create a ‘linked’ [Table of Contents.](#)” – ATI Document Accessibility Training

Lists

When adding bulleted or numbered lists to your document, use Word’s bullet and numbered list options to format your list, so the screen reader will recognize your document’s list as a [list](#). To create a list:

1. Make sure the **Home** menu is selected.

2. Select the list option you would like to use.

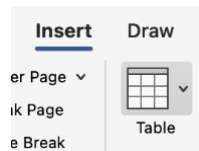


Tables

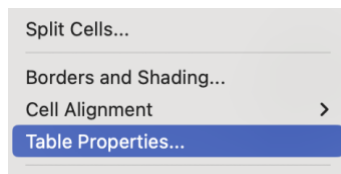
If you plan to add a table to your document, it is important to keep the table as simple as possible, avoiding split or merged cells, as well as nested tables. Screen reader software reads tables from left to right, cell by cell, top to bottom.

To add a table:

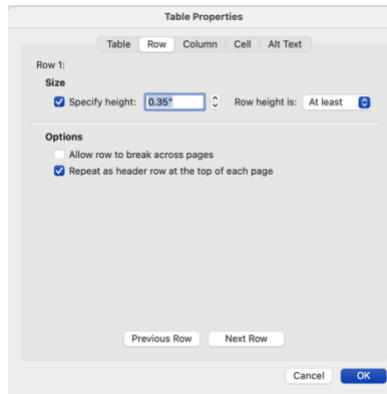
1. Click on **Insert** menu and click on the **Table** button.



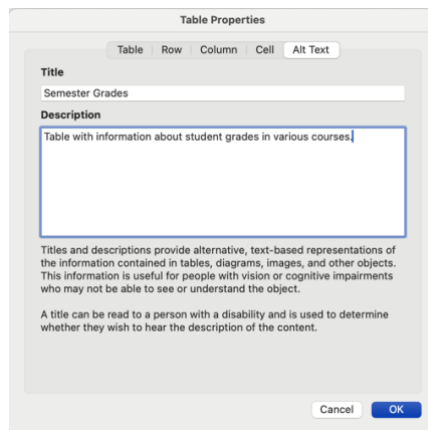
2. When the Table menu opens, choose the desired table size.
3. Enter data into the table.
4. When done, right click on a cell in the header row, and choose **Table Properties**.



5. In the Table Properties window, click on the **Row** tab, check the option **Repeat as header row at the top of each page**, and uncheck **Allow row to break across pages**.



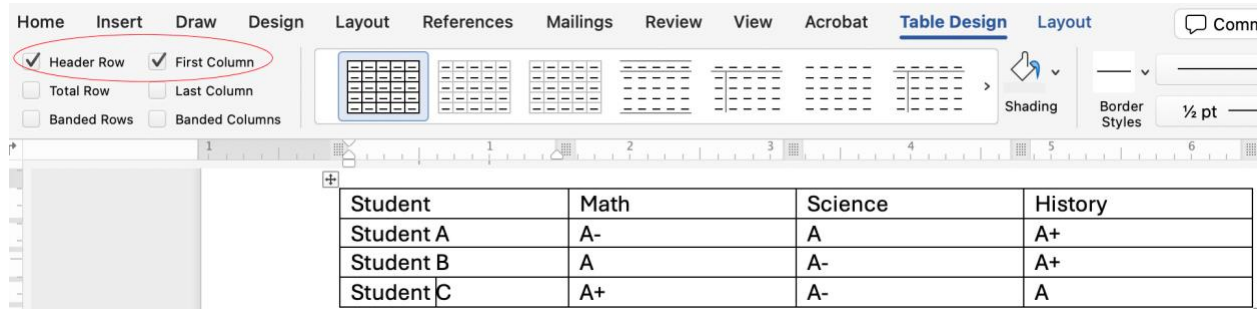
6. Next, click on the **Alt Text** tab, and enter the Title and Description of your table. When done, click **OK**.



Concise, straightforward header cell information is critical for screen readers to navigate the [table](#) successfully. To make sure header cells give correct information about table data:

1. Click on the one of the cells in the table.

2. Click on the **Table Design** menu.



3. Make sure **Header Row** is selected.

4. If the first cell of each row has important information needed to understand data in the rest of the row, such as the example above, make sure **First Column** is also selected.

5. If "Total Row", "Last Column", "Banded Rows", or "Banded Columns" are checked, uncheck them.

Fonts

The [recommended fonts](#) to use for accessibility are Arial and Verdana. The best font size to use is 12 pt., anything smaller should be avoided.

Note: Avoid the following to communicate meaning or emphasis, as screen readers will ignore the formatting.

- Capitalization
- Bold, italics, underlining
- Strikethrough
- Highlighting
- Drop caps
- WordArt

Color Choices

Make sure to choose colors that have a greater [contrast ratio](#), so those with visual impairments will be able to read the document. When there is less color contrast between the font color and the background color, it is more difficult for those with visual impairments to read. The below illustration

gives various examples of color contrast, pay close attention to the examples with a contrast ratio of at least [4.5:1](#).

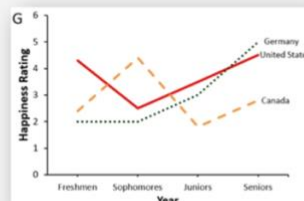
Examples of Contrast Ratios

- Blue 12 pt text on white background with ratio of **3.2 to 1**
- Green 12 pt text on white background with ratio of **2.3 to 1**
- Red 12 pt text on white background with ratio of **4.3 to 1**
- Dark red 12 pt text on white background with ratio of **5.7 to 1**
- Yellow 12 pt text on white background with ratio of **1.7 to 1**
- Black 12 pt text on white background with ratio of **21.0 to 1**
- Blue 12 pt text on black background with ratio of **6.7 to 1**
- Green 12 pt text on black background with ratio of **9.0 to 1**
- Red 12 pt text on black background with ratio of **4.9 to 1**
- Dark red 12 pt text on black background with ratio of **3.7 to 1**
- Yellow 12 pt text on black background with ratio of **12.6 to 1**
- White 12 pt text on black background with ratio of **18.3 to 1**

When including illustrations, such as a chart, make sure not to rely on color alone to communicate meaning. Use another indicator as well, such as shape or line type, to communicate information.

Example of an accessible chart

Using the same chart, now color, line type (i.e., dashed, solid), and labels are used to distinguish between each country.

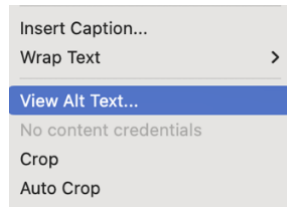


Images

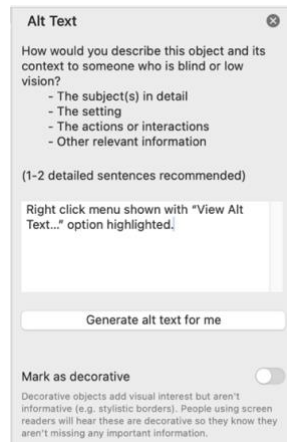
When including images in your document, also give your images a description, called "[alt text](#)," that can be read by a screen reader, to give information about the image. When possible, avoid images with text, as the text is unavailable to the screen reader software, and cannot be adjusted easily by those who may need to alter text elements, such as font size. To enter the alt text information:

1. Right click on the image.

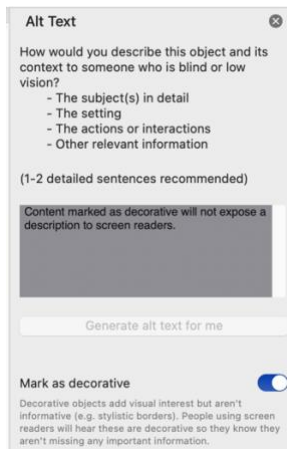
2. Choose **View Alt Text** from the menu.



3. In the window that appears, enter a 1–2 sentence description of your image.



4. If it is decorative, meaning it does not give information, such as a border or line, choose **Mark as decorative**.

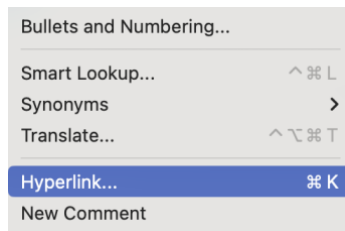


Links

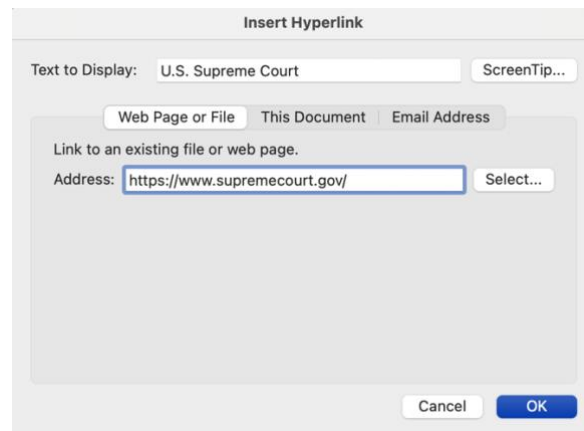
When adding [hyperlinks](#) to your document, it is important to give each link a [unique name](#) that identifies how and where a link will open. Screen reader software provides a list of links, and if each has the same name, or is not

descriptive, the person using screen reader software will not know which link to choose, or where the link will take them. To give your link a unique, descriptive name:

1. Type your hyperlink.
2. Highlight your link, right click, and choose **Hyperlink**.



3. Verify the link is correct in the **Address** field, and enter a unique, descriptive name in the **Text to Display** field.



4. When finished, click **OK**.

Document Information

There are three pieces of information that are helpful for screen readers to find information in the document: Title, Author, and Language. To enter the Title and Author, go to **File>Properties>Advanced Properties**. When done, click **OK**. To enter the document language, go to **Review>Language>Language Preferences**. Click on the **Language** option, make sure English is set as the default language under **Office authoring languages and proofing**, and click **OK**. When done, save your document in the **.docx** file format.



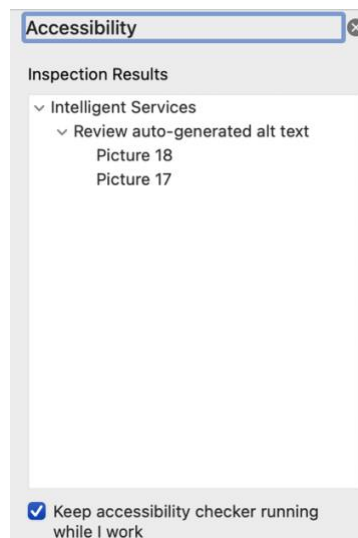
Checking for accessibility

The next step is to check for [accessibility](#) issues. To check accessibility:

1. Click on **Review>Check Accessibility**.



2. An Accessibility window will open with items to check and correct.



3. After correcting any accessibility issues found, you can close the window. Alternatively, you can click on the Accessibility status display at the bottom of your document to open the Accessibility window.



Create PDF

The last step is to create a PDF version of your Word document, to allow people without Word to view your document. To create the PDF:

1. Go to **File>Save As**.
2. In the **Save As** field, give your document a name, if the document name will be different from your Word document name.
3. Choose a location to save your PDF document to.

4. Choose PDF from the **File Format** dropdown list, and make sure **Best for electronic distribution and accessibility (uses Microsoft online service)** is selected.
5. Click **Export**.

