

# Make a Word Document Accessible

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The goal of accessible learning is that a person with a disability will obtain the information as fully, equally, and independently as a person without a disability. When a learning setting is accessible, a person with a disability is afforded the opportunity to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services as a person without a disability in an equally effective and equally integrated manner, with substantially equivalent ease of use.

For documents created in Microsoft Word 365, check the following accessibility guidelines for each document element to make sure that your document is accessible.

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## Make Text Accessible

### Use a text font that is easy to read

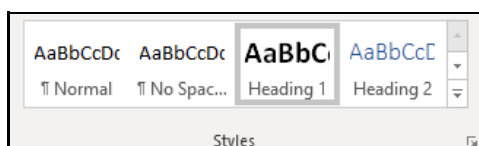
- Ensure your text is readable by using a sans serif fonts, such as Arial, Helvetica or Verdana, that is at least 10pt in size. These font settings will magnify well for those who have low vision.
- If there is an image that includes text, make sure to repeat that text in the alternative text field for the image so it will be accessible to assistive technology users.
- Refrain from using floating text boxes, track changes, or commenting - these features are not accessible.

## Make Headings Accessible

### Use properly formatted headings to structure the page

Styling text using font size, color, or weight to make them look like headings is not sufficient for screen readers to identify. Instead, heading text needs to be formatted so it is identified as a heading.

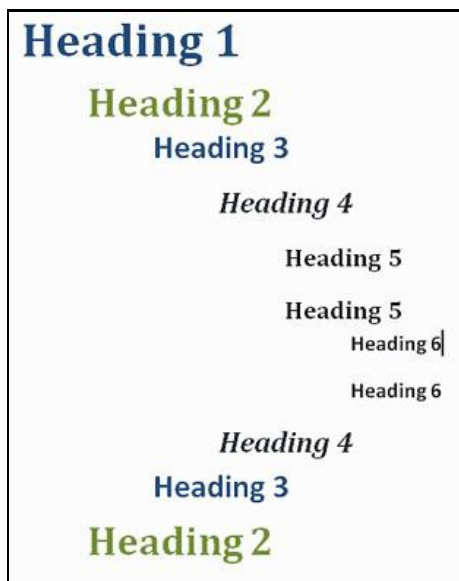
1. Select the text that you want to make into a heading.
2. Go to the **Home** tab.
3. In the Styles group, choose the appropriate heading level (see information below on using headings in the proper order) from the Styles gallery.



**NOTE:** The default style called a normal template in MS Word uses light blue heading colors that have insufficient color contrast. Make sure to change those headings to a darker color.

In addition to formatting headings as headings, the headings need to be used in the correct order. Headings chunk your content, making it easier for everyone to read. Headings are also one of the major ways screen readers navigate a document.

- Headings formatted in the proper order function like an outline for the document.
- Heading 1 is like the title of a book; there is just one per page. Heading 2s are like chapter titles. Heading 3s are sections of those chapters, and so on.
- To make a document accessible, don't skip heading levels.
- It can be helpful to view the Navigation Pane while applying structure to a Word document. This allows you to see the headings in outline format to make sure you haven't skipped a heading level.
- See below for a visual display of a possible heading order:



**Video:** [How to apply headings in the correct order \(http://youtu.be/8ttx2wTESWg\)](http://youtu.be/8ttx2wTESWg).

## Make Lists Accessible

### Use properly formatted lists

Page formatting for document elements such as lists is read aloud to screen reader users so the content is understood in context.

1. Click the **Home** tab.
2. In the **Paragraph** group, select the **Numbering** or **Bullets** icon.
  - Use **Number lists** if a sequential order is important to the list
  - Use **Bullet lists** if all items are equal value.



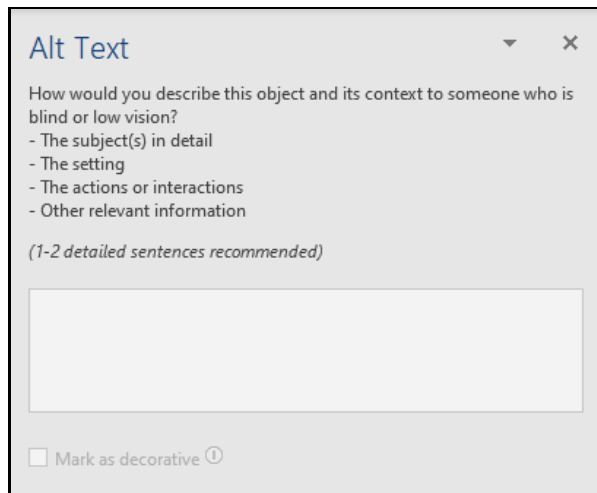
**Video:** [How to format lists \(http://youtu.be/jjELrbAxFR0\)](http://youtu.be/jjELrbAxFR0).

## Make Images and Graphics (including Graphs, Maps, and Shapes) Accessible

**Provide alternative text descriptions (alt text) for images and graphics.**

Alternative text descriptions of images (alt text) allows screen reader users to benefit from the information being conveyed by an image.

1. Right click on the image and select **Edit Alt Text**.
2. The Alt Text pane opens on the right side of the document.
3. Enter your descriptive alternative text into the field provided.



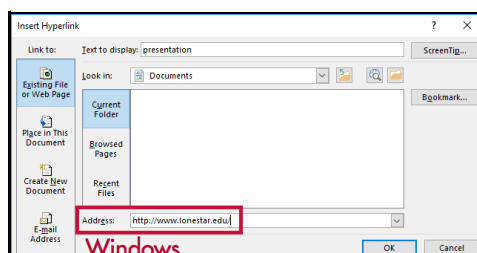
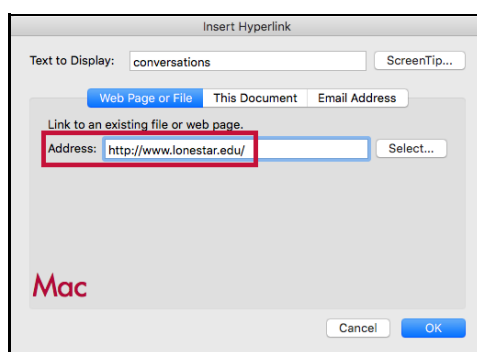
See [How to Make Complex Images Accessible](https://vtac.lonestar.edu/help/a027) (<https://vtac.lonestar.edu/help/a027>) for images that cannot be adequately described in the alternative text (which should be limited to one or two brief sentences).

## Make Links Accessible

### Write meaningful link text that indicates link's destination

Links are a major method of navigating for everyone, but especially screen reader users. If the links are embedded into meaningful text, they are much more useful.

1. Highlight text that describes the destination of the link.
2. Right click and select **Link**.
3. In the **Address** field, type the link URL.



4. Click **OK**.

### Hyperlink Tips:

- If you think students will be printing the document and you want them to have the URL, put it in parentheses after the link but don't hyperlink it.
  - Example: [Lone Star College](http://www.lonestar.edu) (<http://www.lonestar.edu>) ([www.lonestar.edu](http://www.lonestar.edu)).
- Screen reading software can pull up all of the links in a page to aid the user in navigating the page more quickly. If a link pulled up by the screen reader is an indecipherable URL or an ambiguous phrase like "click here," the user will not know where that link goes.



**Video:** [How to make meaningful links](http://youtu.be/See4M64o7aA) (<http://youtu.be/See4M64o7aA>)

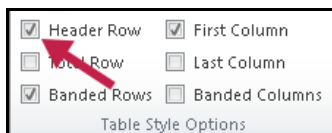
## Make Tables Accessible

### Create data tables with column headers

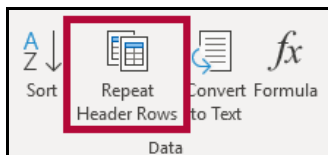
Designating column or row headers in a table is essential for screen reader users to understand how the information is laid out.

#### Windows:

1. Put your cursor in the top row of your data table so the **Table Tools** tabs display on the Ribbon.
2. Under the Table Tools tab, click the **Design** tab.
3. In the **Table Style Options** group, verify the **Header Row** box is checked.

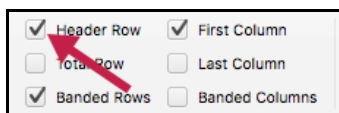


4. Next, click the **Layout** tab under the **Table Tools** tab.
5. In the **Data** group, click **Repeat Header Rows**.

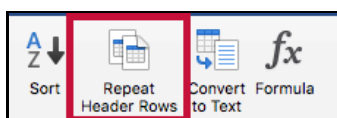


#### Mac:

1. Put your cursor in the top row of your data table. Two tabs display in the Ribbon, **Table Design** and **Layout**.
2. Click the **Design** tab, and then verify the **Header Row** box is checked..



3. Click the **Layout** tab.
4. Click **Repeat Headers Rows**.



### Ensure a proper reading order in tables

- **Screen readers** ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Screen\\_reader](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Screen_reader)) read tables from left to right, top to bottom, one cell at a time (no repeats). If cells are split or merged, the reading order can be thrown off.

- To test the reading order of your table, place your cursor in the first cell of the table. Press the Tab key repeatedly to navigate through the table. This demonstrates the reading order that assistive technologies will use.
- Merged, nested, and split cells change the reading order of tables. Make sure you construct your table in a way that accommodates proper reading order.

## Color Use in Documents

### Don't use color alone to convey meaning

Don't use color alone to make a distinction, to make a comparison, or to set something apart from the rest of the document. If you categorize something by color alone, those who are color blind or have other visual disabilities will not be able to benefit from that information.

### Use sufficient color contrast

Make sure there is enough contrast between the font color and the background color. If you print your document on a black and white printer, would it be understandable? Without sufficient color contrast, people who are color blind or have other visual disabilities will not be able to benefit from that information.



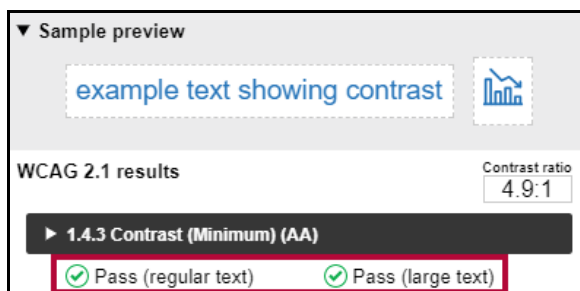
**Video:** [Color contrast in MS Word](http://youtu.be/reDpBQ4oAmM) (<http://youtu.be/reDpBQ4oAmM>)

You can use the Colour Contrast Analyzer tool to help you verify that the color contrast in your document is sufficient.

### How to Install and Use the Colour Analyser tool

1. Download and install [Colour Contrast Analyser Tool](http://www.paciellogroup.com/resources/contrastAnalyser) (<http://www.paciellogroup.com/resources/contrastAnalyser>)
2. Open the **Colour Contrast Analyser** application
3. Click the **Foreground eye dropper** tool, hover over and click the foreground color (usually text) to select it.
4. Click the **Background eye dropper** tool, hover over and click the background color.
5. If you have a 12pt font you are testing for color contrast, you must get a (AA) Pass for regular text.

If you have font larger than that, you must get a (AA) Pass for large text.



### Colour Analyzer Tips:

- LSC's standards are to reach a pass in the AA standards.
- Don't worry if you fail the AAA standards, though you might want to consider something with a contrast.

## Use of Flashing or Blinking Content

### Eliminate flashing or blinking content

If you must use flashing or blinking content, limit that content to no more than 3 flashes per second. Any flashing or blinking content (especially content in red) can cause seizures in people with photosensitive epilepsy as well as other photosensitive seizure disorders, so this content should be used very rarely if at all. Pages that do contain flashing content should limit the flashing to no more than three flashes per second and should not use fully saturated reds in the content.

If you have a video containing a scene involving very bright lightning flashes (or other scenes with flashes), edit the video so the lightning doesn't flash more than three times in any one second period.

## Make Interactive Elements Accessible

### Forms & Buttons

- Label form fields and buttons
- We recommend the D2L quiz tool for creating forms and not MS Word. If you want to use Word to create your form, start with a form template.
- In order for a blind person to be able to fill out a form, the form needs to be electronic and the fields need to be associated with their corresponding labels.
- Make sure you check whether the screen reader tells the user what information to fill into the form fields?

### Check the reading order of forms

- The reading order of a form is important to those who are blind or physically disabled.
- To check the reading order of a form, try tabbing through the form. Does the cursor land in the form fields in the expected order? If not, you need to edit the order of the form fields.
- If you are just making questions and leaving a space for answers instead of formatting your document as an actual form, make sure it is clear what you want the students to do. (For example, if you want students to fill in their responses to your questions below the question, write instructions so it's obvious to someone using a screen reader.)

## Make Math and Science Equations Accessible

### Math and Science Equations

Mathematical equations and scientific notations must be written with MathType (an Microsoft Office equation editor plugin) and saved in a source folder in your course files. This enables Disability Services to access those files and convert them to an accessible format for a visually impaired student.

For more information, see [How to Make Math-Science Resources Accessible](https://vtac.lonestar.edu/help/a026) (<https://vtac.lonestar.edu/help/a026>).

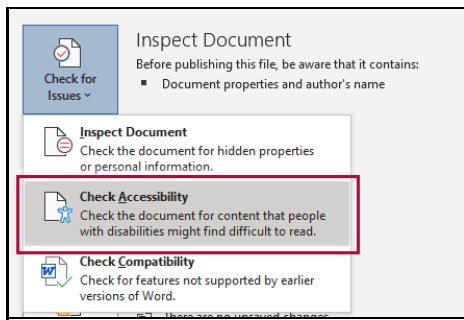
## Run the Built in Accessibility Checker

A great way to begin checking the accessibility of your Word document is to use the built-in accessibility checker.

**NOTE:** The Word accessibility checker only checks .docx files.

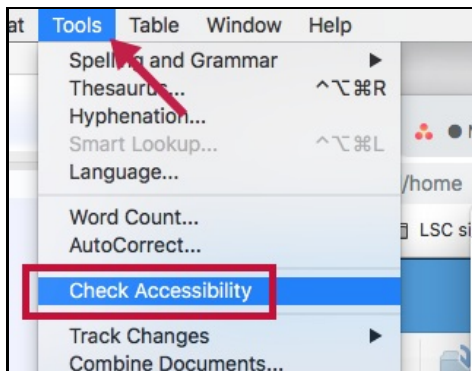
### Windows:

1. Click the **File** tab.
2. Select **Info** from the sidebar menu.
3. Click the **Check for Issues** button.
4. Select **Check Accessibility** from the drop-down list.



### Mac:

1. Click **Tools**.
2. Click **Check Accessibility**.



The Accessibility Checker panel will open to the right of the document. The accessibility checker provides you with a list of errors, warnings, and tips. When you click on an error or warning, instructions on how to fix it appear below the list of errors, in "Additional Information."



**Video:** [How to Use the Accessibility Checker \(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PiKhayo4IXE&list=PLRfHZ9wXKs6duG9d5juBYnSLvJAT4bHVT&feature=share\)](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PiKhayo4IXE&list=PLRfHZ9wXKs6duG9d5juBYnSLvJAT4bHVT&feature=share).

### Additional Resources

- [Microsoft's guide on creating accessible Word documents \(https://support.office.com/en-us/article/make-your-word-documents-accessible-to-people-with-disabilities-d9bf3683-87ac-47ea-b91a-78dcacb3c66d\)](https://support.office.com/en-us/article/make-your-word-documents-accessible-to-people-with-disabilities-d9bf3683-87ac-47ea-b91a-78dcacb3c66d)
- [WebAIM: Microsoft Word \(http://webaim.org/techniques/word/\)](http://webaim.org/techniques/word/)
- [The National Center on Disability and Access to Education Cheatsheets \(http://ncdae.org/resources/cheatsheets/\)](http://ncdae.org/resources/cheatsheets/)