

**This tip sheet will help you improve the accessibility of Word Documents for persons with disabilities.**

Tip sheet is applicable to Word versions 2010, 2013, and 2016. For video tutorials, please [watch Microsoft's videos on creating accessible content in Office](#).

## Add Structure to Documents

Design your documents with styles. Styles add the structure necessary to make your documents usable to people with vision disabilities.

## Headings

Use Styles to create heading formats, i.e. Title, Heading 1, Heading 2, Heading 3, etc. Make styles progress in a logical manner - a Heading 2 should come after a Heading 1. Headings should be short (fewer than 20 words) for easy navigation.

- Home tab → Styles

## Alternative Text or Alt Text

Alternative Text or "Alt Text" refers to text that can be read by a screen reader to describe graphics and images, which people with visual disabilities cannot see.

- Right click on an image → select the **Format Picture** dialog → **Layout & Properties** tab → **Alt Text** → enter the alternative text.

## Text

- Text should be at least 12-point type using a clean sans-serif font such as Verdana, Helvetica or Arial.
- Avoid using the Enter key to create space between paragraphs. Use the space before and space after properties in your styles.
- Avoid using Text Boxes in documents

## Columns

When creating columns, avoid using the tab key to create space between text columns or put text in a table. Use Word's column command:

- Layout tab → Columns button.

## Hyperlinks

Add a meaningful description to hyperlinks. Avoid giving vague instructions i.e. "click here".

- Insert Hyperlink (Ctrl or ⌘ + K).

## Lists

- Use Bulleted Lists to emphasize individual points.
- Use Numbered Lists to describe the proper order for a series of steps in a sequence.

## Tables

- Use simple table structure avoiding use of nested, merged, or split cells.
- Do not use tabs and spaces to manually create tables. Use the Insert Table command.
- Avoid letting table rows break across a page.
- Tables that go beyond a page should have repeat header rows.
- Use the table properties dialog to change formatting.
- Once your table is complete, check the reading order to ensure it makes sense by tabbing through the cells.

## Accessibility Checker

Use the accessibility checker to validate the accessibility of your document before publishing.

File tab → Info → Prepare for Sharing → Check for Issues → Check Accessibility from dropdown.

Review the inspection results and make appropriate corrections.

## Saving as a tagged PDF

While making your document into an accessible PDF involves the accessibility features of your PDF maker software, the task is made easier by following the techniques in this guide and saving the document as a tagged file.

- File → Save As → Save As Type dropdown → PDF → Document structure tags for Accessibility checkmark → Ok button → Save.