



Make Your Word Documents Accessible to Everyone

The following instructions are based on the laws contained within the **American's with Disabilities Act, Section 508**, and are intended to assist you with making your documents more accessible to the blind or visually impaired.

Use Appropriate Font Style and Size

- Use text **fonts** that are easy to read. Such as Arial or Verdana. Sans serif fonts work best.
- Try not to make font size less than 12 points.

Use Built-In Formatting Styles

- Always use the built-in **Styles and Formatting** settings for your **paragraphs, headings, lists, titles, etc.** (see the Styles menu on the Home tab).
- Use the built-in bulleted or numbered lists.

Use Color Appropriately

- When using different **colored fonts** or **colored backgrounds**, the difference in the colors must be **high contrast**. A good test is, if you printed the document in black & white, would you be able to see/read everything easily?
- Never use color alone to convey important information.

Add Alternative Text and Captions

- Always assign **alternative text (alt text)** to **images, shapes, graphs, charts and tables**.
 - **Images, Shapes, Graphs and Charts:** **Right-click** on the item, choose **Format Picture**, select the **Layout & Properties** icon, and then click **Alt Text**.
 - **Tables:** **Right-click** on the table, choose **Table Properties**, and then choose **Alt Text**.
- If an image or shape is just **decorative**, enter a **space** in place of the alt text (click the space bar one time in the alt-text box).
- When adding an image or graphic, always set the **wrapping style** to **"In Line with Text"** to prevent confusion for the screen reader: **Right-click** on the image, select **Wrap Text**, select **In Line with Text**.

Use Proper Formatting for Tables

Specify Column Header Rows

1. Select the **first row** of the table, **Right-click** on the table, choose **Table Properties**, and select the **Row** tab.
2. Ensure the options **"Allow row to break across pages"**, and **"Repeat as header row at the top of each page"** are checked. Click **OK**.

Keep Tables Simple

- Only use one row in the Header.
- Never merge or split cells.
- Try not to leave any cells, rows or columns Blank.



- For more complicated tables, add a description or explanation of the table contents to the body of the document above the table.

Use Meaningful Hyperlink Text

- Don't type out the entire URL in the document.
- Don't make vague text such as "Click Here" or "Visit" clickable.
 1. Place the cursor where the hyperlink is to appear, or simply highlight the text in the document that is to become a link.
 2. **Right-click**, and choose **Hyperlink**. Enter the text in the **Text to Display box**, and/or enter the URL in the **Address box**.

Making Existing Word Documents Accessible

- To open the **Accessibility Checker**:
 - **File > Info > Check for Issues > Check Accessibility**.
 - View the **Inspection Results**.
 - Click on the **error** or **warning** you would like to fix and follow the directions under **Additional Information – How to Fix**:
- To change the format of a heading without changing your chosen font size, color, etc.:
 - Highlight the text you want to format as a heading.
 - On the **Styles** menu bar **right-click** on the heading type you want (such as Heading 1), and click **Update Heading 1 to Match Selection**.