# **Tips for Creating Accessible Word Document**

## General Considerations

* Take into account how electronic document will be read by screen readers.
* Use clear language and consider multiple media format (e.g.: Braille, large print, recorded audio, closed captioning, electronic).
* If you use additional audio components in a document, ensure that the content is available in alternative formats such as closed caption, transcript, or alternative text.

## Font and Colour Contrast

* Use sans serif fonts such as Arial, Franklin Gothic, Verdana with font size between 12 –18 points
* Avoid using different font styles in one document
* To emphasize use **Bold** and do not use underline, italics or change to all **Caps**.
* Capitalize only the first letter in each word, even for a title.
* Choose a high contrast text and background colours such as black or blue text on white or yellow: Black text on white background is the best practice. Do not use light colour font.

## Titles and Subtitles

* Do not format titles manually.
* Always use heading “Styles” for titles and subtitles in a document. The “Styles” tab is in the Home tab of the menu bar (Normal, No Spacing, Heading 1, Heading 2, Title etc).
* Highlight your heading, open “Styles” pane, apply appropriate heading, and right click and a drop down menu will appear. Select “Update [style name] to Match Selection”. This will keep your selection consistent as you continue to write your document.

To edit an already existing document that did not follow these guidelines:

* Highlight your typed text to make changes, select a style and follow the same steps above

Do not manually type in Headers, Footers and Page numbers. Use “Insert Header”, “Insert Footer” or “Insert Page” Number under the “Insert” tab.

## Insert Table of Contents

* Do not manually type your table of content.
* Add a table of contents by selecting the “Reference” tab and clicking on “Table of Content” and then choose your style from the drop-down menu.
* When a Table of Contents window appears, edit what Headings you want to show on the table of contents and when finished making the changes, click OK.

## Page Layout

* Use standard margins defaulted as Normal in Microsoft Word and left alignment under “Paragraph” section in the “Home” tab.
* Adjust/create line spacing by choosing the proper icon in the “Paragraph” tab. This icon has a drop down menu that will show several line spacing option for you to chose one(1.0, 1.15, 1.5 etc)
* To create a new page go to “Insert” tab and click “Page Break” under “Pages” pane to create one. Do not use the “Enter” key (press severally) to create a new page.
* In the “Review” tab ensure all “Track Changes” have been accepted or removed from your final copy as this can impede accessibility of your document.
* Use formatted bullet and numbered lists by Highlighting your listed items, and then select “Bullets Library” or “Numbering Library” under the “Paragraph” pane in the “Home” tab.

Convert word to PDF using either of these approaches

* Select “File,” “Export,” and “Create PDF.”
* Select file, click on “Save As”, name the file and choose PDF among the drop-down options, check standard publishing and online printing, click on “options” select “Document structure tags for accessibility”, click “Ok” click on “save”.

## Pictures, Graphics, Graphs and Charts

Pictures, graphics, charts and tables in your document require alternate text information to be added. Alternate text (alt text) provides description information for screen reader technology

### Images

* Describe graphics and images, by using alternative text or “alt text”: To do this, right click on the image, select “Format Picture,” “Alt Text” under the “Accessibility” section under “Picture Format” and provide an image description manually or automatically (click on “Generate a description for me”).
* Format images to wrap in line with text: By right clicking on the image, and select “size and position” from the dropdown menu. Click on the “text wrapping” tab and under “wrapping style” chose “In Line with Text.”

### Charts

* Create a chart by clicking “Insert“ tab, select chart under “Illustrations”. To add Alt text to charts: Right click on “Chart”, select “Format chart Area” in the drop-down menu, select the “Alt Text” in the left hand list and type in your description.
* Format chart to wrap in line with text: By right clicking on the chart, and select “wrap text” from the dropdown menu. Click and chose “In Line with Text.”
* Do not use any other position or text wrap style.
* Word Art, and tools are not accessible. Do not use Water marks and background designs, or floating objects impede accessibility. Remove all watermarks on final or public documents.

## Creating/Inserting Tables

* To create a table select the “Insert,” tab and click on the “Tables” pane. Choose the number of columns and rows you want. A new tab called “Table Tools” appears on the menu bar. In the “Table Tools”, you have the “Design” tab and the “Layout tab”. Use simple table structures to present the data clearly.
* To automatically repeat header row on the next page, you can chose one of two options.
  + Click on the table you have created and click on a new “Layout” tab on the right of the “Table Design” tab. In this tab click on the “Table” pane and click on “Properties”. A new window will open, click on the “Row” tab and check the option “Repeat as header row at the top pf each page.”
  + Highlight table, right click and select “Table properties” from the drop-down menu. A new window will open. Click on the “Row” tab and check the option “Repeat as header row at the top pf each page”
* Format tables to read in logical tab order (select a cell in the table and hit the
* “Tab” key to see how a screen reader would read the order of information)
* Do not hide the borders when creating tables or cells within a table.
* To ensure that information in the table is understood clearly, click the Table Style Option and ensure the header row is checked.
* Avoid merged cells and nested tables.
* Use alt text for all tables. Alt text provides the image description for screen reader technology. Clicking on your table, select Properties in the Table section. Select the Alt Text tab to fill in what the table is about (Title) and Description (all the information in the table).

Tip: Use copy and paste function to add the information in the Alt Text’s Description box. First copy and paste the table text into a blank Word document. Reformat so that the table’s text is in “text only” and in sentences and bulleted lists; this will describe clearly the table’s information. Copy and paste into the Description box, click OK

If creating tables in spreadsheets, provide unique names for all the sheet tables.

## Use Hyperlinks for Web Addresses

* Hyperlinks are links from a website or a file which when you click on text or image it will directly bring you to that link. Use hyperlinks to avoid screen readers reading every word in a web address:
* Go to the “Insert” tab and click on “Link” under the “Links” section. Use the drop down menu, scroll down and click on “Insert Link”, a hyperlink window will open or just click on “Link” for the hyperlink window to open. Write in a clear title of what the link is in the “Text to display” box (this is what your reader will see in the document). Write the actual website link in the “Address” box and then click “OK” to create your hyperlink. Do not copy and paste web address directly into your write up or use words like “Click Here” or “More Info” as the title of the link.

## Check accessibility before publishing your document

* Clicking on the “Review” tab, and then click on “Check Accessibility” under the “Accessibility” section. This will show you errors and warnings to be corrected.
* Tip: Documents saved with the file extension **.doc** do not have the accessibility checker tool in the program. Quick fix is to save the old file with the extension **.docx** so you can use the accessibility checker.

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