

# ACCESSIBLE DOCUMENTS - WORD

## MICROSOFT WORD

- Microsoft Word is widely used among individuals with a variety of disabilities, and is fairly accessible. Text within Word documents can be read by assistive technologies such as a screen reader. In order for Word documents to be fully accessible, anyone authoring a Word document must follow the primary guidelines below.

## USE HEADINGS

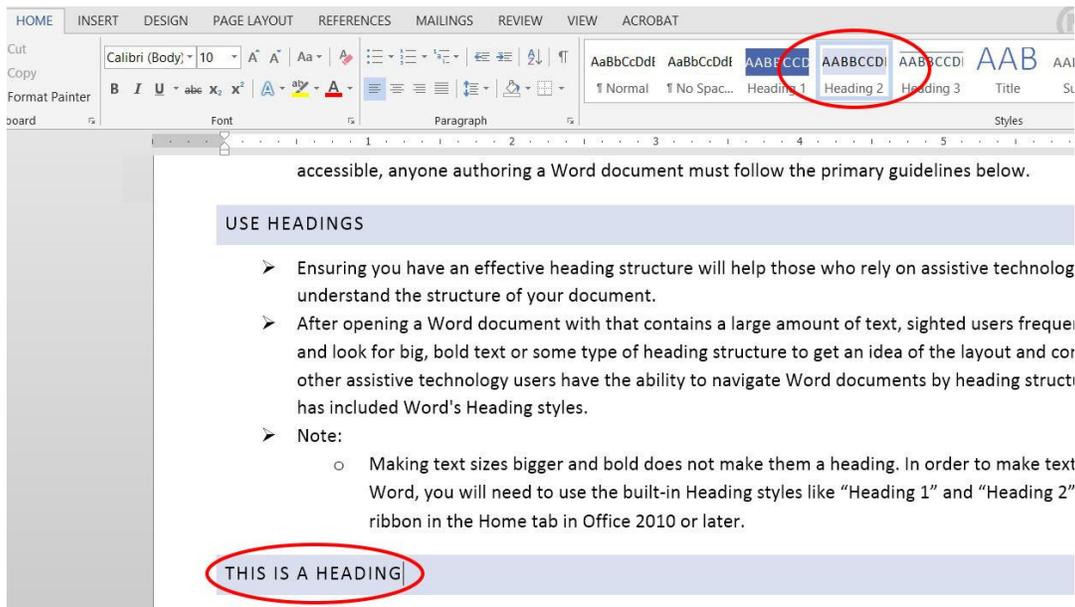
- Ensuring you have an effective heading structure will help those who rely on assistive technology or have low vision to understand the structure of your document.
- After opening a Word document that contains a large amount of text, sighted users frequently scroll the page quickly and look for big, bold text or some type of heading structure to get an idea of the layout and content. Screen readers and other assistive technology users have the ability to navigate Word documents by heading structure, as long as the author has included Word's Heading styles.

## AVOID CREATING HEADINGS WITH FONT STRUCTURES, SUCH AS BOLD OR LARGE TEXT.

- Although this will create a visual heading structure, the headings for assistive technologies will be missing. In order to make text a heading in Microsoft Word, you will need to use the built-in Heading styles like "Heading 1" and "Heading 2". This can be found in the ribbon in the Home tab in Office 2010 or later.

## THE HEADINGS IN YOUR DOCUMENT SHOULD CREATE AN OUTLINE.

- Heading order should be logical or numerical, i.e., Heading 1 is used first for the main heading and Heading 2 for subsequent headings. You may use Heading 3 and Heading 4 for additional headings. You cannot however, go from Heading 1 to a Heading 4.



- Example of a proper heading structure:
  - Heading 1
    - Heading 2
    - Heading 2
      - Heading 3

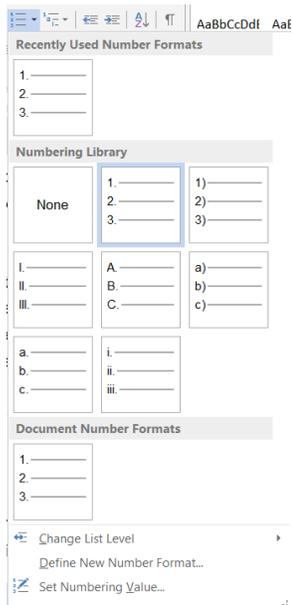
- Heading 3
  - Heading 4
  - Heading 4
  - Heading 4

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## NAVIGATING THROUGH OUTLINE STRUCTURE

- Once you have created a proper heading structure, screen readers or other assistive technologies can now use the structure to navigate the document in the following ways:
  - View a list of all of the headings in the document
  - Choosing top-level headings Heading 1, next-level headings Heading 2, third-level headings Heading 3, and so on
  - Reading or skipping by headings

## COLUMNS AND LISTS



- Lists and columns add important tiered structure to a document and should be built using Word’s tools for unordered and ordered or numbered lists. Avoid creating lists and columns manually by using tabs to indent content. Although this can provide a visual structure for sighted users, it does not create a sufficient guide needed for assistive technology.
- List types
  - You can create two types of lists using Word, ordered and unordered.
    - Use an ordered list to present a sequence of items
      1. Pre heat oven to 350 degrees
      2. Place cookie sheet in oven
      3. Check cookies every five minutes
      4. Remove cookies after 11 minutes
    - Use an unordered list for items without a sequence:
      - Chocolate
      - Vanilla
      - Strawberry
      - Mint chocolate chip

## ALTERNATE TEXT FOR IMAGES

- Alternate or “alt text” for images is necessary to provide a non-visual representation of the content or function of an image.
- Alternate text should be included for:

- Pictures
- Illustrations
- Images of text
- Shapes
- Charts
- Smart or clip art
- Embedded objects

➤ To add alternate text, right click on an image and select “Format Picture” from the action menu, then select the Alt Text tab

- Smart or clip art
  - Embedded objects
- To add alternate text, right click on an



## TABLES

➤ Data Tables

- Be mindful when using tables as Word has limitations for making them accessible. The purpose of tables is to format information in tabular form. The columns or rows should show the meaning of the information in the table.

➤ Adding table properties

- The first row in a table can be designated as the header row. This provides a screen reader with additional information when the document is exported to PDF.

○ Week	○ Number	○ Day
○ 1	○ 17	○ Monday
○ 2	○ 22	○ Friday

## LINKS

- Hyperlinks in Word documents provide a way for users to visit web pages, navigate to Word Headings and Bookmarks, and open email links.
- Creating links in Word
  - Hyperlinks are usually created in Word by pasting the complete URL of a web page into a document and hitting Space, Enter, or some other key. Word automatically creates a link, and uses the URL as the display text (e.g., <http://www.uwyo.edu>). Because the URL text may not be intuitive to a user, it is recommended to edit Word's default link text. For example, [Visit the University of Wyoming online!](#)
- Follow these principles to create accessible links:
  - Use descriptive link text that does not rely on context from the surrounding text.
  - Keep the amount of text in the link to a minimum.
  - Use underlined text with a color that stands out from the surrounding text. By default, Word will underline the link in another color.
- Important
  - Screen readers may scan a document by navigating from one link to another. It is best to avoid vague link text that is tough to understand out of context (e.g., "click here").

## CREATING AN ACCESSIBLE PDF FROM WORD

- After you have created an accessible document in Word, you can export it to a PDF.
  - The goal here is to preserve your accessibility features in your Word document. Be sure not to use the print to PDF option as this will not carry through the accessibility features.

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## WINDOWS - WORD 2010 AND 2013

- Choose File > “Save As...” and select PDF from the choices presented. By default this produces a PDF that preserves the document’s accessibility features.
  - When saving, select Options and ensure that “Document structure tags for accessibility” is checked. This should be checked by default, but may become unchecked depending on your options and defaults.
- If you select “Minimize Size” to reduce PDF size, make sure to repeat the step above, as this could uncheck the “Document structure tags for accessibility” option.

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## MAC – WORD 2016

- Choose File > “Save As...” and select PDF from the choices presented. By default this produces a PDF that preserves the document’s accessibility features.
- When saving, ensure the box labeled “Best for electronic distribution and accessibility” is checked.

## TOOLS

- [Microsoft Word Accessibility Checker](#)