

# Accessible Word Documents

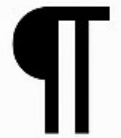
Creating documents that are usable by everyone

# What Makes a Word Document Accessible?

- Clear structure and organization
- Works with assistive technology
- Easy to navigate without a mouse
- Converts cleanly to PDF

# Setting Up Your Word Document for Accessibility

- **Open the Navigation Pane** – Press **Alt + W, K** to see your headings and easily navigate your document.
- **Show Paragraph Marks** – Press **Alt + H, 8** to reveal formatting marks for better structure visibility.
- **Pin the Styles Menu** – Press **Alt + H, F, Y** to keep styles handy for consistent heading and text formatting.



# Add Document Properties

- Use File → Info → Properties
  - Add a descriptive document title
    - The title helps screen reader users
    - Supports search and document identification
- Use File → Options → Language
  - Check language
    - Allows screen readers to pronounce words correctly

# Tip 1: Use Styles to Create Structure

- **Use built-in heading styles** (Heading 1, Heading 2, etc.)
- **Do not** format Headings manually
- Styles create document structure

# Tip 2: Use Tables for Data, Not Layout

- Use tables only for structured data
- Keep structure simple
- Avoid merged or split cells
- Identify header rows
- Label columns clearly
- Avoid tables for positioning text/images

# Tip 3: Create Meaningful Hyperlinks

- Avoid “click here” or raw URLs.
- Links should describe the destination.
- Helps all users understand where links lead.
- *Example: “[Download the Accessibility Guide \(PDF\)](#)”*

# Tip 4: Add Alt Text to Images

- Describe the purpose of the image
- Keep alt text brief and accurate
- Mark decorative images as decorative
- Avoid using images of text

# Tip 5: Use Paragraph Spacing — Not the Enter Key

- Do not press Enter repeatedly
- Use spacing before and after paragraphs
- Apply consistently

What Is an Accessible Document and Why Is It Important No Label • Saved

Layout References Mailings Review View Developer Help Acrobat

Indent  
Left: 0" Right: 0"

Spacing  
Before: 18 pt After: 4 pt

Spacing Before  
Change how much space appears above the selected paragraphs.  
To apply the same spacing to your whole document, use the Paragraph Spacing options on the Design tab.

**What Is an Accessible Document**

An accessible document is one that can be used by as many people as possible.

Accessible documents are

- Work with screen readers
- Support keyboard-only navigation
- Function across devices

# Tip 6: Use Clear, Readable Formatting

- Common fonts
- Left-aligned text
- Avoid color-only meaning

# Tip 7: Use Plain Language

- Write clearly and directly
- Use common, familiar words
- Keep sentences and paragraphs short
- **Write for the intended audience and purpose**
- Focus on what the reader needs to do

# Tip 8: Explain Abbreviations and Acronyms

- Spell out the first use
  - *Example: “Office of Adult Education (OAE)”*
  - Place the acronym in parentheses
- Helps users unfamiliar with the terminology
- Be consistent throughout the document

# Tip 9: Use Sufficient Color Contrast

- Ensure strong contrast between text and background
- Do not rely on color alone to convey meaning
- Light text on dark backgrounds and vice versa
- Check contrast before sharing documents

# Tip 10: Create an Accessible Table of Contents

- Use Word's automatic Table of Contents
- Requires proper heading styles
- Supports quick navigation
- **Best for longer or multi-section documents**

# Use the Accessibility Checker

- Review → Check Accessibility
- Identifies common issues
- Provides guidance
- Fix Errors first
- Review Warnings carefully
- Run before sharing

# Converting Word Documents to PDF

- PDF preserves layout and formatting
- Use PDF for final or official documents
- Keep Word for collaboration and editing
- Start with an accessible Word document

# Common Accessibility Mistakes

## Try to avoid:

- Manual formatting instead of styles
- Missing alt text
- Tables for layout
- Ignoring checker results