

Tips for making Microsoft Word documents accessible

1. Use Built-in Headings & Styles

- Use **Heading Styles (Heading 1, Heading 2, etc.)** instead of manually formatting text (bold/large font).
- This helps **screen readers** navigate the document properly.
- Apply headings under **Home > Styles**.

2. Add Alt Text to Images & Objects

- Right-click on an image, shape, or table → Select **“Edit Alt Text”** → Describe the image’s purpose.
- Example: Instead of "Chart," write **"Bar chart showing enrollment trends from 2020-2024."**

3. Use Descriptive Links

- Instead of "Click here," use meaningful text:
 - ☒ **"Read the accessibility guide"** (Linked text)
 - ✗ **"Click here for the guide"**

4. Create Accessible Tables

- Use **simple table structures** (avoid merged or split cells).
- Set **Header Row**:
 - Select the top row → Go to **Table Design** → Check **“Header Row”**
 - This helps screen readers interpret table data correctly.

5. Check Color Contrast

- Ensure **high contrast** between text and background (avoid light gray text on a white background).
- Use **bold or underlined text** instead of color alone to highlight information.

6. Use Lists Properly

- Use **bulleted or numbered lists** instead of manually typing dashes or numbers.
- Find list options under **Home > Paragraph**.

7. Ensure Readable Fonts & Spacing

- Use **sans-serif fonts** (e.g., Arial, Calibri, Verdana).
- Font size **12pt or larger** is recommended.
- Ensure **1.15 or 1.5 line spacing** for readability.

8. Use the Accessibility Checker

- In Word, go to **Review > Check Accessibility**.
- This tool flags accessibility issues and offers **fix suggestions**.

9. Provide Alternative Formats

- If sharing a document, also provide **an accessible PDF version** (using "Save As PDF" with "Document Structure Tags" enabled).

10. Avoid Using Floating Objects

- Keep images and text boxes **"In Line with Text"** (Right-click > Wrap Text > In Line with Text).
- This ensures assistive technologies read content in the correct order.