

BEST PRACTICES FOR MAKING WORD DOCUMENTS ACCESSIBLE

The following table includes key best practices for creating Word documents that are accessible to people with disabilities.

What to fix	How to find it	Why fix it	How to fix it
Avoid common accessibility issues such as missing alternative text (alt text) and low contrast colors.	Use the Accessibility Checker .	Make it easy for everyone to read your documents.	Check accessibility while you work in Word
In general, avoid tables if possible and present the data another way. If you have to use tables, use a simple table structure for data only, and specify column header information.	To ensure that tables don't contain split cells, merged cells, or nested tables, use the Accessibility Checker . Visually scan your tables to check that they don't have any completely blank rows or columns.	Screen readers keep track of their location in a table by counting table cells. If a table is nested within another table or if a cell is merged or split, the screen reader loses count and can't provide helpful information about the table after that point. Blank cells in a table could also mislead someone using a screen reader into thinking that there is nothing more in the table.	Avoid using tables Use table headers Use built-in title, subtitle, and heading styles Create paragraph banners
Use built-in headings and styles.	To check that the order of headings is logical, visually scan your document's table of contents.	To preserve tab order and to make it easier for screen readers to read your documents, use a logical heading order and the built-in formatting tools in Word.	Use built-in title, subtitle, and heading styles Create accessible lists Adjust space between sentences and paragraphs Create paragraph banners

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Include alt text with all visuals.	To find missing alt text, use the Accessibility Checker .	<p>You can also use paragraph banners to organize your content.</p> <p>Alt text helps people who can't see the screen to understand what's important in images and other visuals.</p>	Add alt text to visuals
Add meaningful hyperlink text and ScreenTips.	To determine whether hyperlink text makes sense as standalone information and whether it gives readers accurate information about the destination target, visually scan your document.	People who use screen readers sometimes scan a list of links.	Add accessible hyperlink text and ScreenTips
Ensure that color is not the only means of conveying information.	To find instances of color-coding, visually scan your document.	People who are blind, have low vision, or are colorblind might miss out on the meaning conveyed by particular colors.	Use accessible font format
Use sufficient contrast for text and background colors.	To find insufficient color contrast, use the Accessibility Checker . You can also look for text in your document that's hard to read or to distinguish from the background.	If your document has a high level of contrast between text and background, more people can see and use the content.	Use accessible font color

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Avoid writing important information in the Header or Footer sections of the document.	Headers and Footers are visible only in the Print Layout view and the Print Preview. Double-click the Header or the Footer to activate and edit its content.	People who use screen readers miss out on important information as screen readers do not scan Headers or Footers.	Use built-in title, subtitle, and heading styles to include titles, subtitles, page numbers, and all other important information in the main body of the document. Include any redundant information in the Header or Footer section.

Source: [Make your Word documents accessible to people with disabilities - Microsoft Support](#)