

Tips for a More Accessible MS Word Doc

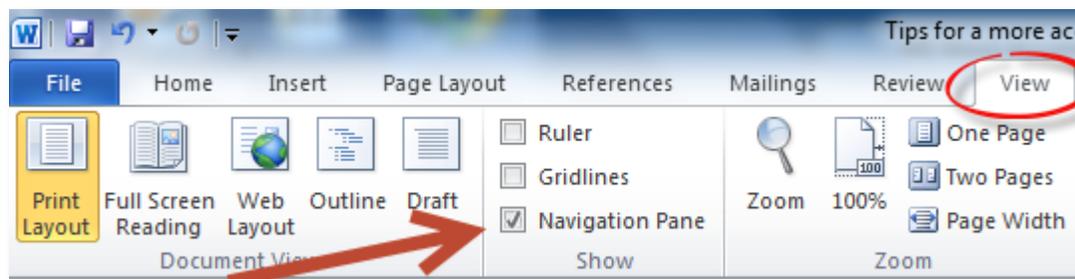
Documents that are designed using accessibility standards and guidelines are beneficial for all users. Accessibility considerations include: appropriate document structure, navigation, alternative text descriptions, adequate labels, and reading order. Digital content accessibility guidelines are very similar to the guidelines and standards for ensuring web content is accessible, however the techniques to achieve accessibility will vary depending on the format of the document. A key technique for creating more accessible Microsoft Word documents is to create document structure and navigation by using Styles to format Headings.

Use Styles and Headings to add document structure

Adding headings and subheadings (Heading 1, Heading 2, Heading 3, etc.) in a logical order will assist all users in navigating and finding information. Headings will be visibly identified in the body of the document by their formatting, but are also viewable and can aid navigation in the Navigation pane.

To View the Navigation Pane:

In Word 2010, on the Word Ribbon, go to View tab and click the checkbox by Navigation Pane in the Show group. (In Word 2007 click, show Document Map)

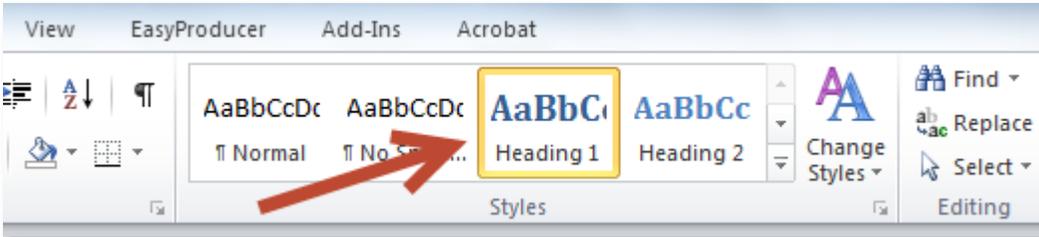


Use Styles to create headings

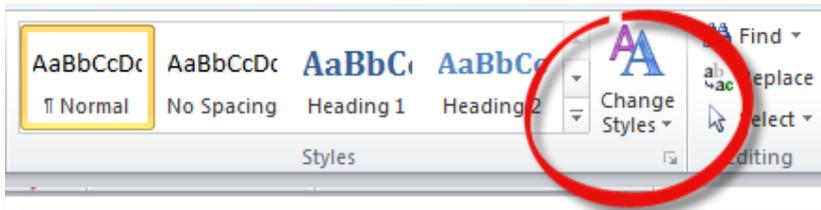
Using Styles rather than direct formatting has a number of advantages including creating document structure and enabling more efficient updating and revisions. By default, text in the Word Doc will have the Style of Normal.

To apply a Heading style, select text to become heading, in the Home tab, go to the Styles group to apply Heading 1, Heading 2, or Heading 3. (Always begin with Heading 1 and add

additional subheadings in a logical order. Skipping a heading level can cause confusion and additional problems, including invalid document form, especially if the document will be exported to another format.)



Heading Styles are preformatted. The preset formatting can easily be changed by changing the Style Set. Go to Change Styles > select Style Set and choose a set from the menu.



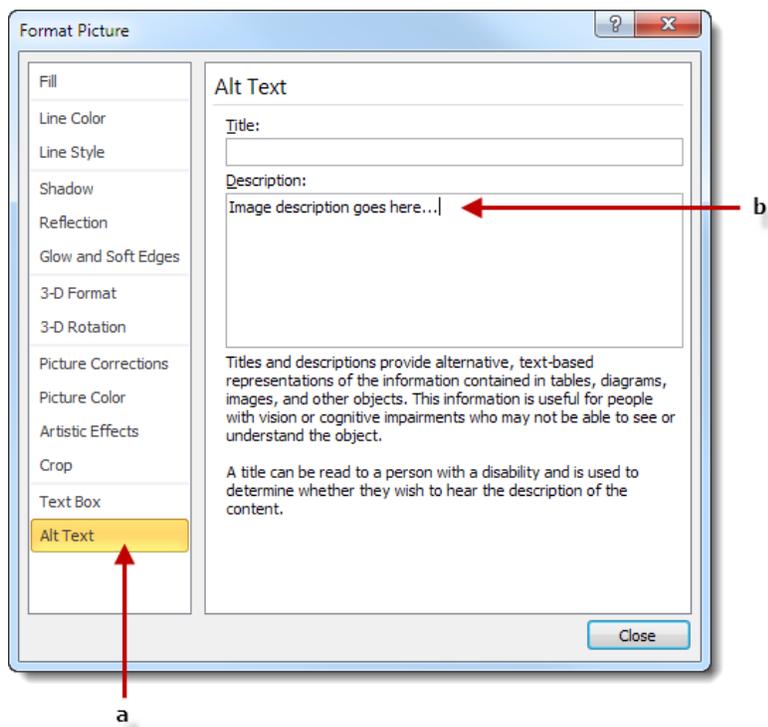
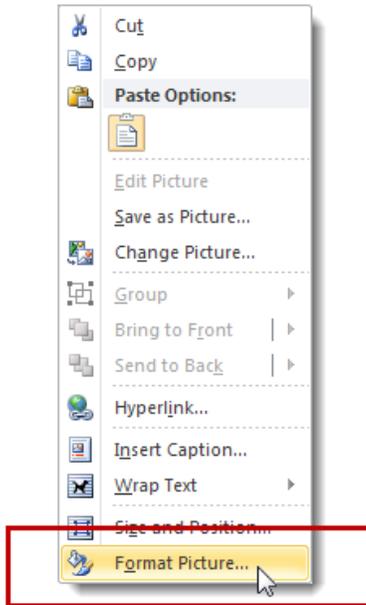
Add alt text to images

Add alternative text descriptions (alt text) to all meaningful images. To determine whether an image needs alt text, determine the purpose of the image. Is it informational or decorative? If the purpose of the image is to convey information or meaning, determine what information the image is conveying and write a short, concise text description that will convey that information. Use complete sentences with proper punctuation when writing alt text descriptions. Avoid using abbreviations or acronyms unless they have been previously defined. Do not duplicate information present in a caption.



To add alt text to an image in MS Word document:

1. Right-click the image
2. Select Format Picture
3. Select the Alt Text option from the list
4. Add summary alt text in the description entry area



Use list styles for numbered or bulleted lists

Using list styles will identify to a screen reader that there is a list and the number of items in the list. Using list styles will also preserve list formatting when exporting a file to another format.

- Item one
- Item two
- Item three

Highlight list items, go to the Paragraph styles group on the Home tab, and select numbered or bulleted list.

Use table styles

Using table styles helps ensure appropriate table structure with adequate headings and helps preserve logical reading order.

To add a table with headings:

1. Go to Insert tab on Word ribbon
2. In the Tables section, select the Tables icon
3. Select the number of rows and columns for your table
4. Select the inserted table by clicking its border. When the table is selected, the Table Tools menu will appear
5. Click on Table Tools > Design
6. In the Table Styles Options group, select the Header Row check box
7. Click on Table Tools > Layout and be sure to click on Repeat Header Rows
8. Add alt text to tables

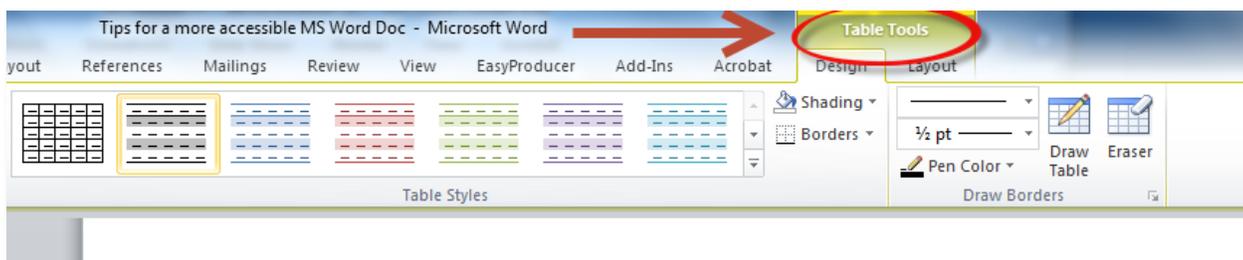
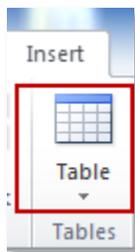


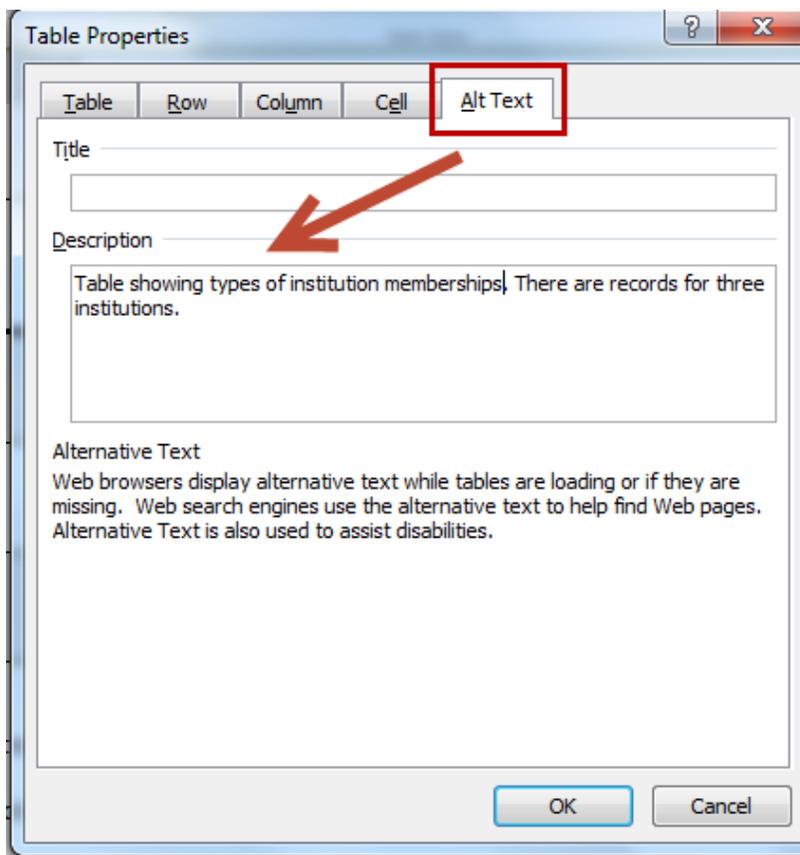
Table 1 Sample Table

ID	Institution	Membership type	Status
12	University 12	Basic	Active
22	University 22	Basic	Active
42	University 42	Basic	Active

Add alt text summary description

Adding an alt text summary description provides users of screen readers the ability to gain the same type of summary information that sighted users can obtain by quickly browsing a table.

Right click table > select Table Properties > Alt Text



Use a simple table structure and tab through the table to check the reading order.

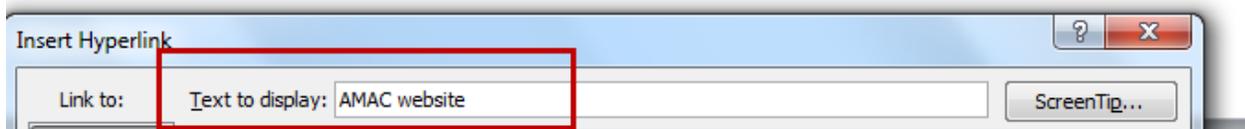
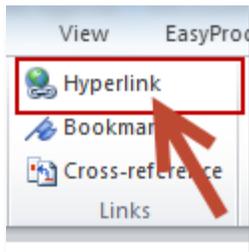
Hyperlinks with context

It is a best practice to create meaningful text for hyperlinks. Do not use links such as “click here” or “more.” Hypertext links should make sense out of context. MS Word provides the ability to add a URL hyperlink with a field to indicate the “text to display.”

To add a hyperlink, highlight text > go to Insert tab > select Hyperlink in the Links group. Enter the Text to Display and the URL address.

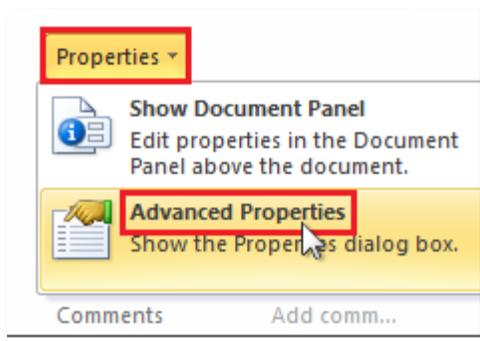
<http://www.amacusg.org/index.php>

[AMAC website](#)

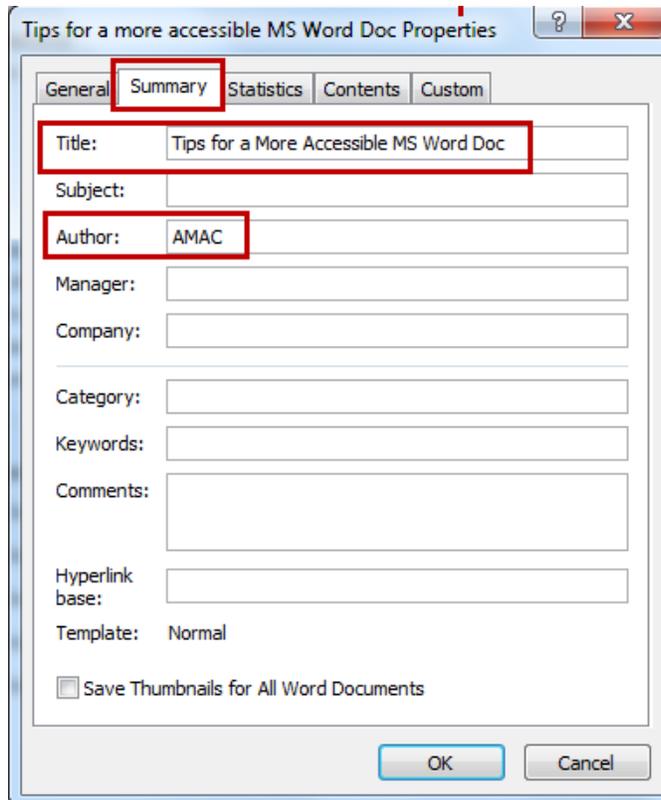


Document properties/metadata

Accurate document properties make it easier to identify and locate information. Go to the File tab and click on the Properties drop-down menu and choose Advanced Properties.



Click on the Summary tab and add information in the Title and Author fields. Add information in additional fields if desired.



Other Issues

A couple of other topics to keep in mind:

Language

If your document contains more than one language, you can identify that language within the **Review** Tab on the ribbon. Select the Language options > Set Proofing language.

Color and Color Contrast:

You do not want to use color as the sole indicator of information. It is necessary to use another means of conveying the information, for example do not use the color red as the sole means of identifying required information, you could also include an asterisk and a key denoting which symbols indicate information that is required.

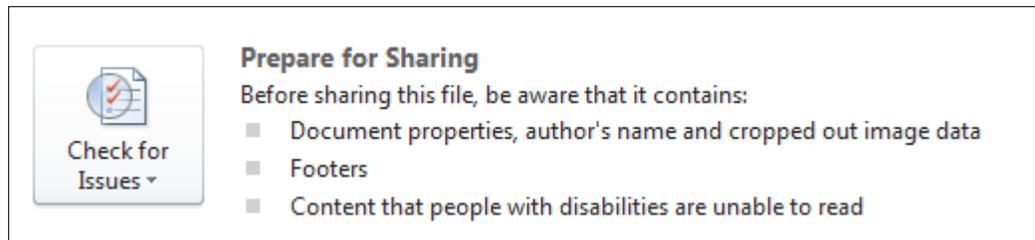
Third party color contrast analyzers can be used to help you evaluate whether the color contrast of your document is appropriate. This is very important for individuals with low vision, but good color contrast improves readability in general.

Also, be sure to use color combinations that are accessible to individuals who are color blind.

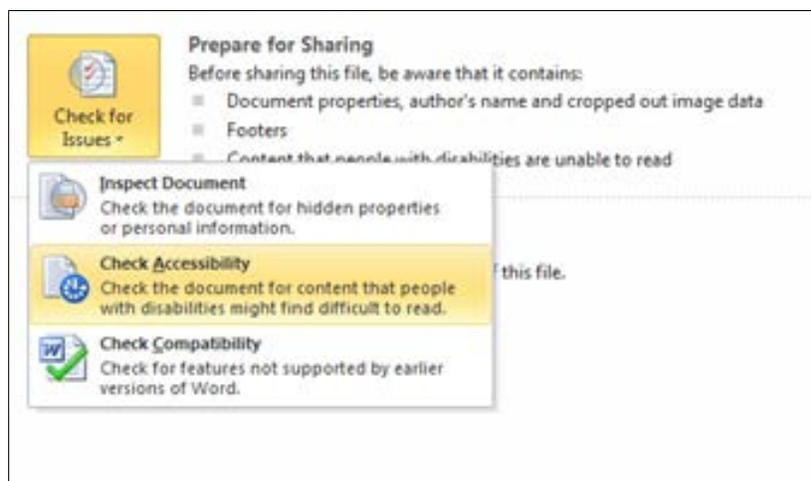
Accessibility Checker

Microsoft Word 2010 has a built-in Accessibility Checker that will inspect your document and produce a report noting accessibility errors and warnings such as missing alt text and unclear hyperlinks.

To access the Accessibility Checker, go to File > Prepare for Sharing and click on **Check for Issues**



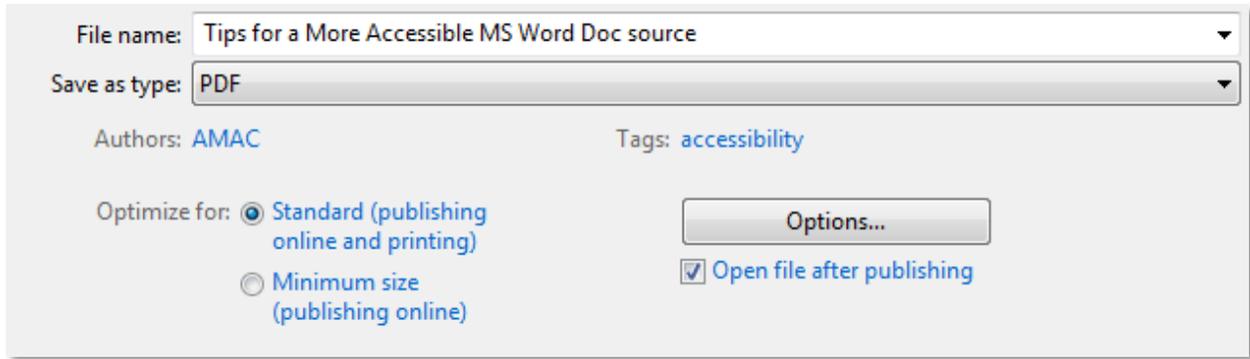
From the context menu, choose **Check Accessibility**



Create accessible PDF from accessible MS Word doc

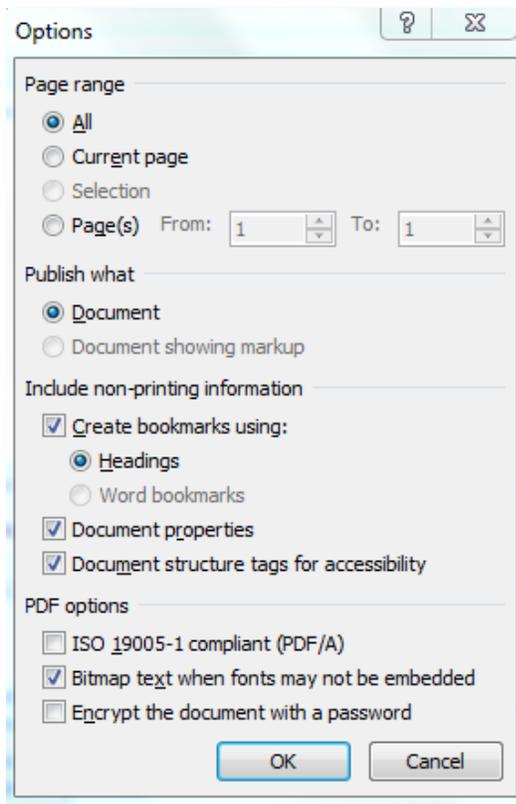
MS Word 2010 and 2013 include the option to Save and Export accessible formatting including headings and alt text when the doc is saved as a PDF. To export your Word doc to an accessible PDF format, go to File > Save As >

from the **Save as type** drop down menu choose **PDF** and click on **Options**.



From the PDF Options menu, under **Include non-printing information**, be sure to check the following options:

- Create bookmarks using Headings
- Document properties
- Document structure tags for accessibility

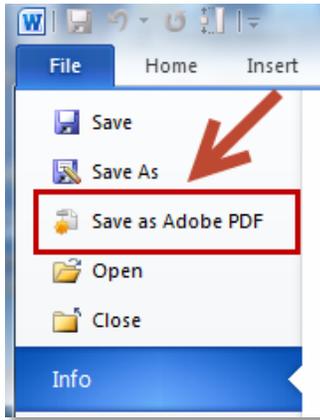


Adobe PDF Maker Add-In for MS Word

When Adobe Acrobat Professional is installed, the Adobe PDF Maker Add-In for MS Word also provides the capability to save the accessible Word Doc as an accessible PDF. The PDF will include **Bookmarks** for navigation and structure while also retaining other accessibility features

including formatted lists and alternative text descriptions. The Adobe PDF Maker will also add tags to the exported PDF which will enhance functionality for screen reader accessibility. (The options described above also add tags for document accessibility).

From the File tab, select, Save as Adobe PDF.



Screenshot showing PDF exported from Word doc with visible bookmarks created from Headings.

