

Creating Accessible Documents

Demo Document

This is a test document to illustrate inaccessible concepts in Microsoft Word.

Headings

Headings are essential for the structure of the document and for ease of navigation using a screen reader. They are assigned using styles. Heading must be used in a hierarchical manner. Unlike in HTML, multiple Heading 1's can be used in a PDF.

Paragraph Spacing

Indentations and paragraph spacing should be used in a Word document for structure.

This prevents the screen reader from reading blank spaces and lines and avoids the need, upon conversion to PDF, to artifact those elements.

Lists

A correctly formatted list makes it easier for a screen reader user to understand the context within which the list is presented. Both bulleted and numbered lists, when created using the appropriate method in Word, will convert cleanly to well-tagged lists in a PDF.

If you see a group of items that should be a list, and you can't fix the list in Word, you can still fix the tags, such as with the list of fruits below.

Apples

Oranges

Lemons

Bananas

Simple Tables

Tables present unique challenges for screen reader users.

An appropriate way to create a simple table is shown below, except it doesn't have the necessary "Row Headers" marked to make it accessible.

Class Name	Professor	Day(s) of the Week
Microbiology	Dr. Martens	TR
Calculus	Dr. Burke	MWF

Some tables are created by simply tabbing to create a table, as shown below. This will not allow screen reader users to understand the text is in a table. If you want a challenge, try to tag this from scratch!

Class Name	Professor	Day(s) of the Week
Microbiology	Dr. Martens	TR
Calculus	Dr. Burke	MWF

Complex Tables

When creating a table in Word note that although column and row headers can be identified, the scope for the relative header cells will need to be set. Below is a sample table that has both column and row headers, as well as merged headers.

Sales Results for 2015

Salesperson	1 st Quarter 2015			2 nd Quarter 2015			3 rd Quarter 2015			4 th Quarter 2015			Annual Total
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
Susan	135	250	235	200	250	235	245	175	225	250	175	125	2500
Bill	175	275	250	225	235	210	200	150	200	275	250	175	2620
Jeff	100	150	175	200	225	250	200	175	200	250	200	150	2275

Images

Information conveyed in images needs to be conveyed in text as well. This can be done either through alt text or by using captions. When using captions, the author may want to artifact the image (set as background) if the document is made into a PDF so that the screen reader isn't reading duplicate information.



Images that don't add any meaning to the document or are purely for decoration should be marked as artifacts/background in PDF.

