



MS Word Accessibility Reference Guide for Web

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September 2022

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Document Properties

Document Title

Unfortunately, there is not a way to add a Document Title in the Web version of MS Word. We recommend opening your document in one of the desktop versions (Windows or macOS) to finalize your document.

File Name

1. Select the **File Name** dropdown menu in the top window bar.
2. Enter a file name in the **File Name** field.

Language

1. Right-click anywhere on the document.
2. Select **Set Proofing Language**.
3. Select **Current document**.
4. **Select a language** from the list of available languages.
5. Select **OK**.

Fonts

Choosing Fonts Carefully

- Avoid overly stylized or scripted fonts to decrease cognitive load.
- Try to choose a font that has distinct letterforms, particularly between these:
 - B, 8
 - C, O, 0
 - c, o, e
 - l, L, 1, i, l

Suggested Fonts

System fonts

- Tahoma
- Calibri
- Helvetica
- Arial
- Verdana
- Times New Roman

Open-source fonts

- Source Sans Pro
- Museo Slab
- Rockwell
- Merriweather
- Public Sans
- Roboto

Using Styles

Create a New Style

1. Select the text you want to turn into a new Style.
2. Use the **Font** and **Paragraph** sections of the **Home Ribbon** to customize the text to look the way you want.
3. In the **Styles** dropdown, select **Create New Style from Formatting**.
4. Give the new Style a name.
5. Select **OK**.
6. The new Style now appears in the **Styles** dropdown.

Modify a Style: Basic

We recommend modifying the **Normal** style first since many other styles are based off it by default.

1. Select the text you want to apply the updated Style to.
2. Use the **Font** and **Paragraph** sections of the **Home Ribbon** to customize the text to look the way you want the Style to look.
3. In the **Styles** dropdown, right-click the Style you want to update.
4. Select **Update [Style Name] to match selection**.

Modify a Style: Advanced

The Web version of MS Word does not have advanced capabilities to modify Styles. We recommend opening your document in one of the desktop versions (Windows or macOS) if you need to do any advanced Styles modifications.

Apply a Style to Text and Headings

1. Select the text you want to apply the Style to.
2. Select the Style you want to apply from the **Styles** dropdown.

Once you have selected your text, you can also apply the most commonly used Styles using the following keyboard shortcuts:

1. Apply the Heading 1 style: **Ctrl + Alt + 1**
2. Apply the Heading 2 style: **Ctrl + Alt + 2**
3. Apply the Heading 3 style: **Ctrl + Alt + 3**

Color Contrast

Using the Colour Contrast Analyser (CCA)

1. Open **CCA** on your PC.
2. Select the **eyedropper tool** to choose your foreground and background colors.
3. Ensure a **4.5:1 contrast ratio** is met for **text** and a **3:1 contrast ratio** is met for **non-text elements**.
 - a. If contrast ratio is not met:
 - i. Expand the color sliders.
 - ii. Select **Synchronize colour values**.
 - iii. Move sliders to find colors that meet contrast requirements.
4. Copy the **HEX code** for pasting into Word later.

Applying Custom Colors from Colour Contrast Analyser

1. On the **Home** tab, select the **Font Color** dropdown.
2. Select **More Colors**.
3. Enter the Hex code from the CCA in the **HEX** field.

You can see your custom colors in the **Recent Colors** area of the Font Color dropdown, making them easy to apply to other Styles. Follow the **Modify a Style: Basic** instructions above to apply a custom color to a Style.

Lists

1. Select text to become a list.
2. Use the built-in **Bulleted List** and **Numbered List** buttons instead of manually formatting a list with spaces or tabs. **Multilevel List** options are available within the Bulleted and Numbered List menus.
 - a. Use a **Bulleted List** if the order of the items on the list does not matter. For example, a list of ingredients in a recipe.
 - b. Use a **Numbered List** or **Multilevel List** if the order of the items on the list matters. For example, the steps describing how to cook a recipe.

Tables

Insert a Table

1. Navigate to the **Insert** tab.
2. Select the **Table** button.
3. Choose the size of your table.

Set Table Header Options

1. Navigate to the **Table** tab.
2. Select the **Style Options** dropdown.
3. Select **Header Row**.
 - a. If your table uses the first column as a Table Header, also select **First Column**.

Set Table Style

1. Navigate to the **Table** tab.
2. Open the **Table Styles** dropdown.
3. Select a **Table Style** that has enough color contrast or adjust the colors to be accessible.

Set Properties

The **Allow row to break across pages** and **Repeat as header row at the top of each page** options are not available in the Web version of MS Word. We recommend opening your document in one of the desktop versions (Windows or macOS) to set these options.

1. Right-click the Table Header and select **Table Properties**.
2. Select the **Row** tab.
3. Uncheck the **Allow row to break across pages** checkbox.
4. Check the **Repeat as header row at the top of each page** checkbox.

Hyperlinks

Remember, hyperlinks should always:

- Be descriptive.
- Be underlined.
- Have enough color contrast (4.5:1) for the visited and unvisited states of the link.

Add Hyperlink with Descriptive Link Text

1. Select text in a paragraph that you want to be the descriptive text for a link.
2. Right-click on the selected text.
3. Choose **Link**, then **Link** again.
4. Enter the URL for the link into the **Enter Link** field.
5. You can edit the descriptive text for the link in the **Display Text** field.

6. Click **OK**.

Adjust the Hyperlink Styles

It is not possible to edit the Hyperlink Style in the Web version of MS Word. We recommend opening your document in one of the desktop versions (Windows or macOS) if you need to edit hyperlink styles.

1. In the **Styles Pane**, change the displayed list to **All Styles**.
2. Modify the **Hyperlink** (unvisited links) and **FollowedHyperlink** (visited links) to have 4.5:1 to color contrast or higher.

Images

Add Image

1. Navigate to the **Insert** tab.
2. Select the **Picture** dropdown.
3. Choose an option based on the image's location.
4. Find and select the image you want to insert.
5. Select **Open** or **Insert**.

Set Image to Be in the Proper Reading Order (In Line)

1. Either **Right-click** the image, or select the image and navigate to the **Picture** tab.
2. Select **Wrap Text**.
3. Select **In Line with Text**.

Add Alt Text

1. Select the image.
2. Navigate to the **Picture** tab.
3. Select **Alt Text**.
4. Add appropriate Alt Text in the **Description** field in the **Alt Text Pane**.
 - a. **Do not** enter anything in the **Title** field.

It is not possible to mark an image as decorative in the Web version of MS Word. We recommend opening your document in one of the desktop versions (Windows or macOS) to mark decorative images.

Avoid Using Color Alone

Avoid using color as the only way to convey information in your document. Use color and at least one other way.

See [Charts](#) below for more information on how to avoid using color alone in charts.

Charts

It is not possible to insert or edit charts and/or graphs in the Web version of MS Word. We recommend opening your document in one of the desktop versions (Windows or macOS), then following the instructions below to insert or edit charts and/or graphs.

Insert a Chart

1. Navigate to the **Insert** tab.
2. Click the **Chart** button.
3. Select the type of chart to insert.
 - a. **Note:** A mini-spreadsheet window will pop up, and you should enter your chart data in the appropriate fields.

Add Symbols

1. Select the chart.
2. Navigate to the **Chart Design** tab.
3. Select the **Chart Styles** dropdown.
4. Choose **Style 11** to add symbols to the chart.
 - a. **Note:** You can see what each Chart Style is called by mousing over the styles.

Edit Symbols

1. Right-click a specific symbol on the chart or graph.
2. Select **Format Data Series**.
3. Select the **Fill & Line** paint bucket icon.
4. Select the **Marker** tab.
5. Edit the marker options. You can change the symbol, color, border, etc.
 - a. **Note:** Ensure all elements have enough color contrast.
6. Repeat for each data series but choose a different **Type** (Symbol) for each series.

Add a Data Table to Chart

1. Select the chart.
2. Navigate to the **Chart Design** tab.
3. Select the **Quick Layout** dropdown.
4. Choose **Layout 5** to add a data table below the chart.
 - a. **Note:** You can see what each Quick Layout Style is called by mousing over the styles. This is unfortunately not available via keyboard.

Add Data Labels

1. Select the chart.
2. Click the **+ Chart Elements** button from the quick action pane.
3. Check the **Data Labels** checkbox.

Edit Data Labels

1. Select a data label.
2. Use the **Font** section of the **Home** tab to manually edit the font to be accessible and match the document.
 - a. **Note:** Unfortunately, you cannot create a Style for this.
3. Move individual data labels by dragging them to be more visible. You can also use the arrow keys to move them around.
 - a. **Note:** Try to avoid overlapping other elements.
4. Repeat for each data label.

Add Patterns

Note: Patterns are only available as an option for certain charts, such as a bar chart.

1. Right-click a data bar.
2. Select **Format Data Series**.
3. Select the **Fill & Line** paint bucket icon, then the **Fill** menu.
4. Select **Pattern Fill**.
5. Select a **Pattern**.
 - a. Choose a Foreground & Background color.
 - b. Ensure there is enough color contrast by using CCA.
6. Repeat for each data series but choose a different pattern for each series.

Table of Contents (TOC)

We recommend setting the headings in your document before adding the TOC because the TOC uses Heading Styles to automatically determine its structure.

Add Basic TOC

1. Navigate to the **References** tab.
2. Select the **Table of Contents** dropdown.
3. Select **Insert Table of Contents**.

Customize your TOC

The Web version of MS Word does not allow for customization of your TOC. We recommend opening your document in one of the desktop versions (Windows or macOS) if you need to edit your TOC, then follow the instructions below.

If you already have a TOC in your document, you can just put your cursor in the TOC and follow these steps. You can also add a **Custom Table of Contents** from the start using these same steps.

1. Navigate to the **References** tab.
2. Select the **Table of Contents** dropdown.
3. Select **Custom Table of Contents**.
4. Modify your desired TOC settings, then click **OK**.
 - a. **Note:** This is a perfect time to ensure the “Use hyperlinks instead of page numbers” checkbox is checked which is found just below the Web Preview pane.

Edit Which Heading Levels Appear in Your TOC

The Web version of MS Word does not allow for customization of your TOC. We recommend opening your document in one of the desktop versions (Windows or macOS) if you need to edit your TOC, then follow the instructions below.

In the **Custom Table of Contents** menu:

1. Click the **Options** button to edit precisely which Heading Levels should appear in your TOC.
 - a. **Note:** Ensure the **Styles** and **Outline levels** checkboxes are checked.
2. You can map different Heading Levels to different TOC Styles by finding the Heading Style in the list, then adding, changing, or removing the number in the **TOC Level** field.

- a. **Note: If you followed the guideline to use only a single Heading Level 1 in your document**, be sure to delete the number "1" in the **TOC Level** for Heading 1 to remove it from your TOC.

Modify Specific TOC Styles

The Web version of MS Word does not allow for customization of your TOC. We recommend opening your document in one of the desktop versions (Windows or macOS) if you need to edit your TOC, then follow the instructions below.

TOC Styles automatically map to the corresponding Heading Level. For example, TOC 1 = Heading Level 1, TOC 2 = Heading Level 2, and so on. Modifying specific TOC Styles allows you to make your TOC look how you want without messing up the actual heading levels in the rest of your document.

To do this, first open the **Custom Table of Contents options** menu, and then:

1. Click the **Modify** button to edit specific **TOC Styles**.
2. Select the **TOC Style** you want to edit.
3. Click the **Modify** button to open the same **Modify Style** window that you used to set your **Styles** before.

Manually setting TOC Styles with the Styles Pane

The Web version of MS Word does not allow for customization of your TOC. We recommend opening your document in one of the desktop versions (Windows or macOS) if you need to edit your TOC, then follow the instructions below.

If you would prefer to set your TOC Style using the **Styles Pane**, simply:

1. Select the text in the TOC that you want to work with.
2. Then select the **TOC Style** you wish to apply from the **Styles Pane**.

Updating your TOC after making changes in your document

Even though we recommend adding the TOC as the last step in preparing your accessible MS Word document, there is always the possibility that you will need to make changes later that might affect the TOC.

If you change any headings in your document or if any page numbers change after the TOC is created:

1. Click the TOC to select it, then click **Update**.