

Create an Accessible Word Document

Basics

- Use a readable **sans serif font**.
- Use a minimum of **11pt or 12pt font** for normal text structure.
- Use larger **18pt if large print** is requested.
- Ensure **color contrast**.
- Ensure **adequate spacing** between lines and double space paragraphs.
- Use **plain backgrounds** for text.
- Save as a Word Document (.docx) with a **descriptive filename**.
- Make sure **titles and headings are larger** than the text
- Use a combination of upper and lower case, **avoiding all caps**.
- Left align** text, titles and headings whenever possible.
- Create **page numbers** in the same font and size in outer corner of page.

Document Structure

- Use **built-in styles** to create headings and place them in a logical order.
- Check headings** in Navigation Pane - match outline & order of document
- Use **built-in tools** for lists, columns and tables. Images, color, etc.
- Use **alt text** for images and other objects: briefly describe
 - If the object is an image of text, it must match the text verbatim
 - If object is a decorative (e.g. a border), use a space or “double-quote, space, double-quote” as the alt text. Screen reader will then ignore.
- Add text to ensure that **color is not the only way to convey meaning**. This could be an asterisk or letter indicator in parenthesis but be sure to add a note that explains the marking.
- Pictures must be **in line** with text. Only way for Screen readers to read
- Create **accessible embedded files**.
 - include a transcript with audio only files
 - include a text description to video only files
 - add captions and audio description to your multimedia files
- Avoid using flashing** objects.

- ❑ **Isolate graphs, charts and pictures** on individual pages with explanatory captions. Horizontal and vertical lines between rows and columns will help tracking in tables with multiple columns.

Considerations for special text

- ❑ Add **meaningful hyperlink text** and screen tips.
 - avoid “click here” or “more”. Use clear and accurate information about the destination (e.g. Click here to learn more).
- ❑ Create accessible text boxes by having them **in line** with text. Screen readers can only read information that is in line.
- ❑ Duplicate any vital information included in **headers, footers, and watermarks** as screen readers do not automatically read this information.

Fillable Forms

- ❑ If creating a fillable form, use the **Legacy Form tool** to create accessible fillable form fields (located in developer tab).
 - Select form field you want to add. After you add it, right click and select “properties”. In the dialogue, change the ‘Bookmark’ text to match the print in the document.
 - Click “add help text” and type what you would like the person using a screen reader to hear such as directions for filling out the section.
 - In drop down boxes, have the first item in the box describe what information is needed
 - When you finish adding form fields, press “protect document” option and “start protection now”
 - Include section breaks (continuous section break) before and after form controls to allow the screen reader to access all form controls as it will allow you to protect only those sections containing form fields and leave other text unprotected.
 - If the document includes additional text, create sections and protect only those sections containing form fields.

Final Step

- ❑ When finished, run accessibility checker in Review tab. Fix any warnings.