# Building Accessible Word Documents

## Visual Accommodations

* Font
  + Sans serif fonts
    - Arial
    - Calibri
    - Candara
    - Corbel
    - Tahoma
    - Verdana
  + At least 12-point font for main text; 18-point font for large print main text
  + Emphasis of text (instead of or in addition to color)
    - Asterisks
    - Dashes
    - Quotes
    - Underlining
* Contrast
  + Plain background (colors for black text)
    - Off white
    - Cream
    - Ivory
    - Yellow
    - Pink
  + High visual color contrast between background and text
  + Check your contrast with the free [Colour Contrast Analyzer](https://www.tpgi.com/color-contrast-checker/)
* Spacing (Home tab; paragraph group; indents and spacing tab)
  + Avoid using blank spaces or lines to create formatting or white space. Use document formatting such as
    - Indentations
    - Line spacing
    - Styles
    - Page breaks
    - Check by using WYSIWYG (paragraph symbol)
  + Leave ample white space as this creates luminance around the text
  + Indent 1 inch at margins
  + Space 1.5 between lines (recommended for LP)
  + Double space (30-34 pt) between paragraphs or other bodies of text
  + Use block paragraph style, no indents, aligned left
  + Avoid floating objects by using text wrapping “top and bottom” or “in line with text.”
* Page numbers
  + Same font style and size as document text
  + Top right corner is preferred; if possible, add to bottom center as well
  + Book format: upper or lower outer corner of each page
  + Margin of .075 inches
  + For longer documents provide a table of contents
    - Place cursor where you want the table of contents
    - References>Table of Contents>Automatic Table of Contents
    - Note how your headings build your table of contents

## Headings

* Heading structure creates organization for a screen reader
  + Use prescribed logical order (Heading 1, Heading 2, Heading 3; Major, Section, Subsection; etc.)
  + Organize information into small chunks; ideally each heading would include only a few paragraphs
  + The title of the page should be Heading 1
  + Don’t over use headings. Most documents use heading 1 and 2, occasionally 3 and rarely 4, 5, or 6.
* Heading Suggestions
  + Modify the Styles so each type of heading is visibly different (example below)
  + Large Print Recommendations
    - Heading Level 1: 22-point font, center, bold, upper and lower case letters
    - Heading Level 2: 20-point font, aligned left, bold, upper and lower case letters
    - Heading Level 3: 20-point font, aligned left, bold, underlined, upper and lower case letters
    - Normal: at least 12-point font (18-point for large print), aligned left, upper and lower case letters
* Assigning styles
  + Type the text you want into a Word document
  + Select a sentence you want to add a header to
  + Select Home>styles (alt+H, then L), then select the heading you want
* Modify existing styles
  + On the Home tab, right-click any style in the Styles gallery and click Modify
  + In the Formatting section, make any formatting changes you want, such as font style, size, color, alignment, line spacing, or indentation.
  + Choose whether the style change applies to the current document or to all future documents.
* Create your own styles
  + Right-click the text on which you want to base the new style
  + In the mini toolbar that appears, click Styles, and then click Create a Style
  + In the Create New Style from Formatting dialog box, give your style a name and click OK
  + If you want your new style to appear in all new Word documents, right-click it in the Styles gallery, click Modify, and then select New documents based on this template at the bottom of the dialog box.
* Permanently Change Styles
  + Change default font: Design tab, Fonts, Customize Fonts which takes you to Create New Themes Fonts
    - Select Heading font
    - Select Body font
    - Name this Theme
  + Change default Size: Home tab, control+D
    - Select size
    - Click Set as Default
    - Choose “For all future documents”

## Document Structure

* LISTS
  + Use the built-in List tools
  + Lists are used to break-up and simplify content
  + Screen readers cannot infer meaning from just formatting (Tab and use a dash)
* COLUMNS
  + If you want columns, use the Columns feature
  + Columns are used to break-up and simplify content
  + Screen readers need the structure to read in correct order (don’t use tabs and spaces)
* HEADERS, FOOTERS AND WATERMARKS
  + Screen readers do not automatically read these items
  + If the information is important (Confidential, do not distribute, respond by X date), duplicate it at or near the start of the main content area
* TABLES
  + Create or insert tables; do not make the table an image!
  + Keep data tables simple (only one row of columns and no merged or split cells)
  + Identify the header row
  + Leave no cell blank
  + Place data tables in-line so that AT can access the content
  + Complex data tables in MS Word are not accessible; convert the document to Excel or PDF for accessibility
  + Keep tables to no more than one page

## Hyperlinks

* Links should convey clear and accurate information about the destination.
* Use meaningful text such as “click here to take the survey” or “more about APH” instead of just making the text say “click here” or “more” be the hyperlink

## Alternate Text

* Briefly describe the image and mention the existence of the text and its intent. Include the most important information in the first line, and be as concise as possible
* If it is an image of text, the alt-text must match the text verbatim
* If the object is a decorative image such as a border, mark as decorative if you are in a new system, otherwise, state “decorative item”
* Use the description field and leave the title blank
* SmartArt graphics need alt text!
* For audio and video content, in addition to alt text, include close captioning for people who are deaf or have limited hearing.

## Language

* Documents can contain sections written in different languages.
* Identifying distinct languages creates a structure for it to be read correctly.
* Technical terms or foreign words that are common use may bypass the rule.
* Setting the correct language
  + Select the text written in a different language
  + Go to Review>Language>Set proofing Language.
  + Select the appropriate language from the pick list.

## Accessibility Check

* Navigation Pane to check for headings
  + Control+F
  + View>navigation pane
* Properties
  + Title of document for conversion to PDF
  + Tags for search engines and screen readers
* Built-in Check
  + File>Info>Check for Issues>Check Accessibility
  + Review tab>Check Accessibility

## Exportation to PDF

* File>Save As>PDF
* Select Options and be sure that “Document structure tags for accessibility” is checked.
* If you select “minimize size” to reduce the size of the PDF, be sure to repeat the preceding step.
* Office 2007 and 2003 require a plug-in to do this.
* If you use a Mac
  + File>Save As>PDF
  + Select “Best for electronic distribution and accessibility”
  + Only available in Office 2016 and later

## Websites

* [APH Accessibility Hub Checklist for Word Documents](https://aphaccessibility.com/checklist-for-ms-word-docs-home/)
* [WebAIM Creating Accessible Documents](https://webaim.org/techniques/word/)
* [US Department of Health and Human Services Creating an Accessible Word Document](https://www.hhs.gov/web/section-508/making-files-accessible/create-accessible-pdfs/step-2/index.html)
* [Michigan Tech Accessible Technology Creating Accessible Word Documents](https://www.mtu.edu/accessibility/training/documents/microsoft-word/)
* [Washington State Board for Community & Technical Colleges Creating Accessible Word Documents](https://sbctc.instructure.com/courses/1578604/pages/creating-accessible-word-documents)
* [wikiHow How to Create Accessible Word Documents](https://www.wikihow.com/Create-Accessible-Word-Documents)
* [Washington State University Creating an Accessible Microsoft Word Document](https://web.wsu.edu/creating-an-accessible-microsoft-word-document/)
* [Microsoft Support Make your Word document accessible to people with disabilities](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/topic/make-your-word-documents-accessible-to-people-with-disabilities-d9bf3683-87ac-47ea-b91a-78dcacb3c66d)
* [University of Washington Creating Accessible Documents in Microsoft Word](https://www.washington.edu/accessibility/documents/word/)
* [Accessibility Cheat Sheets by the National Center on Disability and Access to Education](https://ncdae.org/resources/cheatsheets/)
* [University of Minnesota Accessible U, Documents and PDFs](https://accessibility.umn.edu/what-you-can-do/create-accessible-content/documents-pdfs#scannable)
* [Resetting Default Heading and Body Fonts in Word](https://www.attorneyatwork.com/resetting-default-heading-body-fonts-in-word/)
* [Permanently Modifying Word’s Heading Styles](https://www.attorneyatwork.com/permanently-modifying-words-heading-styles/)
* [Understanding Styles in Microsoft Word](http://www.addbalance.com/usersguide/styles.htm)