



# PDF Accessibility Guide

Microsoft Word to PDF

Version: 1

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## Introduction

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This guide is intended to help SCCCD staff use Microsoft Word to create accessible PDF documents for the web. The information presented in this document was taken from the WebAim website and the content has been condensed and rearranged for an easier to follow procedure. If you would like more detailed information, you can access the WebAim page by using the following link: [WebAim Website - Creating Accessible Documents](#)

The steps in this procedure were put together using Word 2013 on Windows. If you have a different version of Word, you can locate the appropriate instructions on the WebAim website by using the link provided above. In the Article Contents you will find links to various versions of Word for Windows and Mac.

## Best Practices

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- Use simple language
- Ensure that font size is sufficiently large – minimum of 11 points
- Provide sufficient contrast between text colors and background colors
- Do not use color as the only way to convey content
- Do not use watermarks as they can impact readability and create low contrast
- Provide a table of contents for long documents
- Do not underline text that is not a link

## Heading Structure

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This is probably the most important consideration as pages should be structured in the following manner:

- **Heading 1** – usually a page title or a main content heading. This is the most important heading and there generally should only be one.
- **Heading 2** – major section heading
- **Heading 3** – sub-section of the Heading 2
- **Heading 4** – sub-section of the Heading 3
- **Heading 5** – sub-section of the Heading 4
- **Heading 6** – sub-section of the Heading 5



**Never skip heading levels such as Heading 4 directly below Heading 2. This confuses some screen readers making information unavailable to the blind.**

The following outline shows an example of proper heading hierarchy:

Heading 1

    Heading 2

Heading 3

Heading 2

Heading 3

## How to Set Headings in Word

Properly set up your headings by following this procedure:

1. Type in the text that you want to use as a heading on a separate line and then highlight the text with your mouse.
2. Switch to the “HOME” ribbon tab located at the top of the Word document:

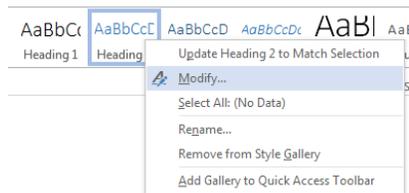


3. Select the proper heading from the toolbar:



## How to Change Heading Styles

The quickest way to change heading styles is to right click on the heading you want to change and then click on Modify from the context menu as shown:



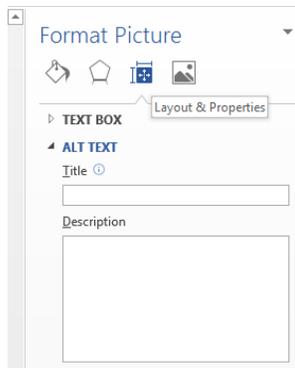
The “Modify Styles” dialog will display allowing you to change font style, color, positioning, etc.

## Images

Images must contain alternative text as a non-visual means of representing the content or function of the image. All images must contain alternative text so that screen reader software can read it.

Follow the procedure below to add alternative text to images:

1. Right click on the image and select “Format Picture”.
2. On the right hand side of the window, select the “Layout & Properties” icon as shown below:



3. Type in an “ALT TEXT Title” and “ALT TEXT Description”.

## Best Practices for Alternative Text

Alternative text should be:

- Accurate and equivalent – present the same content or function of the image
- Succinct – no more than a few words are necessary; rarely a short sentence or two may be appropriate
- Do not be redundant – do not provide information that is in the surrounding text
- Do not use descriptive phrases – screen reading software identifies images, so **do not** use phrases such as “image of ...” or “graphic of ...”

## Data Tables

The purpose of data tables is to present information in a grid, or matrix, and to have columns or rows that show the meaning of the information of the grid.

Class	Class Start Date	Class Time	Class Days
English	8/7/2017	8:00 am to 11:00 am	Mon, Wed
History	8/1/2017	9:00 am to 12:00 pm	Tue, Thu
Math	8/7/2017	1:00 pm to 3:00 pm	Mon, Wed, Fri



**Never use data tables to format the layout of your documents. Learn to properly layout your documents using proper techniques as described within this document.**

## Adding Table Properties

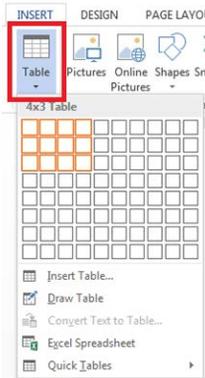
The first row in a table shall be used as a header row to describe a columns data. Header rows are also important if the table spans more than one page. Follow the procedure below to create a table that is accessible:

1. Switch to the “INSERT” ribbon tab located at the top of the Word document:

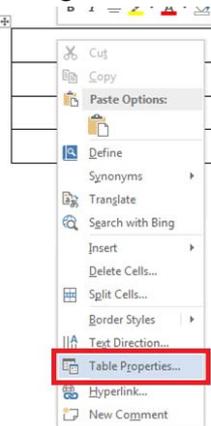


2. Single click on the “Table” button and to select the number of columns and rows from the context drop-down by moving mouse to the right over squares and then left single click to apply.

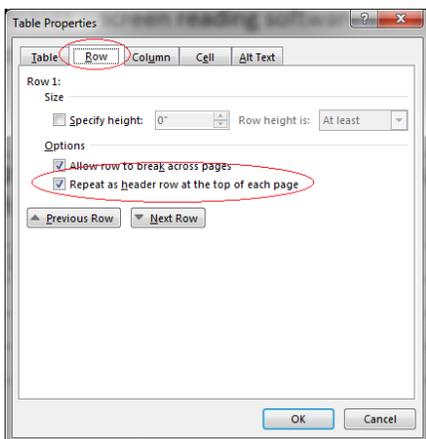
The number of squares highlighted in orange are how many table cells will be added to the table:



3. Type in a title for each column of the first table row that describes the columns data.
4. To repeat the first row when a table spans more than one page, select the first row of the table and right mouse click and then select "Table Properties" from the context menu:



5. Select the "Row" tab and check the option box "Repeat as header row at the top of each page" as shown and then click on the "OK" button:



## Links

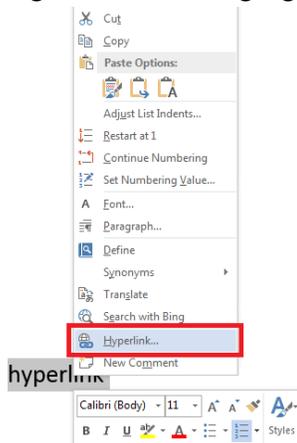
Hyperlinks in Word documents allow users to visit web pages, navigate to work headings and bookmarks, and open email links.



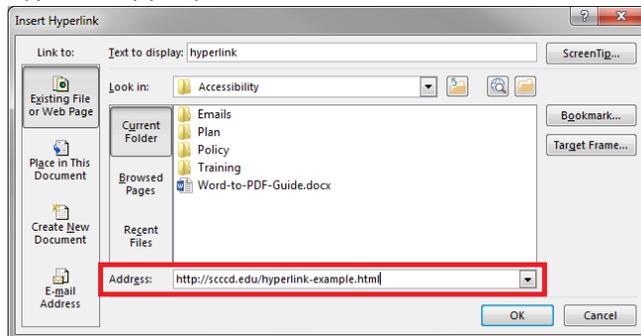
Screen reader users may skim a document by navigating from link to link. Avoid ambiguous link text that is difficult to understand out of context (e.g., “Click here”, “Read more”).

## Creating links in Word

1. Type in the text that you want to use as a link on a separate line and then highlight the text with your mouse. Make sure that the displayed text for the link follows [best practices](#).
2. Right click on the highlighted text and select “Hyperlink” from the context menu:



3. Type or copy & past in the address:



4. Click on the “OK” button.

## Best Practices for links

- Use descriptive link text that does not rely on context from the surrounding text
  - Examples of bad link text: “click here”, “more”, “continue”
  - Examples of good versus bad link descriptions (the hyperlink in the sentence is the text that is underlined):
    - Bad: All new applicants please complete the online admissions application by clicking here.
    - Good: All new applicants please complete the online admissions application.
- Keep the amount of text in the link to a minimum
- Use underlined text with a color that stands out from the surrounding text

## Lists and Columns

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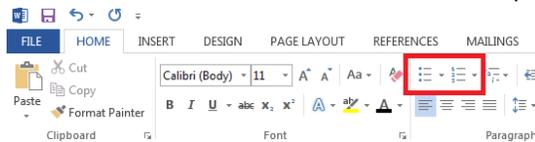
Lists and columns add important hierarchical structure to a document. Sometimes users create lists and columns manually by pressing the “Tab” key to indent content. While this provides visual structure for sighted users, it does not provide the document structure needed for assistive technology users.

### Creating Lists

1. Switch to the “HOME” ribbon tab located at the top of the Word document:



2. Choose the bulleted list or numbered list option from the Paragraph group:

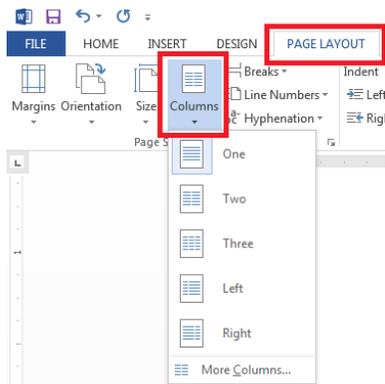


3. Type in your line items one by one pressing on the enter key at the end of each item

### Creating Columns

The procedure below will affect the entire document unless you highlight a section of text first:

1. Switch to the “PAGE LAYOUT” ribbon tab located at the top of the Word document and then select “Columns”:



2. Choose the number of column(s)

## Accessibility Checker

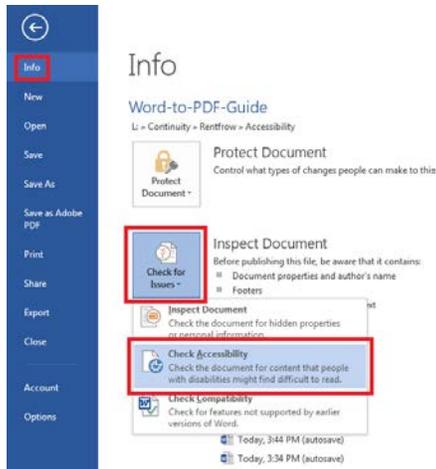
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Word provides an Accessibility Checker for identifying and repairing accessibility issues. The checker’s inspection results classifies accessibility issues into categories: Errors, Warnings, and Tips.

- Errors: difficult or impossible for people with disabilities to access
- Warnings: content that is most – but not all – cases difficult for people with disabilities to access
- Tips: content that people with disabilities can access, but that might be better organized or presented

### Using the Accessibility Checker

1. Select File > Info > Check for Issues > Check Accessibility:



2. Review the errors and make corrections using the on screen recommendations.

## Convert to PDF

Accessibility support for PDF files is better than Word documents. Consider adding additional accessibility using Acrobat Professional if you have a licensed copy of the software.

There are a couple different ways to convert a Word document to PDF. The recommended way is to use an Adobe Acrobat add-in, or you can use Word to save the document as a PDF file. You will know if you have the Adobe Acrobat Add-in as you will see a ribbon tab labeled "ACROBAT" in Word.



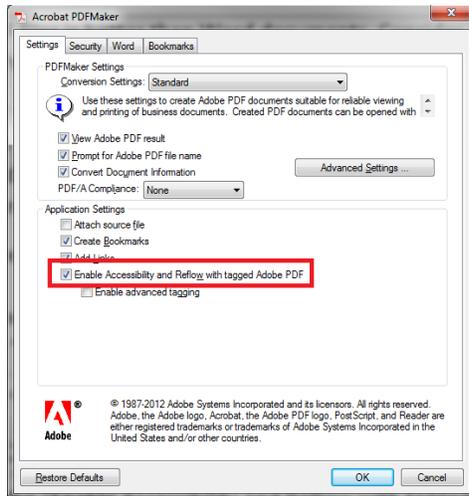
**Be sure to follow the procedure under "Using the Accessibility Checker" before saving your document to PDF format.**

## Saving to PDF Using Adobe Add-in

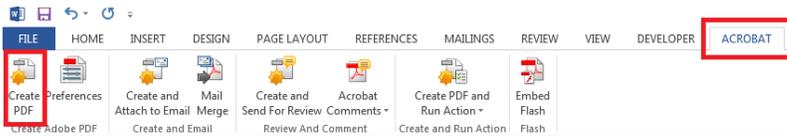
1. Check that the proper application settings are enabled in Word. You will only need to perform this step once.
  - a. Switch to the "ACROBAT" ribbon tab located at the top of the Word document and then click on the "Preferences" button:



- b. Check that the "Enable Accessibility and Reflow with tagged Adobe PDF" setting is checked in the Acrobat PDFMaker dialog:



- c. Click on the “OK” button to accept the changes.
2. Switch to the “ACROBAT” ribbon tab located at the top of the Word document:

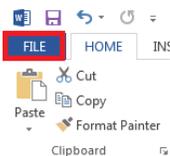


3. Click on the “Create PDF” button and the “Save Adobe PDF File as” dialog displays. Browse to the folder location that you want to save the document and then click on the “Save” button. Your new PDF will be saved and loaded on screen.

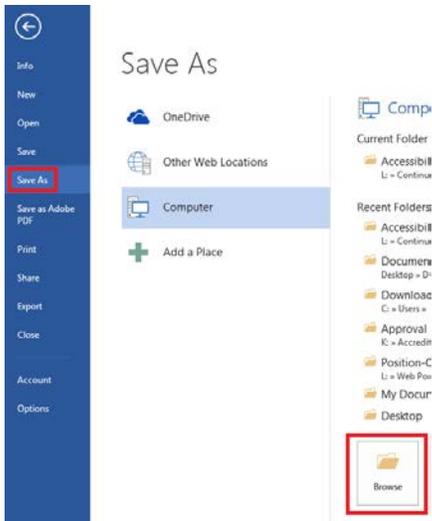
## Saving to PDF with Word

If you do not have Adobe Add-in then you will have to save using the native features of Word. Follow the procedure below to create a PDF:

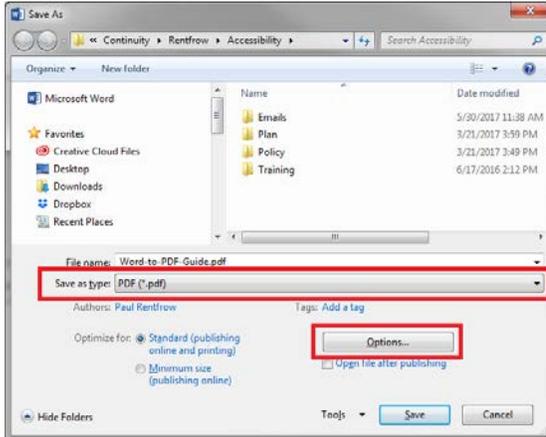
1. Click on “File”:



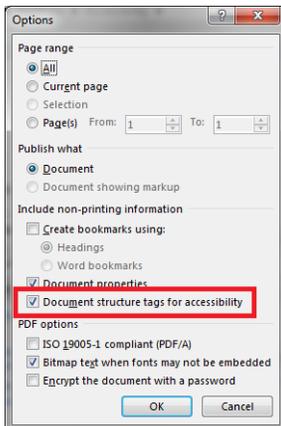
2. Click on “Save As” and then click on the “Browse” button:



3. Browse to the folder location that you want to save the document
4. Select "PDF (\*.pdf)" in the "Save as Type" drop down and then click on the "Options" button:



5. Check that the "Document structure tags for accessibility" option is checked:



6. Click on the "OK" button
7. Click on the "Save" button