



Microsoft Word

Accessibility Quick Card

Follow these best practices to help make documents accessible. For more information on Word document accessibility and training, visit the [MNIT Office of Accessibility website](#).

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Use document styles

Use heading and paragraph styles with logical hierarchy to structure the document. Start with an accessible template.

Use short headings

Keep headings short so readers can quickly navigate the document.

Name hyperlinks appropriately

Links should contain meaningful text that describes the link's destination or subject. Do not use generic language, such as "click here."

Use simple table structure

Avoid using nested tables, merged or split cells, or blank cells for formatting. Table header rows are essential to provide context to table data. Do not put the table title inside the table. If a complex layout is necessary, contact an accessibility expert.

Add alt text to images and objects

Use informative and concise alt text descriptions for important graphics or embedded objects. For example, "Person in wheelchair on ramp" rather than "Smiling woman sitting in a green wheelchair posing on ramp." Use the "Mark as decorative" checkbox as appropriate.



Align images with text

When inserting an image with text wrap, the anchor icon indicates when assistive technology will read the alt text for the image. Do not place it in the middle of a sentence or paragraph.

Check color contrast

Color contrast must meet standards throughout the document. Normal text to background ratio is 4.5:1. Non-text elements and large text (a minimum of 14pt bold or 18pt) ratios are 3:1.

Avoid using repeated blank characters

Extra spaces, tabs and empty paragraphs add confusion to content for assistive technology users. Use built-in formatting tools to adjust the layout. This simplifies design and enhances user experience. This also applies to columns and hard returns for page breaks.

Fill in Document Properties

Enter title, subject, and author in the document's properties.

Use the Accessibility Checker tool

This built-in tool provides details on potential issues and gives suggestions to correct them. However, it can't find everything. Perform manual checks in addition to the automated accessibility checker.

Use Acrobat's Create PDF tool

If the Word document will be converted to a PDF, start with a fully accessible Word document. If Adobe Acrobat Pro is installed, use the Acrobat Tab > Create PDF tool. Never use "Print to PDF." If Acrobat Pro isn't available to use, work with someone who has it.