

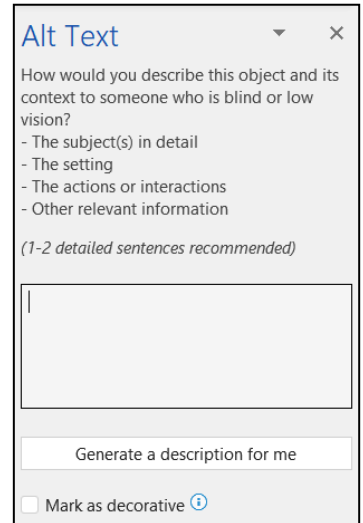
Word A11y – The Basics

The World Wide Web was built to bring people and information together. The constantly evolving nature of the Web and its technologies can present challenges and barriers for people with disabilities. Luckily, there are strategies for ensuring the design, functionality, and content of digital products and services are available and inclusive for all.

Images

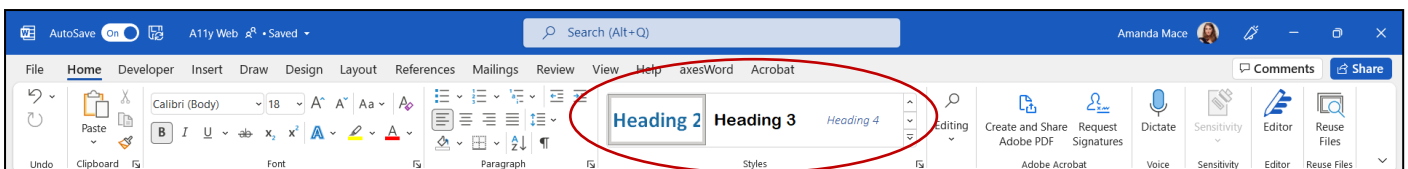
Informative images require descriptive alternative text. For this, Word allows a user to add “alt text” by right clicking on the image, select “Edit Alt Text” and providing an input box to add a description of the image.

Images that are purely decorative can be marked as ‘decorative’. This allows assistive technology users to navigate the content without hearing unnecessary information. Simply check ‘Mark as decorative’ box for this option.



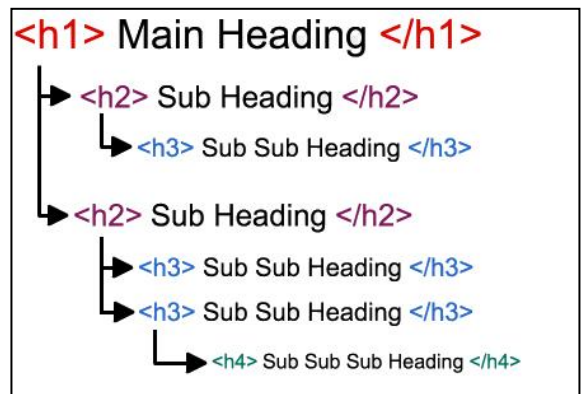
Heading Structure

Headings in a document should be formatted using styles.



Word provides 6 heading structure/tags (H1 – H6) which allow for headings to be programmed hierarchically as shown in the figure below.

- H1 used to define the most important heading. H6 is used to define the least important headings.
- Best practice states that there should be only one H1 per page. This should be the purpose of the page.



Bookmarks

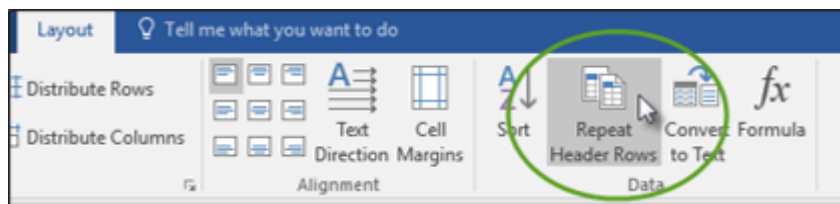
Bookmarks are a way to provide navigation in the final exported PDF. You can allow for this option from the onset for when the Word document is exported with the following steps:

- Choose Save As and select type PDF
- Click Options
- Check 'Create bookmarks using' and 'Headings'

Data Tables

Applying Table Headers ensures screen reader users hear the header row, followed by the data. This gives the data context for the non-sighted.

All data tables should have "Repeat Header Row" selected in the table Layout ribbon. When exported to PDF, the header row identifies as Table Header <TH> cells for that row and Table Data <TD> for the data cells.



It is Best Practice to use tables for data only, and not for layout or display purposes. However, if tables have been used for layout, they should not have <TH> tags/repeated Header Row.

Links

Link text should be clear, concise and descriptive of destination. Editing the "Text to display" for a hyperlink is a method to given meaningful link text.

Colour Contrast and Use of Colour

- Regular text requires a contrast ratio of 4.5:1 for Level AA
- Large text, at least 18pt or 14pt and bold, requires a contrast ratio of 3:1 for Level AA
- If colour alone is used to portray information, such as graphs or to indicate an error state, differ a contrast of at least 3:1 is required.
- Informative icons, borders for input fields, graphical objects all require a contrast of at least 3:1 with the background.

Properties

Even after producing a tagged PDF which has an improved accessibility, a PDF document needs a title. This is because the title helps in identifying the document and without a meaningful document title; some users might not know they have the correct document. To edit the properties such as title, author, company - select File, Info and “Show all properties”

With a great web presence, comes great responsibility! We hope these few tips will help you on your accessibility journey. #UnlockTheWeb

