

Make your Word Documents Accessible

Word has many features built-in that help people with different abilities to read and author documents. Word also offers the Accessibility Checker that locates elements that might cause problems for people with disabilities.

To learn more about how the Accessibility Checker works, see [Use Accessibility Checker rules to help ensure your Office documents, spreadsheets, and presentations are accessible.](#)

Windows: Best practices for making Word documents accessible

The following table includes key best practices for creating Word documents that are accessible to people with disabilities.

What to fix	How to find it	Why fix it	How to fix it
<p>Include alternative text with all visuals and tables.</p> <p>Visual content includes pictures, clip art, SmartArt graphics, shapes, groups, charts, embedded objects, ink, and videos.</p>	To find missing alternative text, use the Accessibility Checker.	<p>Alt text helps people who can't see the screen to understand what's important in images and other visuals.</p> <p>Avoid using text in images as the sole method of conveying important information. If you must use an image with text in it, repeat that text in the document. In alt text, briefly describe the image and mention the existence of the text and its intent.</p>	<p>Add alt text to images</p> <p>Add alt text to SmartArt graphics</p> <p>Add alt text to shapes</p> <p>Add alt text to charts</p> <p>Add alt text to tables</p>
<p>Add meaningful hyperlink text and ScreenTips.</p>	To determine whether hyperlink text makes sense as standalone information and whether it gives readers accurate information about the destination target, visually scan your document.	<p>People who use screen readers sometimes scan a list of links. Links should convey clear and accurate information about the destination. For example, instead of linking to the text Click here, include the full title of the destination page.</p> <p>Tip: You can also add ScreenTips that appear when your cursor hovers over text or images that include a hyperlink.</p>	Add hyperlink text and ScreenTips

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What to fix	How to find it	Why fix it	How to fix it
Ensure that color is not the only means of conveying information.	To find instances of color-coding, visually scan your document.	People who are blind, have low vision, or are colorblind might miss out on the meaning conveyed by particular colors.	Use accessible text format
Use sufficient contrast for text and background colors.	To find insufficient color contrast, look for text in your document that's hard to read or to distinguish from the background.	If your document has a high level of contrast between text and background, more people can see and use the content.	Use accessible text color
Use built-in headings and styles.	To find headings that are not in a logical order, use the Accessibility Checker.	<p>To preserve tab order and to make it easier for screen readers to read your documents, use a logical heading order and the built-in formatting tools in Word.</p> <p>For example, organize headings in the prescribed logical order. Use Heading 1, Heading 2, and then Heading 3, rather than Heading 3, Heading 1, and then Heading 2. And, organize the information in your documents into small chunks. Ideally, each heading would include only a few paragraphs.</p>	<p>Apply built-in heading styles</p> <p>Use bulleted lists</p> <p>Use ordered lists</p>
Use a simple table structure, and specify column header information.	To ensure that tables don't contain split cells, merged cells, nested tables, or completely blank rows or columns, use the Accessibility Checker.	<p>Screen readers keep track of their location in a table by counting table cells. If a table is nested within another table or if a cell is merged or split, the screen reader loses count and can't provide helpful information about the table after that point. Blank cells in a table could also mislead someone using a screen reader into thinking that there is nothing more in the table.</p> <p>Screen readers also use header information to identify rows and columns.</p>	Use table headers

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Add alt text to visuals and tables

The following procedures describe how to add alt text to visuals and tables in your Word documents.

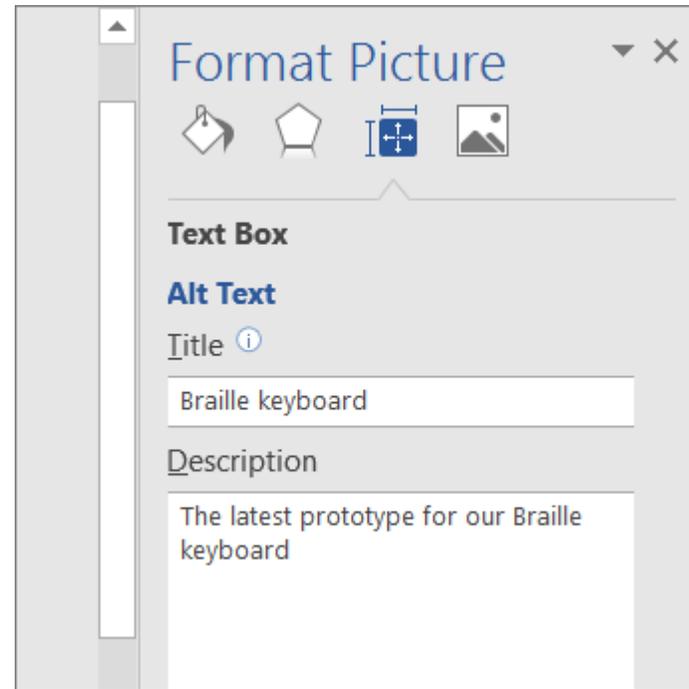
Note: We recommend only putting text in the description field and leaving the title blank. This will provide the best experience with most major screen readers including Narrator. For audio and video content, in addition to alt text, include closed captioning for people who are deaf or have limited hearing.

Add alt text to images

Add alt text to images, such as pictures, clip art, and screenshots, so that screen readers can read the text to describe the image to users who can't see the image.

1. Right-click an image.
2. Select **Format Picture** > **Layout & Properties**.
3. Select **Alt Text**.
4. Type a description and a title.

Tip: Include the most important information in the first line, and be as concise as possible.

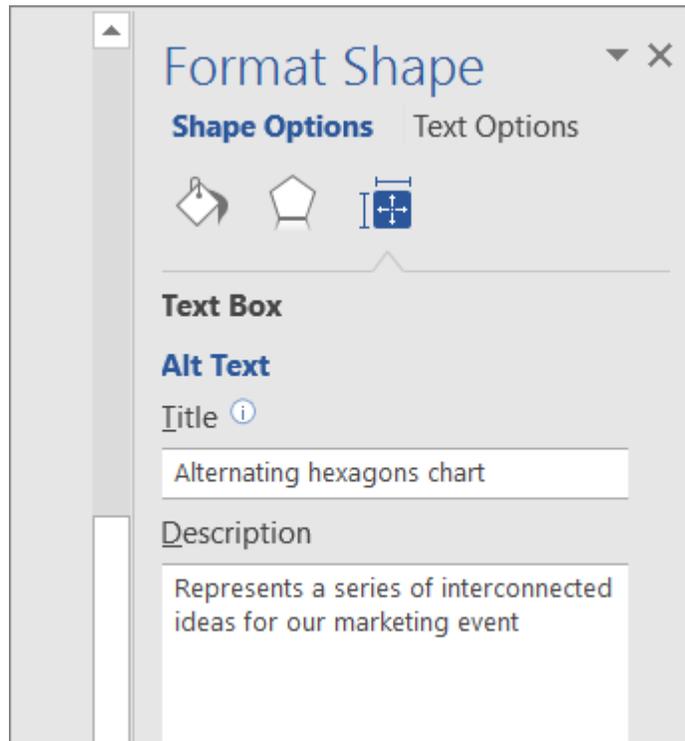


Make your Word Documents Accessible

Add alt text to SmartArt graphics

1. Right-click a SmartArt graphic.
2. Select **Format Object > Shape Options > Layout & Properties**.
3. Select **Alt Text**.
4. Type a description and a title.

Tip: Include the most important information in the first line, and be as concise as possible.

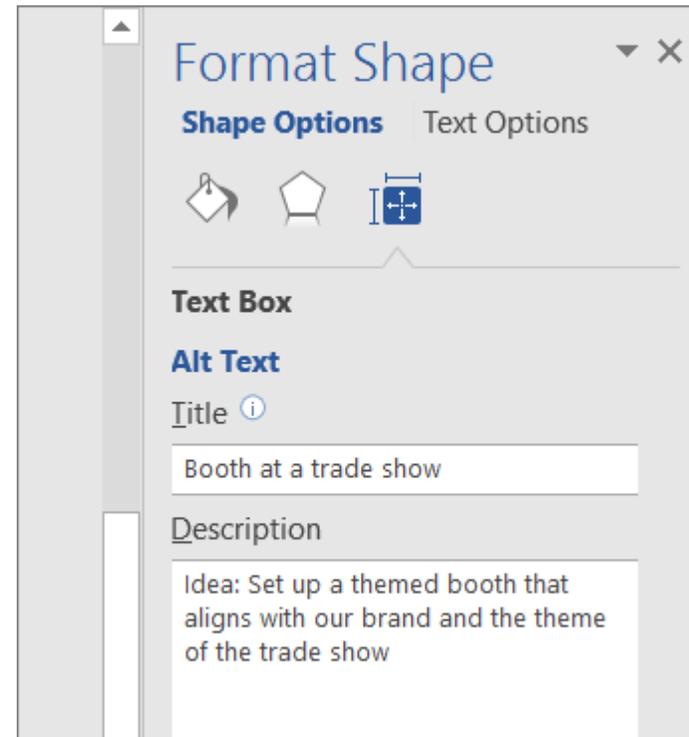


Add alt text to shapes

Add alt text to shapes, including shapes within a SmartArt graphic.

1. Right-click a shape, and then select **Format Shape**.
2. In the right pane, select **Layout & Properties**, and then select **Alt Text**.
3. Type a description and a title.

Tip: Include the most important information in the first line, and be as concise as possible.

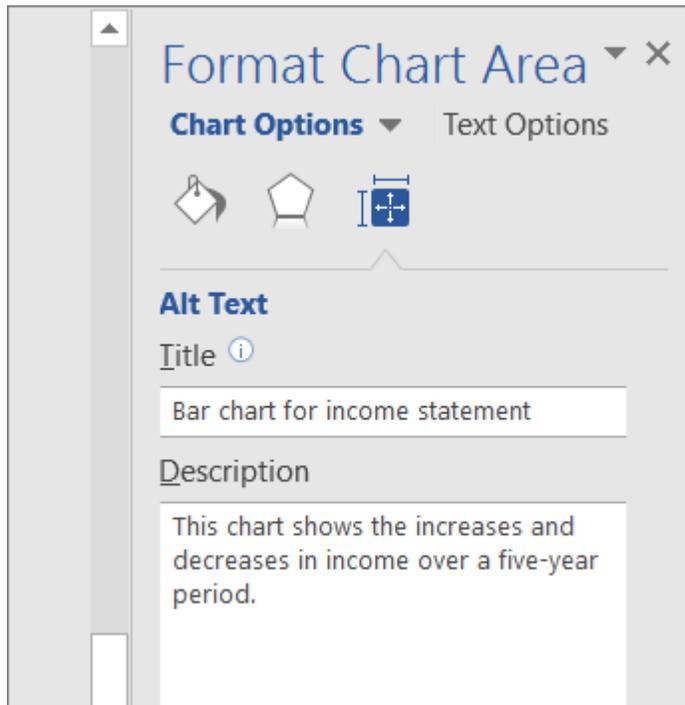


Make your Word Documents Accessible

Add alt text to charts

1. Right-click a chart.
2. Select **Format Chart Area > Chart Options > Layout & Properties**.
3. Select **Alt Text**.
4. Type a description and a title.

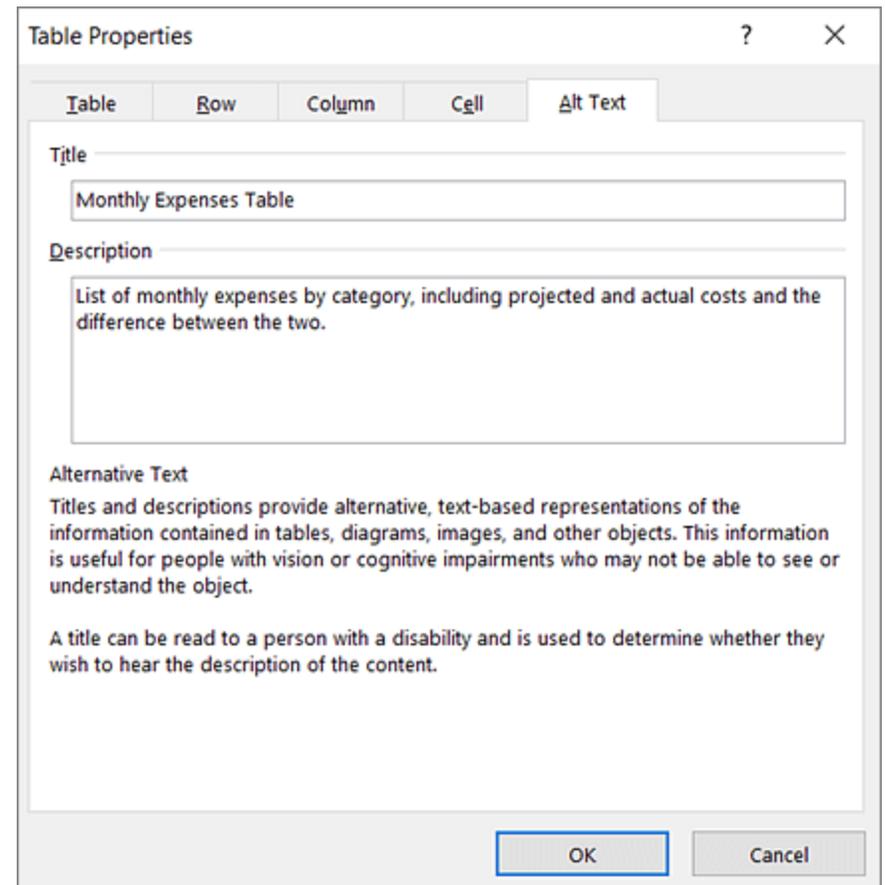
Tip: Include the most important information in the first line, and be as concise as possible.



Add alt text to tables

1. Right-click a table.
2. Select **Table Properties**.
3. Select the **Alt Text** tab.
4. Type a description and a title.

Tip: Include the most important information in the first line, and be as concise as possible.



Make your Word Documents Accessible

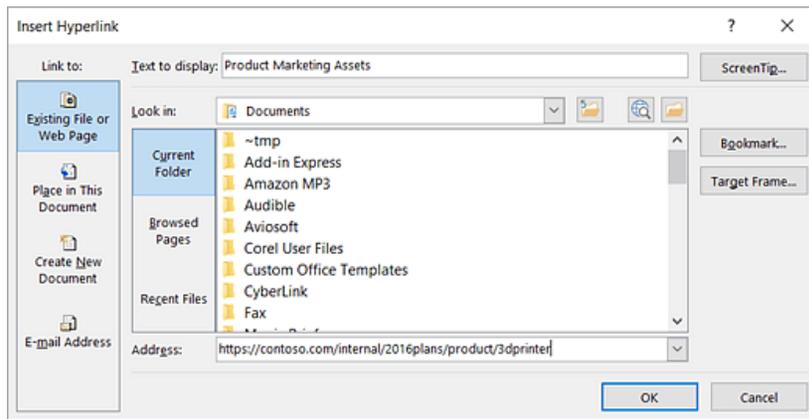
Make hyperlinks, text, and tables accessible

The following procedures describe how to make the hyperlinks, text, and tables in your Word documents accessible.

Add hyperlink text and ScreenTips

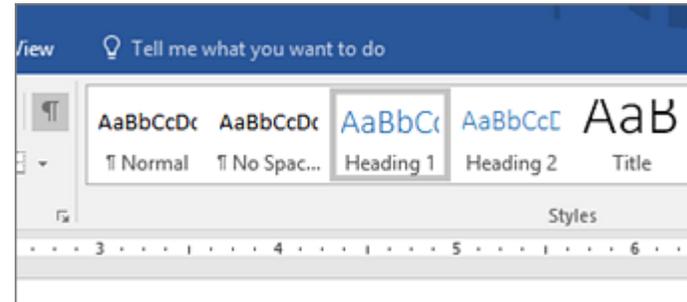
1. Select the text to which you want to add the hyperlink, and then right-click.
2. Select **Hyperlink**.
The text you selected displays in the **Text to display** box. This is the hyperlink text.
3. If necessary, change the hyperlink text.
4. In the **Address** box, enter the destination address for the hyperlink.
5. Select the **ScreenTip** button and, in the **ScreenTip text** box, type a ScreenTip.

Tip: If the title on the hyperlink's destination page gives an accurate summary of what's on the page, use it for the hyperlink text. For example, this hyperlink text matches the title on the destination page: Templates and Themes for Office Online.



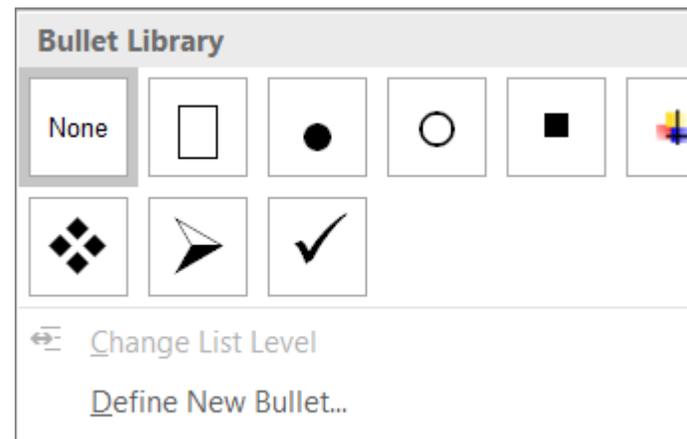
Apply built-in heading styles

1. Select the heading text.
2. On the **Home** tab, in the **Styles** group, select a heading style, for example, **Heading 1** or **Heading 2**.



Use bulleted lists

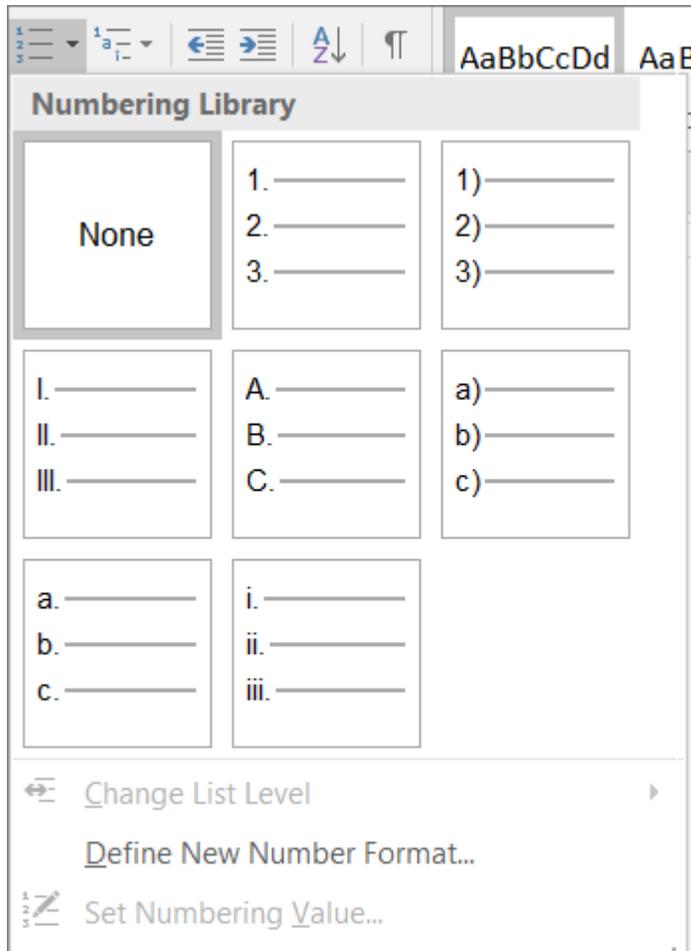
1. Position the cursor anywhere in your document.
2. Select the **Home** tab.
3. In the **Paragraph** group, select the **Bullets** button.
4. Type each bullet item in the bulleted list.



Make your Word Documents Accessible

Use ordered lists

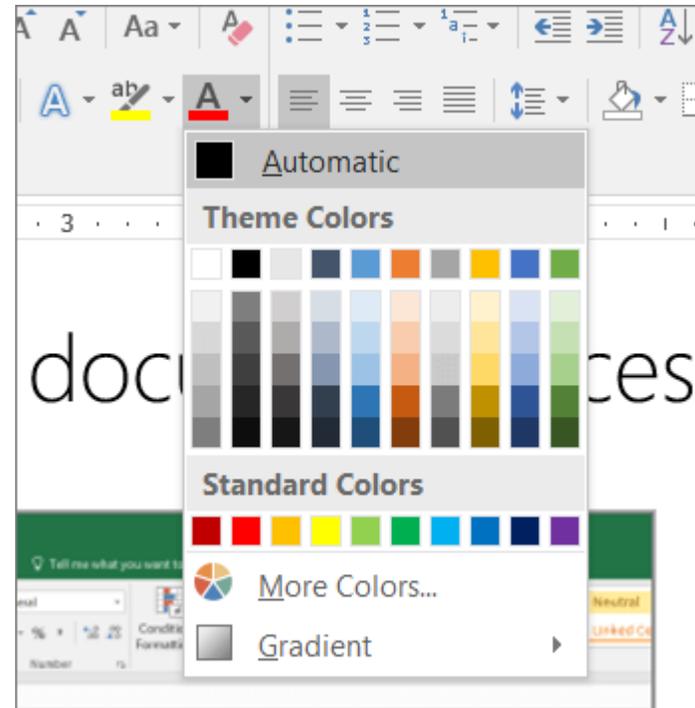
1. Position the cursor anywhere in your document.
2. Select the **Home** tab.
3. In the **Paragraph** group, select the **Numbering** button.
4. Type the sequential steps.



Use accessible text color

Here are some ideas to consider:

- Ensure that text displays well by using the **Automatic** setting for font colors. Select your text, and then select **Home > Font Color > Automatic**.



- Use the Colour Contrast Analyzer, a free app that analyzes colors and contrast, and displays results almost immediately.

Make your Word Documents Accessible

Use accessible text format

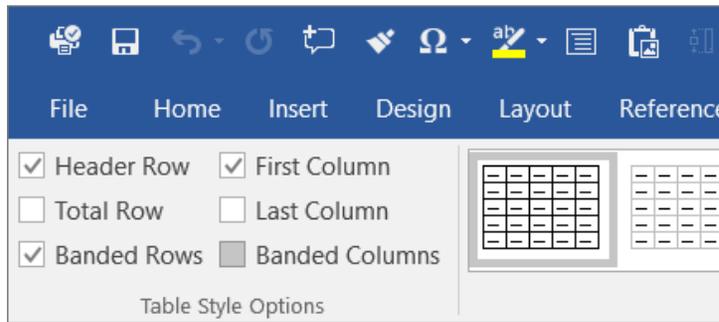
Here are some ideas to consider:

- Add an underline to color-coded hyperlink text. That can help colorblind people know the text is linked even if they can't see the color.
- Add shapes if color is used to indicate status. For example, add a checkmark symbol  if green is used to indicate "pass" and an uppercase X  if red indicates "fail".

Note: These resources provide other suggestions: usability.gov and Web Accessibility for Users with Color Blindness.

Use table headers

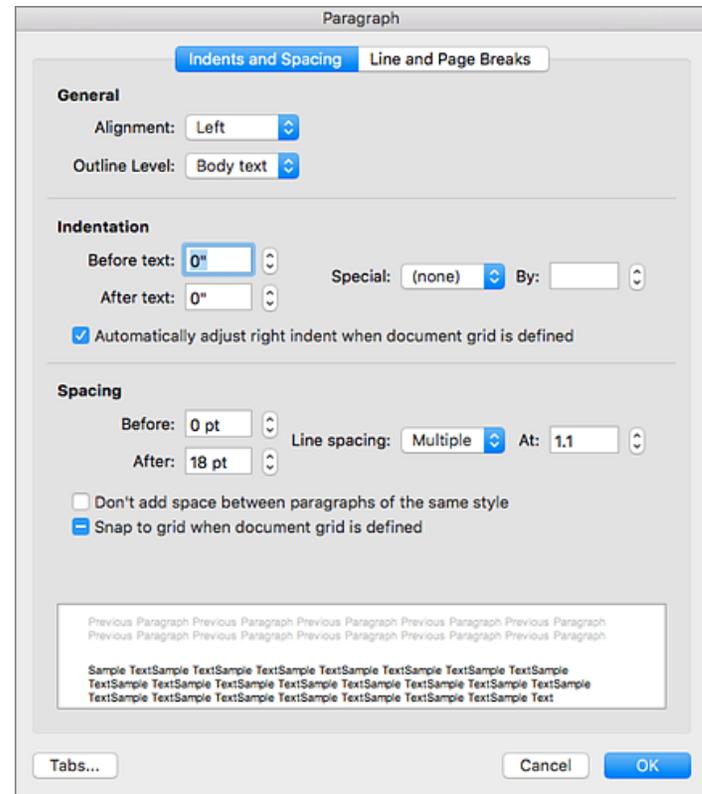
1. Position the cursor anywhere in a table.
2. On the **Table Tools Design** tab, in the **Table Style Options** group, select the **Header Row** check box.
3. Type column headings.



Use text spacing

Increase or decrease white space between sentences and paragraphs.

1. Select your text.
2. Select the **Home** tab.
3. In the **Paragraph** group, in the lower-right corner of the group, select the **More** button. The **Paragraph** dialog box opens, showing the **Indents and Spacing** tab.
4. Under **Spacing**, select the spacing options you want.



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Document properties

Properties -

Size 147KB
Pages 9
Words 1443
Total Editing Time 87 Minutes

Title Quick Guide For Word 2013 - Accessibility
Tags 2013, Word, Quick Guide, Accessibility
Comments Add comments
Template Normal
Status Add text
Categories Add a category
Subject Word Accessibility
Hyperlink Base Add text
Company NCLIA

Related Dates

Last Modified Today, 1:30 PM
Created Today, 9:16 AM
Last Printed

Related People

Manager Specify the manager
Author Information Technology Services - User Technology Support
Add an author

When creating or editing word documents that need to be posted online, or exported to acrobat format, the following fields need to be filled out in Document Properties:

- Title
- Tags
- Subject, and
- Company

The information in these fields are exported to acrobat, reducing the number of accessibility errors in the pdf file.

File naming conventions

In general, document file names should not contain spaces and/or special characters.

Document file names should be concise, generally limited to 20–30 characters, and make the contents of the file clear.