# ACCESSIBLE MICROSOFT WORD DOCUMENTS

Adding 'Alt Text'

All pictures, charts, graphs, etc. require an alternate text description especially if they are integral to understanding the content.

1. To add alternate text, right click on the item and choose 'Format Picture'.
2. Choose 'Layout and Properties.'
3. Under 'Layout and Properties' open 'Alt Text' by clicking on the third icon from left and then click "Alt Text."
4. Add a title and a concise description in the appropriate fields. The Title field is optional, but the Description is required.
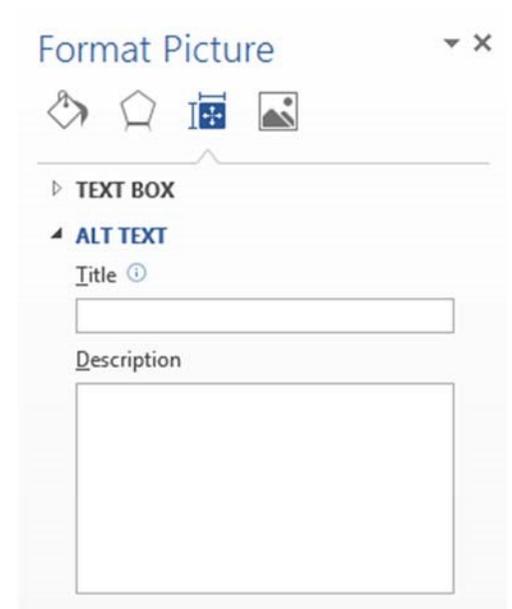
Using the 'Styles' toolbar

Use the 'Styles' toolbar to give your document appropriate structure. The style tags you attach to the headings, quotes, book titles, etc. help assistive technology (like screen readers) convey the structure and logic of the document to the reader.

1. Open up the 'Styles' toolbar if not already open.
2. As you add a title, heading, book title, etc., click to apply the corresponding style from the menu.
3. If you are retrofitting a document, highlight the title, heading, book title, etc. and click on the correlating style to apply it to the document.

Creating effective Hyperlinks

When you include a website in your document, you want the visible text that is linked to be meaningful and helpful to anyone using a screen reader. Avoid using raw URLs or words like "click here."

1. Copy the URL that you want to include, but instead of pasting it into your document, click "Insert" from the top-level menu and choose 'Hyperlink.'
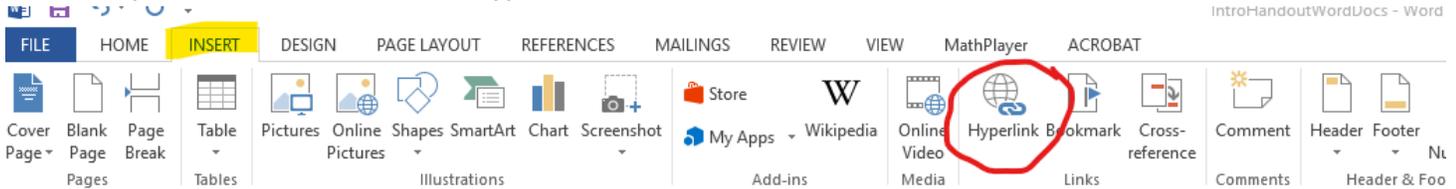

2. At the top of the dialog box in the Text to Display field, type the visible, descriptive text you want displayed for your hyperlink. At the bottom in the Address field, paste the URL.
3. If you already have a URL pasted in as a hyperlink or using something generic like "Click here," you can edit it to make the hyperlink text meaningful.
   a. Highlight the link in the document; right-click, and choose 'Hyperlink'
   b. Click 'Edit Hyperlink'
   c. In the Text to Display field, delete the existing text and add meaningful text.
   d. Click 'OK.'
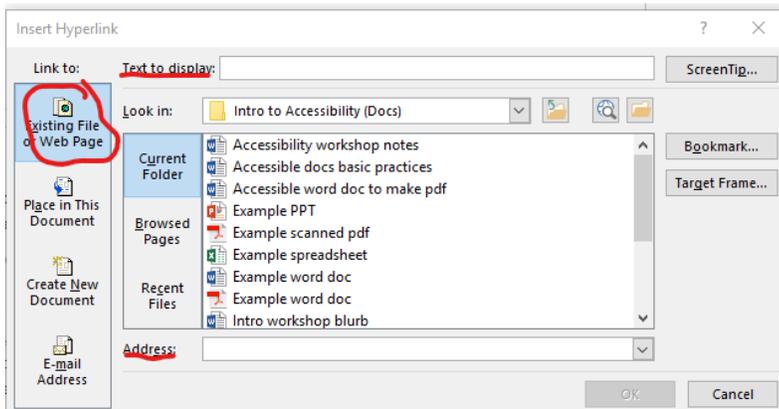
Using True Bulleted and Numbered Lists

1. Click the 'Home' tab on the main menu ribbon.
2. Choose either 'Numbered List' or 'Bulleted List' options from the Paragraph group.
3. Avoid using asterisks and tabs or numbers and tabs to create lists.
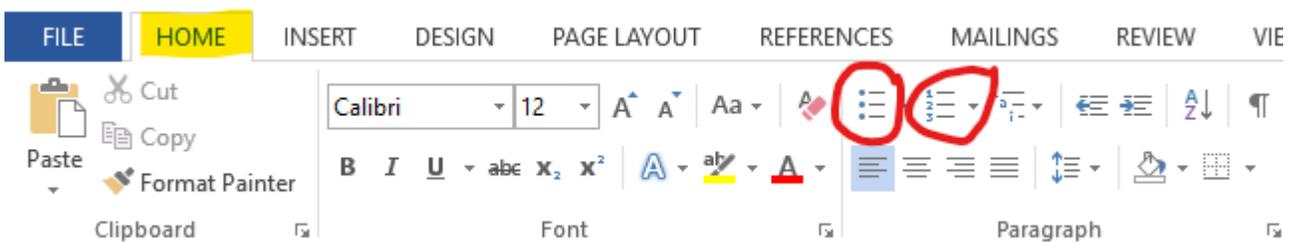
Defining and Labeling Tables

1. If any tables exist in the Word document, the first row may need to be set as a Header Row. To do this: Highlight the top row, right click on it and choose "Table Properties."

   a. Click the Row tab on the "Table Properties" dialog box.
   b. Select "Repeat as header row at the top of each page" on the Row tab. Click OK.

2. Add alternate text to the table:

   a. Right click on the table and choose "Table Properties."
   b. Click the Alt Text tab in the "Table Properties" dialog box.
   c. Add a Title and an alternate text Description.
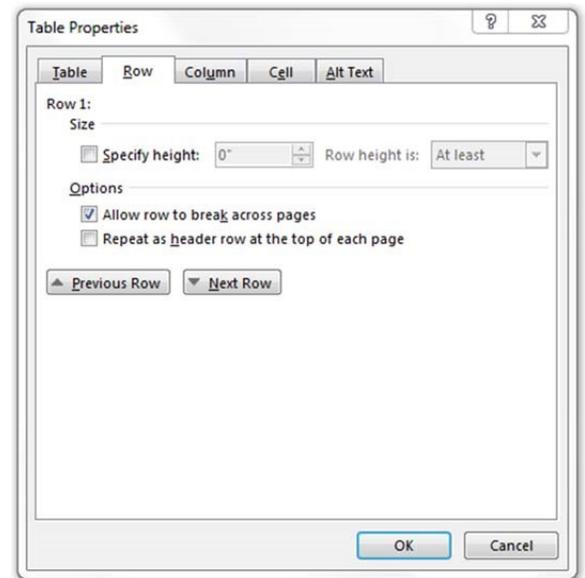
## FINAL STEP: Running an Accessibility Check

Microsoft includes a function in its programs that scans the document for common issues related to accessibility and can instruct you on how to correct them.

1. With your Word document open, click 'File' in the top left corner to open up the 'Info' screen.
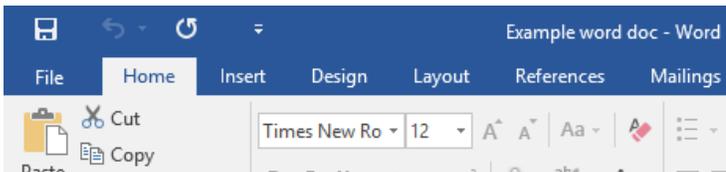
2. On this screen, click the button that says 'Check for Issues' and then select 'Check Accessibility' from the dropdown menu.
3. If using Word on a Mac, click "Review" on the top ribbon and then select "Check Accessibility."

4. Word will populate an Accessibility Checker on the right side of the screen.
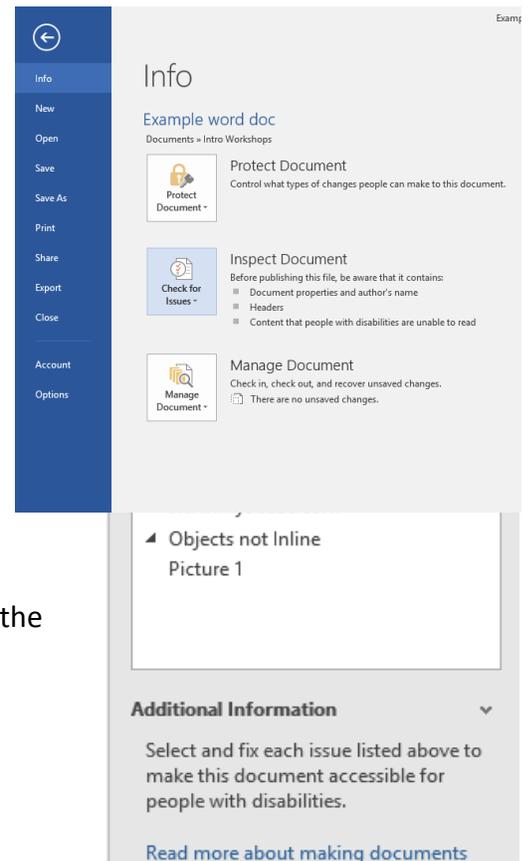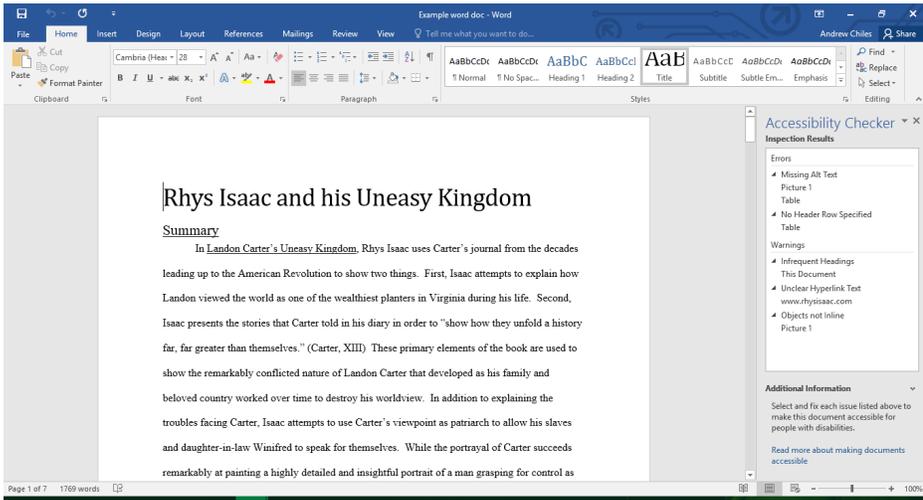
5. Go through each item in the Accessibility Checker and follow the recommendations and directions listed under 'Additional Information.'

This is your simplest, best practice to provide accessibility in existing Word document. This is also the same set of steps you would take with Microsoft Excel, Microsoft PowerPoint, and other programs in the Microsoft Office suite.

Additional Microsoft Word Accessibility Tips

- Ensure that font size is sufficient, at least **12 points.**
- Provide sufficient **contrast.**
- Don't use color as **the only way** to convey meaning.
- Provide a **table of contents** for long documents.
- Use **simple** language.