Intro to Document Accessibility & Microsoft Word Accessibility

State of Iowa

January & February 2025

MSF&W

Agenda

1. Overview of Accessibility and Assistive Technologies
2. PDF Documents & Demonstration of JAWS Screen Reader
3. Creating an Accessible Document in Word

Overview of Accessibility and Assistive Technologies

Accommodating People with Disabilities

- People with low vision or blindness
- People with limited use of their hands
- People who are deaf or hard of hearing
- People with learning disabilities

Assistive Technologies

- Alternate Keyboard & Mouse Devices
- Speech Recognition
- Large Fonts & High Contrast
- Screen Magnifiers (*ZoomText*)
- Screen Readers (*JAWS, NVDA, VoiceOver*)





Dragon® Professional 16 NUANCE



ZoomText

JAWS

PDF Documents & JAWS Screen Reader

PDF Behind-the-Scenes

- **Physical View** - what you see
- **Content Layer** - text used for searching
- **Tags Layer** - text with logical structure
  - Like HTML does for web pages

JAWS Demonstration

- Accessible PDF
- Inaccessible PDF

Creating an Accessible Document in Word

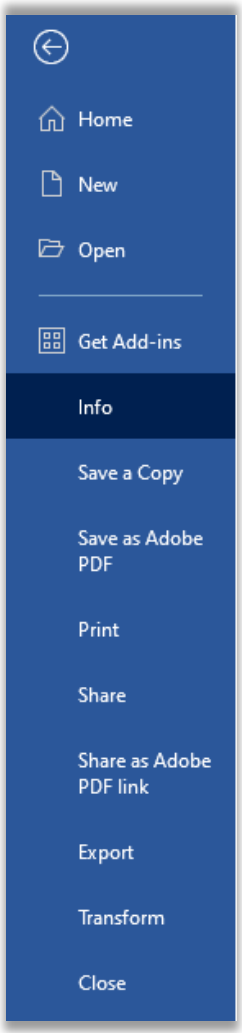
Microsoft Word Features

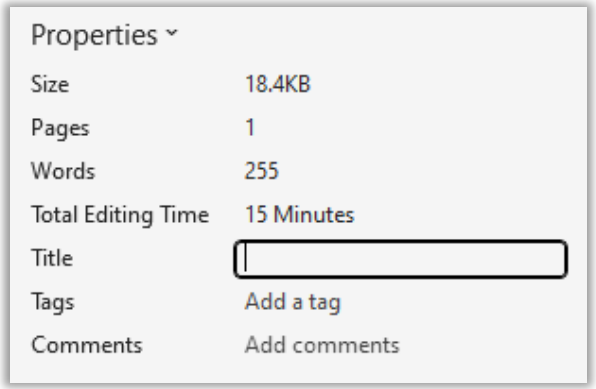
Use Word as it was meant to be used

- Title
- Heading Styles
- Lists
- Columns
- Links
- Images and Alternate Text
- Data Tables
- Color Contrast

Title

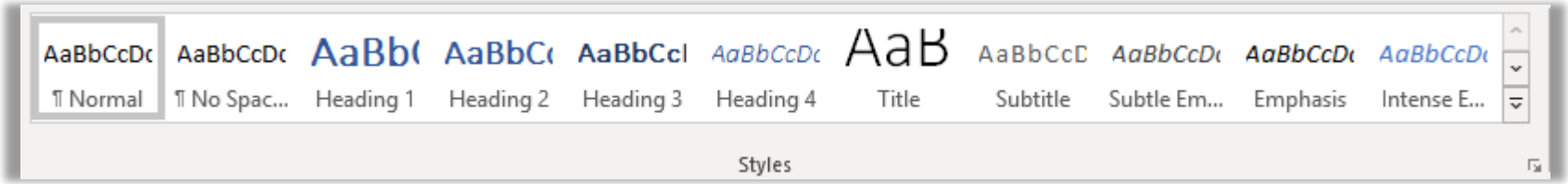
- A meaningful name for the document (different than the file name)
- File tab → Info → Properties section → Title





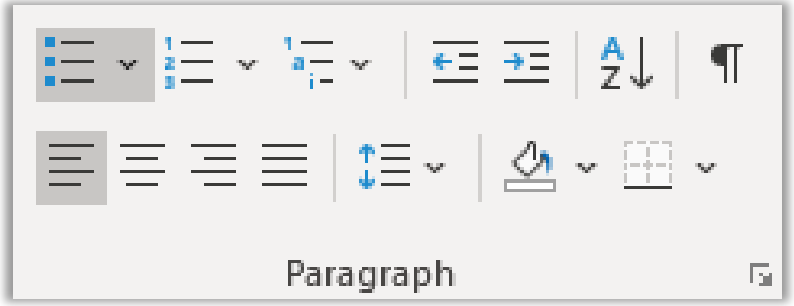
Headings

- Structural markup to provide hierarchy of information within a document.
  - Do not use bold, colored fonts with larger font size
- Makes reading more efficient – allows screen reader users to “skim” a document.
- Used for Table of Contents
- Home tab → Styles



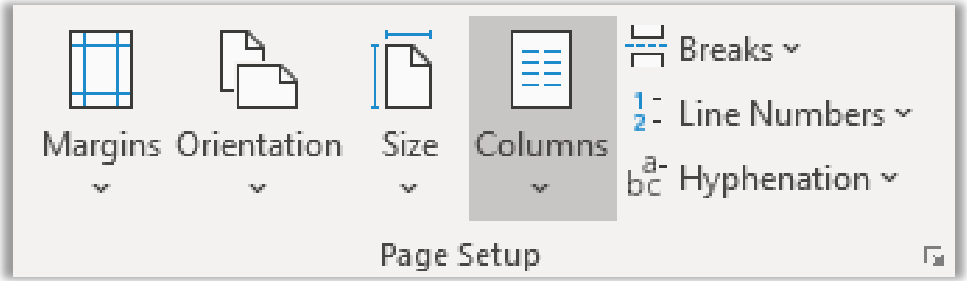
Lists

- Layout to present lists of information
  - Can be ordered or unordered
  - Do not use dashes, asterisks, etc.
- Adds structure to document and makes reading more efficient
- Home tab → Paragraph → Bullets or Numbering



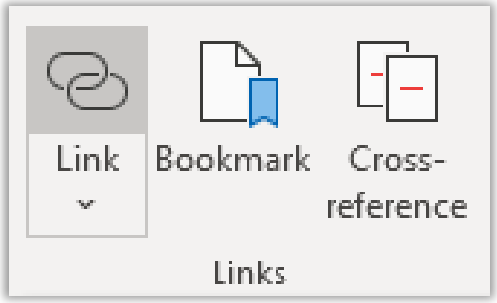
Columns

- Layout to present information in columns
  - Do not use Tabs or Spaces or Tables
- Ensures proper reading order
- Layout tab → Page Setup → Columns



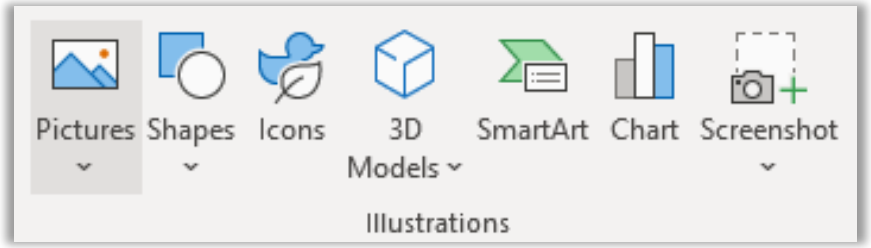
Links

- Create a link for quick access to web pages or files.
  - Link text should usually match the title of the page to which the link points.
  - Do not include the words “click,” “click here,” or “more” in link text.
- Mouse or keyboard can be used to activate
- Insert tab → Links → Link



Images

- Insert logos, charts, graphs, diagrams, or photos to a document.
- Adds visual decoration or information
- Insert tab → Illustrations → Pictures



- Or paste chart from Excel as an image

Alternate Text for Images

- Alternative, text-based representation of the information contained in an image
- Allows people who cannot see an image to understand its purpose or meaning
  - How would you explain an image to someone over the phone?

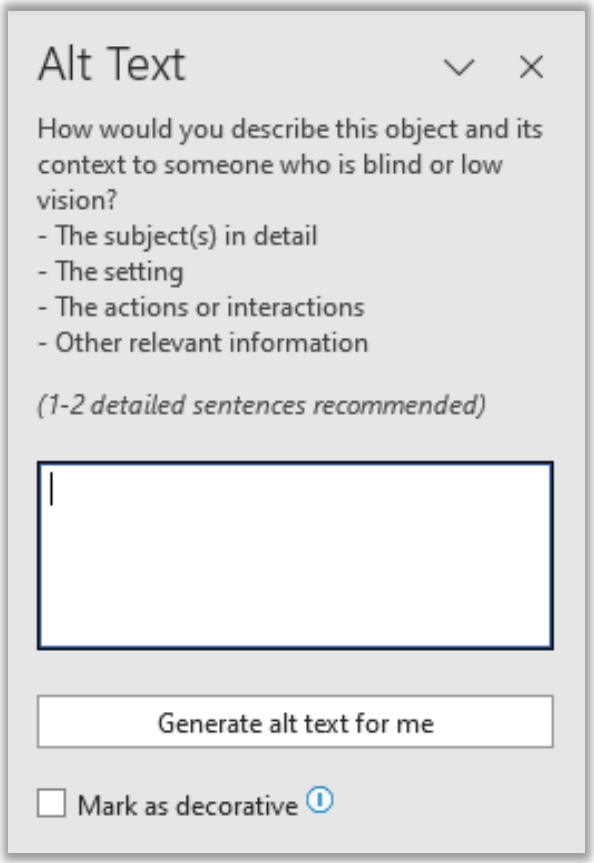
Alternate Text for Images

- Be concise
- Use standard punctuation and spacing
- Check spelling
- Do not include the words “image,” “photo,” or “picture” in alt text.

Alternate Text for Images

- Picture Format tab → Accessibility → Alt Text





Alternate Text for Decorative Images

- Images that are purely decorative, do not convey meaning, or are completely redundant with text that is already on the page
  - Mark as decorative
  - Mark as “artifact” in PDF





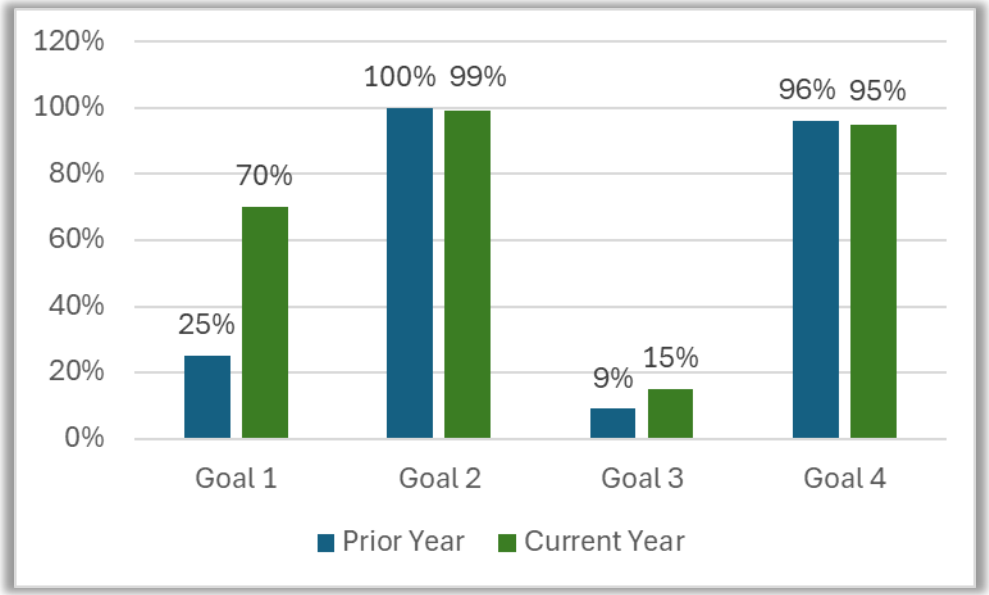
Alternate Text for Meaningful Images

- Images that contain text
  - Use alternate text that includes the same words or letters.
  - **Alt Text:**
    Iowa



Alternate Text for Meaningful Images

- Charts and graphs
  - Use alternate text that conveys the same information displayed visually.
  - **Alt Text:**
    Goal 1: Prior Year=25%, Current Year=70%
    Goal 2: Prior Year=100%, Current Year=99%
    Goal 3: Prior Year=9%, Current Year=15%
    Goal 4: Prior Year=96%, Current Year=95%

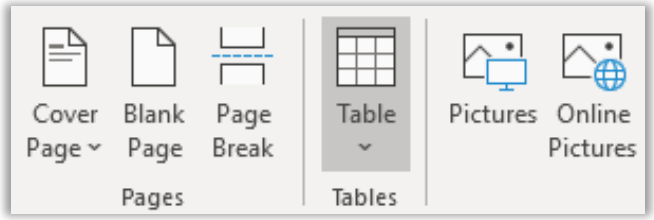


Alternate Text for Redundant Images

- If the **exact same** content presented in the image is also available in text (e.g., narrative, data table), the image can be considered decorative and the image can be marked as decorative in Word.

Tables

- Use only for tabular data, where there are 2 axes of labels for each data cell
  - Do not use for layout
- Insert tab → Table



- or Paste table created in Excel (default paste)
  - Copy in Excel → Word Home tab → Paste

Color Contrast

- Sufficient contrast should be kept in mind during document creation, so it does not need to be addressed in the PDF.
- Make sure that the contrast between foreground and background colors is at least 4.5:1.
- Use a checker (e.g., Colour Contrast Analyser) to verify contrast.
- Note: Users can customize colors when viewing a PDF.

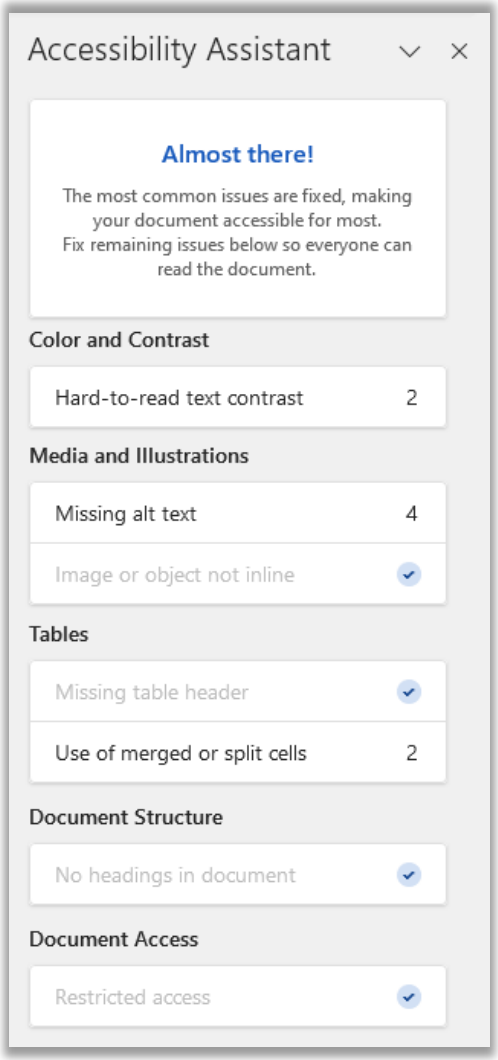
Word Accessibility Assistant

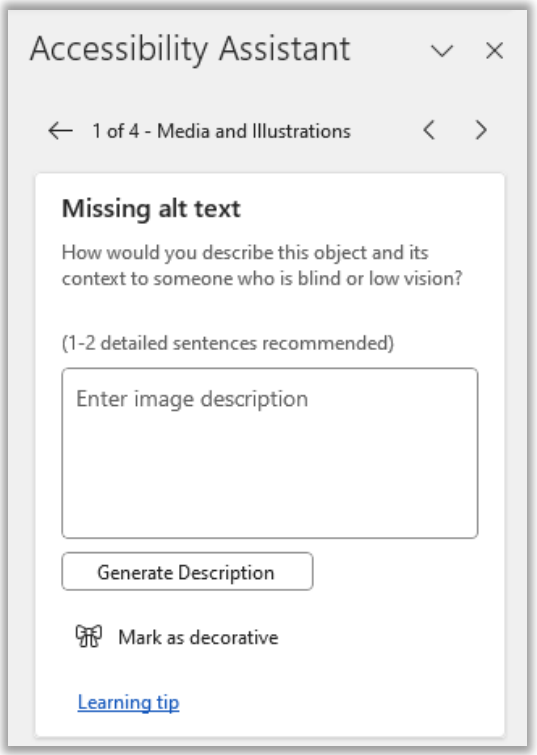
- Review tab → Accessibility → Check Accessibility



Word Accessibility Assistant

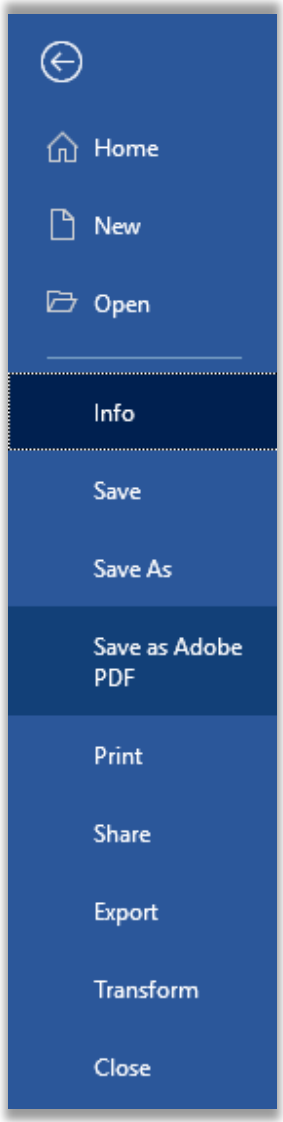
- Results vary depending on the version of Word
- Click to open an issue and make changes





Save as Adobe PDF

- File tab → Save as Adobe PDF
- Do not print to PDF



Google Docs

- Google Docs cannot be directly made into accessible PDFs
  - “download as PDF document” does not create a tagged PDF, and significant work must be done within Acrobat
- Recommend creating PDFs from Word instead
  - Download Google Doc as Microsoft Word, verify styles and structure, and then Save as Adobe PDF from Word

Other Office Software

- For other Office software (e.g., PowerPoint), use the same techniques as Word when available
  - Styles, headings, lists, alt text, etc.
- Always Save as Adobe PDF when available.
- You likely will not be able to make the source document as accessible as you did with Word and will need to do extra work in Acrobat to make the PDF accessible.

Summary

- PDFs need to be accessible for people with disabilities
- If possible, address accessibility before creating PDF
- Use Word as it was meant to be used (styles, columns, etc.) to produce most accessible PDF possible
- Create PDFs using “Save as Adobe PDF”

Q&A

Questions?

accessibility@msfw.com