



Accessibility Network at the University of Cincinnati

Accessibility Best Practices – Word Processing

Print and use the checklist below to use when preparing an accessible Word document.

File Setup

- Does the document file name [not contain spaces and/or special characters](#)?
- Is the document file name concise, [generally limited to 20–30 characters](#), and does it make the contents of the file clear?
- Have the [document properties for Title, Author, Subject](#) (AKA Description), Keywords, Language, and Copyright Status been completed?
- Have you set your [file's language to English](#)?
- Have [track changes](#) been accepted or rejected and turned off?
- Have [comments been removed](#) and [formatting marks](#) been turned off?

Text

- Does the document utilize [recommended fonts](#) (i.e., Times New Roman, Verdana, Arial, Tahoma, Helvetica, or Calibri)?
- Are heading styles organized in a [hierarchal and logical](#) fashion, with consecutive headings (i.e., no missing heading levels)?
- Is the [list style](#) being used, as opposed to manually typed characters (e.g. Hyphens, numbers, or graphics)?
- Is content [clear and concise](#)?
- Is all text logical in the [Outline View](#)?
- Do all URLs contain [descriptive hyperlinks](#) (i.e., avoid generic phrases like “click here”; instead, use phrases that let users know about the content of the linked page prior to selecting it)?
- Is the [color contrast ratio](#) between foreground text and background color sufficient?

Continued on page 2 →



Accessibility Network at the University of Cincinnati

Images

- Do all [images](#), grouped images, and [non-text elements](#) that convey information have meaningful [alternative-text descriptions](#)?
- Do complex images (i.e., charts and graphs) have [descriptive text](#) near the image (perhaps as a caption or long description)?
- Is the document free of [scanned text-heavy images](#) (i.e., avoid text content contained in images that disappear when images are not available)?
- If color is used to emphasize important text, is there is an [alternate, compliant method](#) used as well?
- Have you provided alternatives for or avoided use of [sensory information](#) (e.g., shape, size, color, visual location, orientation, sound, etc.)?

Tables

- Do all data tables in the document have designated [row and/or column headers](#) in table properties?
- Does the [table header repeat](#) at the top of the table as it goes from one page to another?
- Are data cells set so they do not [split across pages](#)?

Accessibility Check

- Has a separate [accessible version of the document](#) been provided when there is no other way to make the content accessible?
- Did you use the built-in [MS Office Accessibility Checker](#), has that been run and does your document pass?
- Did you visit the KB article Creating Accessible Microsoft Word Documents [for Windows](#) or [for Mac](#) to find more detailed information?
- Did you contact the [Accessibility Network](#) if you are having trouble?