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**Instructor Guidance on Meeting Word Accessibility Standards (1/23)**

This document shows you how to meet the Checklist Standards for Word documents. The Checklist and Guidance are based on Microsoft and other guidance and tries to keep directions simple.

**General Guidance**

1. Start with an accessible template.
* To find an accessible template for PC or Mac, go to the [link to accessible Word templates](https://templates.office.com/en-us/collection-accessibility) and select a Word template that best suits your purpose.
1. Use the built-in Accessibility Checker that runs automatically in the background when you're creating a document. Monitoring it and following its tips will take you far (but not all the way) in meeting our standards. If the Accessibility Checker detects accessibility issues, you will get a notice in the status bar.
* To launch the Checker manually:
	+ Select **Review** **> Check Accessibility**. (See this [video on using the Accessibility Checker](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/video-check-the-accessibility-of-your-document-9d660cba-1fcd-45ad-a9d1-c4f4b5eb5b7d) for more.)
* Run the checker any time you make significant revisions to the content.
* Run the checker one last time, close the document, and rerun the checker before submitting your document for accessibility review by MLA staff.
* **IMPORTANT:** The Checker does not address all accessibility requirements. “No accessibility errors found” reported by the Checker does not mean that all accessibility requirements are met.

**Guidance on Meeting Standards**

1. Fonts are sans serif and 12pt or larger:
* Use Georgia, Helvetica, Open Sans, Futura, or other sans serif fonts.
1. Word’s built-in headings and styles are used to structure the page and the order of headings is logical.
* **To add a heading style**:
* Select a sentence that you want to add a header to.
* Select **Home** > **Styles** (PC) **/Styles Pane** (Mac) and then select the heading you want.
* Organize headings in logical order and do not skip heading levels. For example, use Heading 1 (highest level), Heading 2, and then Heading 3, rather than Heading 3, Heading 1, and then Heading 2.
* Organize the information in your document into small chunks. Ideally, each heading includes only a few paragraphs.

3. There are no multiple line returns or spaces. Paragraph spacing and layout tools are used instead.

* **To set the line spacing in a new document:**
* Go to **Design** > **Paragraph Spacing**.
* **To change the line spacing in an existing document:**
* Select one or more paragraphs to update. Press Ctrl + A to select all.
* Go to **Home** > **Line and Paragraph Spacing** 
* Select **Line Spacing Options** and choose an option in the **Line spacing** box.
* Adjust the **Before** and **After** settings to change spacing between paragraphs.
* Select **OK**.

4. Text Does not wrap around visuals. Do not select in the layout menu.

5. All visuals include alternative text of 1 or 2 sentences or are marked decorative.

* **To add Alt Text on a Mac**
	+ When you insert an image or object, Mac adds alt text and lets you edit it or mark as decorative.
	+ To add alt text to existing image, double click or right click the image and select Alt Text.
* **To add Alt Text in Windows**
	+ Right-click the object and select **Edit Alt Text**. Enter text or mark as decorative
* For the step-by-step instructions on how to add or edit alt text in PCs & Macs, see [Add alternative text to a shape, picture, chart, SmartArt graphic, or other object](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/add-alternative-text-to-a-shape-picture-chart-smartart-graphic-or-other-object-44989b2a-903c-4d9a-b742-6a75b451c669#PickTab=Windows).
* For guidance on writing Alt Text, see [Everything you need to know to write effective alt text](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/everything-you-need-to-know-to-write-effective-alt-text-df98f884-ca3d-456c-807b-1a1fa82f5dc2) (This says you don't have to add Alt Text for a table. Ignore it. Add Alt Text to tables.)

6. Tables are only used if absolutely necessary. If a table is used, the table structure is simple, used only for data, specifies column header information, and text is not wrapped around.

* Avoid tables and present data in another way, such as using paragraphs with headings.
* If you have to use tables, use the following guidelines to make sure your table is as accessible as possible:
	+ Avoid fixed width tables.
	+ If you have hyperlinks in your table, edit the link texts, so they make sense and don't break mid-sentence.
	+ To ensure that tables are simple and don't contain split cells, merged cells, or nested tables, use the Accessibility Checker
	+ Add alt text.
	+ Add table headers:
		- Place the cursor anywhere in a table.
		- PC: On the **Table Design** tab, in the **Table Styles Options** group, select the **Header Row** checkbox.
		- Mac: On the **Table Design** tab, select the **Header Row** check box
		- Type in your column headings.

7. Hyperlink text is accurate, concise, makes sense out of context, and stands out. (Information and text taken from [Accessible Hyperlinks](https://accessibility.oit.ncsu.edu/accessible-hyperlinks/).)

* To determine whether hyperlink text makes sense as standalone information, look over your document and read the links. Do they make sense on their own? Are they concise?
	+ Links that don’t make sense on their own:
		- URLs (e.g., <https://classroomaccess.oit.ncsu.edu/simple-wayslesson2/part-6-hyperlinks/>)
		- "Click here," "See this page" “Benefits," "Learn more"
	+ A link that makes sense out of context but is verbose: [This page lists ways in which accessible hyperlinks can benefit screen reader users](https://classroomaccess.oit.ncsu.edu/simple-wayslesson2/part-6-hyperlinks/)
	+ Meaningful, concise hyperlinks: “Lesson 2.6: Hyperlinks,” “Creating Accessible Hyperlinks”
* Hyperlink text is usually blue but may be any color that contrasts with surrounding colors. Use the same color for all hyperlinks in a given document. Underline links.
* To create a basic web hyperlink: Press Enter after you type a web page address.
* To make a link accessible:
	+ Select the whole URL, including the "http" or “https” at the beginning and the domain at the end.
	+ Right-click to open the context menu, then find and select **Edit Hyperlink** (PC)**/Hyperlink> Edit Hyperlink** (Mac).
	+ In the dialog box, look for a text box labeled **Text to display**. Type in the description text you want.
	+ Click **OK**.
* Tips
	+ 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.
	+ If a hyperlink downloads a file, be sure to mention that.
	Example: [Campus Map (PDF, 5.62 MB)](https://accessibility.oit.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/47/2019/03/CampusMap_11x17.pdf)
	+ If a hyperlink opens in a new browser tab or window, be sure to mention that. Example: [NC State University Homepage (opens in new tab)](http://www.ncsu.edu/)
	+ Write out full email addresses to convey that it is an email address

9. There is sufficient contrast between text and background colors.

* To ensure that text displays well in a high contrast mode, use the **Automatic** setting for font colors.



* Use this [color contrast checker](https://color.a11y.com/) if you are unsure if you have enough contrast. When in doubt, use color for headings. In the text area, use black text and light-colored or white backgrounds.

### 10. Lists are accessible.

### Organize the information in your document into small chunks, such as bulleted or numbered lists.

### Design lists so that you do not need to add a plain paragraph without a bullet or number to the middle of a list.

### For the step-by-step instructions on how to create lists, see [Create a bulleted or numbered list](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/create-a-bulleted-or-numbered-list-9ff81241-58a8-4d88-8d8c-acab3006a23e).

11. Accessibility Checker returns no errors after checking, closing the list, and checking again.

* To check accessibility manually: Select **Review** > **Check Accessibility**. If there are no errors, complete your checklist and submit it with your document.

This guidance is based on [Make your Word documents accessible to people with disabilities](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/make-your-word-documents-accessible-to-people-with-disabilities-d9bf3683-87ac-47ea-b91a-78dcacb3c66d) and [Microsoft Word Accessibility-Digital Accessibility Office-The University *of* North Carolina *at* Chapel Hill](https://digitalaccessibility.unc.edu/resources/documents/word-accessibility/)